This is a seminar for social science doctoral students in public administration. Students should accomplish the following objectives.

1. Students will define and differentiate various concepts of science that undergird the professional practice of social scientific inquiry.
2. Students will define and construct the intellectual building blocks of professional scientific research: theories, hypotheses, and operational definitions.
3. Students will develop pragmatic research designs that employ the logic of control and identify a feasible means of data collection.
4. Students will effectively and ethically review social scientific research.

This seminar will immerse students in considering the proposition that scientific inquiry has a logic and process that shapes our ideas about the nature of reality, truth, knowledge, and the questions to which we seek answers. The process involves what counts as evidence, proper relationships between the inquirer and the field of inquiry, appropriate methodology, standards of validity, and standards of scholarly quality. “Logic” implies the existence of a structure of premises and processes on which inquiry is based. In social science generally and public administration in particular no one logic governs all inquiry, but the class will focus on orthodox social scientific inquiry.

Pursuing a Ph.D. is significantly different from pursuing a Master’s degree. While some of the challenge lies in acquiring specific knowledge and skills, much of it entails shifting yourself from the role of student to the role of scholar and intellectual -- from consumer to producer of scholarship. Therefore, we will learn by doing as much as possible. This will be an intensive course, but one that should provide a solid foundation for your scholarly development.

As part of this transition from consumer to producer, students will be central to conducting the classroom and learning experience. The instructor will instruct, but will also guide, the self-teaching that is associated with the doctoral program pedagogy. Students should willingly embrace the process of teaching themselves and others at this stage in the process. It is the foundation of scholarship and careers in the academy.
Course Requirements

Required Materials:

Books:

Review the following website on a weekly basis: https://retractionwatch.com/

Articles:

Additional readings from peer reviewed articles or other online material will be distributed through BB or via your own collection of materials from the library or other resources. This means that if you cannot find it on BB, use your research skills to find the article or book chapter.

Software:

All students are required to obtain and to use one of the following bibliographic software packages (listed alphabetically) which should be available online or at a local bookstore.

- **Endnote**. The standalone software is preferable to the web-based version, but the web-based version is acceptable and free.

- **Refworks**. This popular software is recommended by the UNT library.

- **Zotero**. This is a free bibliographic software solution that requires a download but can operate in Firefox browsers. Available at www.zotero.org.

Graded Assignments:

**General Note**: All work for this class cannot be used in any other class during the semester. No double dipping for this class.

**Seminar participation**: Each student will be required to submit assignments throughout the semester. All weekly written assignments must be posted no later than 5:00PM on the Sunday preceding class. Other assignments are due at the time of class on Monday or when stated in the syllabus.

I will also assess general class participation which is worth 100 points. This grade will be awarded at the end of the semester and is evaluated based upon the quality and quantity of discussion during class. The evaluation is holistic in nature and at the complete discretion of the instructor. It is your responsibility to come to class and be ready to offer helpful comments and questions.

**Final**: You will take only one exam in the course. It will be a final exam that takes three hours. You will have essay questions and definitional identifications taken from all terms in all assigned
chapters in Dixon, Singleton and Straits. All exams MUST be typewritten and taken on a computer assigned by the department.

**Short Literature Review:** Your literature review should be 1000 to 2000 words and contain no fewer than fifteen journal article references and no more than 25 articles. The literature review should identify a research question, it’s theoretical and practical importance, and explain what the scholarly literature tells us about variation in the dependent variable or the independent-dependent variable combination in the question. The literature review must also identify a gap in the literature that deserves further scrutiny. That gap is one of the following: 1) a contradiction in the findings of the literature; 2) an omission of key variables, measures, methods within the existing paradigm; or 3) a new theory that will imply new or contradictory hypotheses to existing literature. Identify and explain which


1. Why do municipalities join interlocal agreements? Is there a relationship between regulatory burdens and willingness to join ILAs?
2. Why is there variation in state preemption of local government policy making? What explains the state level variation?

**Research Proposal**

The major writing assignment is a research proposal that asserts an important question in public administration, provides a literature review, a causal theory, and a complete research design that meets orthodox social scientific standards. You will define your question with instructor approval. Evaluation of the paper will consider the quality of writing, question, literature review, theory, hypotheses, and research design. All of this must be a feasible project. Feasible means you could conduct the research this summer (you have the time and the financial resources). Submit a complete research proposal paper that contains a research question that is justified by the literature review. The theory and hypotheses must be clearly stated and a feasible research design thoroughly described and justified. See article reviews for a model of how this will be evaluated. All assignments MUST use APA. *The maximum length of the paper including the bibliography should be no more than 6500 words.*

The outline of the paper is as follows:

1. Introduction/Problem Statement
2. Literature Review
3. Theory and Hypotheses
   3.1. Identification and definition of dependent and independent variables that ultimately answers the question.
3.2. Deductive argument that explains why variation in one variable causes a specified directional change in another variable.

3.3. Hypothesis Statements: Logical consequence/prediction of theory
   3.3.1. Positive covariation
   3.3.2. Negative covariation
   3.3.3. Categorical covariation

4. Research Design
   4.1. Unit of analysis
       4.1.1. Spatial domain
       4.1.2. Temporal domain
       4.1.3. Sampling
       4.1.4. Logic of comparison and control
   4.2. Measurement of Dependent, Independent, and Control Variables
       4.2.1. Operational definitions of concepts
       4.2.2. Data collection
       4.2.3. Discussion of any validity concerns
   4.3. Data Analysis
       4.3.1. Specify which qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods or models are to be used to test hypotheses.
       4.3.2. Discuss internal validity concerns/issues.

5. Limitations
   5.1. External validity discussion (generalization parameters)
   5.2. All others

Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Assignments</th>
<th>150 points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation In Class</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>200 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Proposal</td>
<td>300 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>250 points</td>
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Point Scale/Grades

900 – 1000 = A  
800 – 899 = B  
700 – 799 = C  
600 – 699 = D  
< 600 = F

COURSE SCHEDULE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics and Readings/Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 27</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to Social Science</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dixon et al 1-2</td>
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</tbody>
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September 10  

**What is science and its practice in PA?**
- Dixon et al, 14
- Kuhn 3,4,7,9,10
- Yeager, S. *Where do research questions come from and how are they developed?*
- Lee, Allen S. “Reviewing a Manuscript for Publication.”
- Brainard, D. “How to Write an Effective Manuscript Review.”

September 17  

**Building Theory: Literature Review and Conceptualization.**
- Dixon et al 4
- Jaccard and Jacoby 5
- Assignment #1 is due on Sunday.

September 24  

**Building Theory: Causation and Hypothesis**
- Jaccard and Jacoby 4, 6, 7, 8
- Assignment #2 is due on Sunday.

October 1  

**Experimentation as Scientific Research**
- Dixon et al 7
- Assignment #3
October 8  **Experimentation in PA**

October 15  **Measurement: Goals and Evaluation**
- Dixon et al 5
- Short literature review is due at the beginning of class.

October 22  **Measurement: Complex and Subjective**
- Dixon et al pp 328-44.
- Assignment #4

October 29  **Large N-Cross-Sectional: Population Surveys w/ Individuals as Unit of Analysis**
- Dixon et al 6, 8
- Each student brings one article to class that fits the discussion.
November 5  **Large-N: Cross-Sectional with Organizations and Time Series**

- Each student brings one article to class that fits the discussion.

November 12  **Small-N Research Designs**

- Dixon et al 9
- Assignment #5

November 19  **Data Collection, Management, and Analysis**

- Dixon et al 10, 11, 12, 13
- Assignment #6

November 26  **Ethics in Social Science**

- Dixon et al 3
- Discuss Retraction Watch

*** Final Paper is Due on December 1st at 5:00pm ***

December 3  **Mini-conference**

- *** Final paper and critiques are presented ***
ACADEMIC POLICIES

(1) **Attend class each week.** There is no direct attendance policy, but the participation score is a function of attendance. Attendance for exams is mandatory. Excused exam absences are rare and require prior notification and documentation explaining absence. I reserve the right to ask different questions on make-up exams.

(2) **Read each week’s assignments prior to class and be prepared to discuss the material.** Regular attendance and meaningful participation is often the margin of difference for those on the borderline between grades.

(3) **Assignments are due at the times identified on the course website.** These times vary by assignment so please review them carefully.

(4) **No incompletes will be allowed except in very critical circumstances.** Please complete the course. It is in your best interest to do so.

UNIVERSITY & DEPARTMENT POLICIES

1) **Cheating And Plagiarism:** Notice of this policy shall be given in all public administration classes each semester, and written copies shall be available in the public administration departmental office.
   a. **Definitions:** The UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline defines cheating and plagiarism "as the use of unauthorized books, notes, or otherwise securing help in a test; copying other's tests, assignments, reports, or term papers; representing the work of another as one's own; collaborating without authority with another student during an examination or in preparing academic work; or otherwise practicing scholastic dishonesty."
   b. **Penalties:** Normally, the minimum penalty for cheating or plagiarism is a grade of "F" in the course. In the case of graduate departmental exams, the minimum penalty shall be failure of all fields of the exam. Determination of cheating or plagiarism shall be made by the instructor in the course, or by the departmental faculty in the case of departmental exams. You will receive a 0 for any assignment with plagiarism, whether intentional or not.
   c. **Procedures:** Cases of cheating or plagiarism on graduate departmental exams, papers, theses, or dissertations shall automatically be referred to the departmental Curriculum and Degree Programs Committee. Cases of cheating or plagiarism in ordinary course work may, at the discretion of the instructor, be referred to the Curriculum and Degree Program[s] Committee in the case of either graduate or undergraduate students. This committee, acting as an agent of the Department, shall impose further penalties, or recommend further penalties to the Dean of Students, if they determine that the case warrants it. In all cases, the Dean of Students shall be informed in writing of the case.
d. **Appeals:** Students may appeal any decision under this policy by following the procedures laid down in the UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

2) **Policy On Disability Accommodation:** The Department of Public Administration, in cooperation with the Office of Disability Accommodation, complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Please present your written accommodation request during regular office hours before the 12th class day of regular semesters (4th class day of summer sessions).

3) **Holy Day Observance:** A student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence with no penalty. Advanced notice of such an absence is an important professional courtesy.

4) **Syllabus Change Policy.** The syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice. If you do not understand or accept the contents of this syllabus, you must notify the instructor in writing within one week after receiving this syllabus.

5) **Evaluation.** Please remember to complete the SETE evaluation at the end of the course preferably before the final exam to ensure that the SETE remain open.

6) **Technology policy.** Use technology in the classroom for course purposes only. Failure to do so will result in severe penalties including dismissal from class and lowered grade.