



University of
Pittsburgh

School of
Education

Linda DeAngelo, PhD – Co-Instructor deangelo@pitt.edu

Heather McCambly, PhD – Co-Instructor mccambly@pitt.edu

Sarah Kurz, MEd – Teaching Assistant sek164@pitt.edu

2051 - MEd Research Methods for Higher Education

The University of Pittsburgh occupies land that was once the home to the Adena culture, the Hopewell culture, and the Monongahela peoples, among others. We honor the legacies of these cultures and the many Indigenous people who call this land home - past, present, future.

Term:	Fall 2021
Schedule:	Tuesdays 6:00 - 8:40 PM Posvar 5001
Office Hours - DeAngelo:	By appointment at https://go.oncehub.com/LindaDeAngelo
Office Hours - McCambly:	By appointment at https://calendly.com/mccambly/officehours
Office Hours - Kurz:	By appointment at sek164@pitt.edu

Course Description

Research and assessment-based work is critical to effective practice in higher education and student affairs. This research methods course for students in the higher education MEd program is designed to provide students with the necessary introductory and foundational research skills they will need throughout their MEd program and in their early career. The class emphasizes socially just research practice and the hands-on development of practical skills and competencies for conducting and interpreting research for educationally just decision making.

Course Learning Outcomes

This module-based course will include lecture, discussion, activities, and module assignments related to the reading material and major assignments, all designed to enhance knowledge and understanding. It is expected that students will become more confident in their ability to conduct and interpret the introductory research methods covered in the course as the semester progresses. There may be areas in the course where some students have more prior knowledge to draw upon than others. Prior experience and knowledge is something to be shared in this course. Students should ask intentional, thoughtful, and critical questions to scaffold knowledge they may not have that others (including the instructor) seem to have as they engage with the course and its materials. Students should expect to do independent work (e.g. reading materials, watching and engaging with instructional YouTube and other instructional materials and videos) beyond the materials offered in the course to acquire the foundational and background knowledge they need to get the most out of the course.

The course learning outcomes:

- 1) Students will demonstrate proficiency in aligning practice-based research questions with an appropriate data source and analytic plan.
- 2) Students will be able to demonstrate proficiency in conducting introductory quantitative and qualitative assessment-based research
- 3) Student will be able to demonstrate proficiency in interpreting introductory quantitative and qualitative assessment-based research and make appropriate inferences based on data
- 4) Students will understand how to center anti-racist and anti-oppressive inquiry in their work, including intentionality in the ways they work with, consider, and support minoritized student and administrator identities in their research work
- 5) Students will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of research and the opportunities and difficulties of conducting assessment-based research

Assignments

Class Participation	10%
Homework Assignments	20%
Qualitative Module Assignments	20%
Qualitative Final Project	15%
Quantitative Module Assignments	35%

Assignment Descriptions

Class Participation:

This course requires participation from everyone to be successful. Each of us brings a wealth of knowledge which will enrich the learning environment. In addition to being present for each class meeting (after more than one absence a student cannot earn a full participation grade), it is important that all of us come prepared, having read all the assigned readings for the module, and having completed the homework and other module activities. Participation is not all about quantity, quality is also important. Quality engagement in the class sessions fosters the growth, understanding, and learning of everyone in the course and allows us to connect concepts to one another and deepen our knowledge.

Setting up for Class Sessions: Your patience and flexibility is needed to make our learning environment successful. Please follow these guidelines:

- 1) Our time together is limited and precious. Please be on time, be present, and prepared for discussion. This includes having modules and advanced work done and ready to reference or share.
- 2) Be ready at any point to engage in class discussion, answer questions, and pose new questions. For many of our class sessions part of our time together will be used as a computer lab where you will have the opportunity to work with and manipulate data.
- 3) Participation involves not only our contributions, but also how we listen and engage

with one another's ideas and questions. A few words from Shotter (2005) to keep in mind:

“seeing *with another's words in mind* can itself be a thoughtful, feelingful, way of seeing, while thinking *with another's words in mind* can also be a feelingful, seeingful, way of thinking – a way of seeing and thinking that brings one into a close and personal, living contact with one's surroundings, with their subtle but mattering details.”

In this spirit, consider your participation in terms of the quality of your contribution, as well as the quality of your engagement with the materials and the words of your classmates. Monitor the cadence of the discussion, making contributions at times, and sitting back at others to make room for the quieter “instruments” in our orchestra.

- 4) Be fluid and ready to adjust as needed. Since this is a practice-based course we may need to slow down a bit or even speed up. To increase understanding an extra reading here or there or even an extra assignment may be added to the course. Though the semester is well planned out, please remain flexible and responsive.



← A sign in Grace Lee Boggs' home, by way of adrienne maree brown

Homework Assignments:

The module homework assignments are designed for you to practice the skills and competencies that are overviewed in each module. These practice problems will not cover every area that is included in the readings but are designed to make sure you have practiced and are beginning to develop some mastery of the major research skills addressed in the module. Please consider doing extra practice beyond what is assigned for the module to develop further mastery or additional skills beyond those that are covered in the module homework. The homework for each module will be available on Canvas on the day the module starts (i.e. for module 2 the homework will be available on Canvas on 8/31, the first day of the module). Although the homework assignments are independent assignments and each student must submit their original work, the purpose of these assignments is for you to practice. Therefore, please know that you may discuss the concepts and problems with one another to advance your understanding of the course material covered in the assignments. Although you will need to upload these assignments prior to the start of the course session in which they are due to receive completion credit, the assignments will be reviewed together in class. Make sure to have a copy of your homework available for this review in order to maximize your learning experience.

Module Assignments:

The module project assignments are designed to reinforce the skills that you are learning and are an opportunity to begin to demonstrate mastery of those skills. The two qualitative modules are each worth 10% of your grade and the two quantitative modules are each worth 15% of your grade. The Excel training is worth 5% of your grade.

- In the 2 qualitative modules you will be doing the initial development of a mini-study and initial analysis of data that you have collected for that study (the write up of which is your qualitative final project). The first qualitative module will focus on the development of your research question(s) and interview protocol, and the second module will be a themes report which presents the initial analysis of your qualitative data. Each student will develop their own independent work for these two assignments, but you may consult with your peers and bounce ideas off them, etc.
- In the 2 quantitative module assignments you will work with a “live” dataset that was created for the purposes of this course. These two project assignments will be more complex and multi-faceted than the weekly homework assignments and you will need to not only manipulate data but also possibly figure out what type of test needs to be conducted. You will then interpret and make meaning of the results that you derive. The two quantitative module assignments will be available one week prior to their due date. Although you may complete these two assignments at any time during the week, they must be uploaded. Your independent work without consulting with your peers or others is required for these two assignments.
- The Excel training assignment will include the successful completion of a LinkedIn Learning course to prepare you for the quantitative module assignments and for use on a future resume. This course (accessible for free through your Pitt login credentials) will guide you through fundamental Excel skills including, but not limited to: spreadsheet tools and management, data sorting, tables, and formulas. Students will complete 11 guided sections and quizzes throughout the ~2 hour course, and conclude with a short exam and a resulting certificate. Students must upload their certificate by 10/5 for credit.

Qualitative Final Project:

This project will be a culmination of work you have undertaken in the qualitative modules. You will write a final report for your study. This will include a brief introduction and literature review, purpose and research questions, methodology section as well as a results and conclusion section. Each student will develop and must complete their own independent work for this project, but you may consult with your peers and bounce ideas off them, etc.

Assessment and Evaluation

Past iterations of this course have taught us that learners’ worry about grades does not support the learning goals of this course. Our hope for you is to develop a stronger intuition of multiple research methods such that you are able to better consume and deploy these methods in your own practice. Our goal is *not* for you to fret about homework points and certainly not to worry that

you will fail this course. So, let us be clear from the outset: if you complete the assignments in this course, you will not fail.

The lowest grade you will receive in this course is a B-, even if the points you receive on the assignments or modules add up to less than the 80% you typically associate with a B-. We do, however, need you to complete all of the assignments and modules. We can't assign credit for work that is not completed because then we don't have a space to offer you feedback and not your progress, which is part of co-constructing this course together. Receiving a minimum B- is thus dependent on you completing all assignments, modules, and projects. If completion is not possible this semester, you can arrange with us to receive an "incomplete" in the course.

Unsatisfactory: 0-2.5 on a 5-point question, 10-25 on a 50-point module, 0-50 on a 100-point final project

Below average: 3 on a 5-point question, 26-34 on a 50-point module, 51-69 on a 100-point final project

Average: 3.5 on a 5-point question, 35-39 on a 50-point module, 70-79 on a 100-point final project

Above average: 4-4.5 on a 5-point question, 40-47 on a 50-point module, 80-95 on a 100-point final project

Excellent: 5 on a 5-point question, 48-50 on a 50-point module, 96-100 on a 100-point final project

Letter grades will be assigned in this class based on points earned and the proportion of the grade assigned to that area of the course. A and B letter grades using + and – will be assigned for all students who complete the course work.

Basic Writing Guidelines for Course Assignments

All written work must use Times New Roman 12" font and have 1" (normal) margins throughout. Written work must conform to APA citation style guidelines. All assignments/papers will be turned in through Canvas and must be uploaded as Microsoft Word documents by the deadlines that are provided for each assignment.

Statement of Instructor Position in Course

Linda DeAngelo - My classrooms are places of intellectual inquiry where discussion and critical reflection are normative and where students are empowered as leaders in the learning process. I have high expectations for student achievement and have a strong belief in the potential of all students to succeed. This belief in each student's potential to succeed centers all my interactions with students both inside and outside of the classroom. I am committed to anti-racist, non-sexist, non-classist, non-heterosexist and affirming pedagogy. This includes fostering an environment

that is as safe and inclusive as possible for everyone. If everyone in the class is similarly committed it will make our work together more productive and stimulating.

Heather McCambly - I hope to build educational spaces that are life-giving and fortifying--spaces with room and trust supportive to collectively wrestling with big questions and dreaming together about new and more equitable futures. Equitable practice begins in our interactions with one another, as well as in our writing and thinking. I offer substantive feedback as a way to demonstrate my deep engagement with your ideas and your trajectory as a learner. I look forward to dreaming up new ways of doing and understanding higher education, building from your personal and professional experiences. In this spirit, and in alignment with Linda, I am committed to anti-racist, non-sexist, non-classist, non-heterosexist and affirming pedagogy. I will get this wrong at times and know that often, you will teach me in these moments. Know that I will listen and take on the burdens of repair and growth.

Readings / Resources

Required Texts:

Please note that we are using the Pitt's Redshelf e-access system for our two required texts. Your total costs for both required texts below is 65.88 and will be charged to your student account. You will have access to the texts via Canvas during the course and through pitt.redshelf.com for another semester. If you decide to buy hard copies of the texts instead you may cancel your Redshelf access up through the end of the add/drop period and the charges will be reversed. You are strongly encouraged not to drop your Redshelf access until your physical books arrive (obviously though you must do it prior to the add/drop deadline).

Salkind, N. J. & Frey B. B. (2022). *Statistics for People Who (think they) Hate Statistics – Using Microsoft Excel – 5th edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. & Baez, J. C. (2021) *30 Essential Skills for the Qualitative Researcher - 2nd edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

LinkedIn Learning Excel Training Module - accessible through your Pitt login credentials at no extra charge. Must be completed by 10/5.

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/excel-essential-training-office-365-microsoft-365/getting-started-with-excel-for-office-365?resume=false&u=2252458>

Other Required Reading:

Strunk, K. K., & Locke, L. A. (2019). *Research Methods for Social Justice and Equity in Education*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan. Various chapters from this text are assigned during the course. The text is available electronically through the Pitt Library.

The NILOA report that is assigned during the last module will be available on Canvas.

See class schedule listings below.

Modules and Schedule:

Module Number and Name	Reading Week and Reading Assignments	Activities and Assignments w/Due Dates	Synchronous Class Date
1 What is Research? What is a Good Research Question?	8/27 – 8/30 Schutt, R. K. (2015). Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research, 8 th Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage. Chapter 1 and 2. White, P. (2009). Developing Research Questions: A Guide for Social Scientists. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. Chapter 2, pages 33-58.	1 - HW 1 Due 8/31	Tues 8/31
2 Building Your Qualitative Base	8/31 – 9/6 Readings Creswell Chapters 1 – 4 Strunk & Locke Chapter 10 (library download)	1 - HW 2 Due 9/7	Tues 9/7
3 Developing a Study and Interview Protocol	9/7 – 9/13 Readings Creswell Chapters 7-8, 11-13, and 15-17	1 - HW 3 Due 9/14 2 - Qual Module 2-3 Open Review Session 9/15, 5-6PM - Zoom	Tues 9/14
4 Considerations in Socially Just Research Session 1	9/14 – 9/20 Readings Strunk & Locke Chapters 2 & 3 (library download) The Sage Encyclopedia of Action Research. 2014. “Anti-Oppression Research.” Editors David Coghlan and Mary Brydon-Miller. <u>Thousand Oaks: Sage. Pages 40-44.</u>	1 - HW 4 Due 9/21 2 - Qual Module 2 - 3 Project Due by Thurs 9/23 at 11:59 PM	Tues 9/21

	Eve Tuck and K Wayne Yang. 2014. "R-Words: Refusing Research." In Humanizing Research: Decolonizing Qualitative Inquiry With Youth and Communities, Editors D Paris and MT Winn. <u>Thousand Oaks: Sage: Chapter 12, pages 223-247.</u>		
5 Data Analysis	9/21 – 9/27 Readings Creswell Chapters 18, 20, & 22	1 - HW 5 Due 9/28 2 – Conduct Interviews this Week!	Tues 9/28
6 Writing Qualitatively	9/28 – 10/4 Readings Creswell Chapters 24-26	1 - HW 6 Due 10/5 2 - Deadline to upload Excel Certificate - 10/5 3 - Qual Module 5-6 Open Review Session, 10/6, 5-6PM Zoom	Tues 10/5
7 Putting the Study Together	10/5 – 10/11 Readings Creswell Chapters 27-30	1 - HW 7 Due 10/12 2 - Qual Module 5 - 6 Project Due Thurs 10/14 at 11:59 PM	Tues 10/12 (Session will also include a qualitative writing workshop)
8 Formulas and Functions	10/12 – 10/18 Readings Salkind Chapter 1 & 2 Make sure to download the Data Analysis Tools (see page 37). Strunk & Locke Chapters 16 (library download)	1 - HW 8 Due 10/19 2 - Qual Final Project Open Review Session, 10/20, 5-6PM Zoom	Tues 10/19
9 Descriptive Statistics	10/19 – 10/25 Readings Salkind Chapters 3-6	1 - HW 9 Due 10/26 2 - Qual Final Project Due by Thurs 10/28 at 11:59 PM	Tues 10/26

10 Essentials of Quantitative Studies	10/26 – 11/1 Readings Salkind Chapters 7-9	1 - HW 10 Due 11/2 2 - Quant Module 8-9 Open Review Session, 11/3, 5-6PM Zoom	Tues 11/2
11 Inferential Statistics	11/2 – 11/8 Readings Salkind Chapters 10-14	1 - HW 11 Due 11/9 2 – Quant Modules 8-9 Project (Salkind 1 – 6) Due Thurs 11/11 11:59 PM	Tues 11/9
12 Considerations in Socially Just Research Session 2	11/16 – 11/19, 11/29 Readings Strunk & Locke Chapters 22 & 23 (library download)	1 – HW 12 Due 11/16	Tues 11/16
Thanksgiving Break			
13 Moving Forward with an Equity Praxis	11/16 – 11/19, 11/29 Reading NILOA Report – A New Decade for Assessment: Embedding Equity into Assessment Praxis (Canvas) Marcus Gaddy and Kassie Scott. 2020. <u>Principles for Advancing Equitable Data Practice</u> . Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.	1 - HW 13 Due 12/7 2 - Quant 10-11 Project Open Review Session, 12/8, 5-6PM Zoom	Tues 12/7
Quant Module 10 – 11 Project (Salkind 7 – 14) by Thursday 12/14 by 11:59 PM			

Statements on University and School of Education Policy:

Departmental Grievance Procedures. The purpose of grievance procedures is to ensure the rights and responsibilities of faculty and students in their relationships with each other. When a student in higher education believes that a faculty member has not met his or her obligations (as an instructor or in another capacity) as described in the Academic Integrity Guidelines, the student should follow the procedure described in the Guidelines by (1) first trying to resolve the matter with the faculty member directly; (2) then, if needed, attempting to resolve the matter through conversations with the chair/associate chair of the department; (3) if needed, next talking

to the assistant dean of the school; and (4) if needed, filing a written statement of charges with the school-level academic integrity officer. [Shederick McClendon is the Assistant Dean and Integrity Officer.]

Academic Integrity: Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. In this course, failure to comply with academic integrity policies will result in a zero on assignments where the policy was violated and may result additionally in a failure for the course grade. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators. To learn more about Academic Integrity, visit the [Academic Integrity Guide](#) for an overview of the topic. For hands-on practice, complete the [Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism tutorial](#).

Disability Services: If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and [Disability Resources and Services \(DRS\)](#), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu, (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Health and Safety Statement: We are still in the midst of the COVID pandemic and it is extremely important that you abide by public health regulations and University of Pittsburgh health standards and guidelines. While on campus and/or interacting with Pitt faculty, staff and students, at a minimum this means that you must wear a face covering and comply with any physical distancing requirements; other requirements may be added by the University during the semester. These rules have been developed to protect the health and safety of all community members. Failure to comply with these requirements could result in a Student Conduct violation. For the most up-to-date information and guidance, please visit coronavirus.pitt.edu and check your Pitt email for updates.

Accessibility: The Canvas LMS platform was built using the most modern HTML and CSS technologies, and is committed to W3C's Web Accessibility Initiative and [Section 508](#) guidelines. Specific details regarding individual [feature compliance](#) are documented and updated regularly.

Diversity and Inclusion: The University of Pittsburgh does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity or other factors as stated in the University's Title IX policy. The University is committed to taking prompt action to end a hostile environment that interferes with the University's mission. For more information about policies, procedures, and practices, see: <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix-compliance/policies-procedures-and-practices>. I ask that everyone in the class strive to help ensure that other members of this class can learn in a supportive and respectful environment. If there are instances of the aforementioned issues,

please contact the Title IX Coordinator, by calling 412-648-7860, or e-mailing titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu. Reports can also be filed online: <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix-compliance/make-report/report-form>. You may also choose to report this to a faculty/staff member; they are required to communicate this to the University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. If you wish to maintain complete confidentiality, you may also contact the University Counseling Center (412-648-7930).

Copyright Notice: These materials may be protected by copyright. United States copyright law, 17 USC section 101, et seq., in addition to University policy and procedures, prohibit unauthorized duplication or retransmission of course materials. See [Library of Congress Copyright Office](#) and the [University Copyright Policy](#).

Statement on Classroom Recordings: To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

Email Communication: Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.

Gender Inclusive Language Statement: Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Just as sexist language excludes women's experiences, non-gender-inclusive language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. Identities including trans, intersex, and genderqueer reflect personal descriptions, expressions, and experiences. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender (for example, first year student versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind, etc.). It also affirms non-binary gender identifications and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Students, faculty, and staff may share their preferred pronouns and names, and these gender identities and gender expressions should be honored.

Statement on Scholarly Discourse: In this course we may discuss very complex issues of which all of us have strong feelings and, in most cases, unfounded attitudes. It is essential that we approach this endeavor with our minds open to evidence that may conflict with our presuppositions. Moreover, it is vital that we treat each other's opinions and comments with courtesy even when they diverge and conflict with our own. We must avoid personal attacks and the use of ad hominem arguments to invalidate each other's positions. Instead, we must develop

a culture of civil argumentation, wherein diverse positions have the right to be defended and argued against in intellectually reasoned ways. The only exception are positions that fundamentally attack or invalidate the humanity and dignity of another person or group of people--whether intentional or unintentional. The instructors will intervene in such discursive turns in the spirit of protecting the right to dignity afforded to each student in this space. It is this standard that everyone must accept in order to stay in this class; a standard that applies to all inquiry in the university, but whose observance is especially important in a course whose subject matter could at times be emotionally charged.

Take Care of Yourself! Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding excessive drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep, and taking time to relax. Despite what you might hear, using your time to take care of yourself will help you achieve your academic goals more than spending too much time studying. All of us benefit from support and guidance during times of struggle. There are many helpful resources available at Pitt. An important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Take the time to learn about all that is available and take advantage of it. Ask for support sooner rather than later – this always helps. If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or difficult feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty, or family member you trust for assistance connecting to the support that can help.

The University Counseling Center is here for you: call 412-648-7930 and visit their website.

If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal, call someone immediately, day or night:

University Counseling Center (UCC): 412 648-7930

University Counseling Center Mental Health Crisis Response: 412-648-7930 x1 Resolve Crisis

Network: 888-796-8226 (888-7-YOU-CAN)

If the situation is life threatening, call the Police: On-campus: Pitt Police: 412-268-2121

Off-campus: 911