

**EPS 780:  
RESEARCH PRACTICUM ON MIXED METHODS ANALYSIS**

Professor Sara Goldrick-Rab  
Educational Policy Studies and Sociology

Fall and Spring 2011-2012  
Wednesdays, 9 am – 12 pm

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This year-long course covers the theory and practice of mixed methods research in the social sciences, with a special emphasis on educational research. It is a practicum in the sense that each student will undertake a project with linked qualitative and quantitative components, with the intention of producing a publishable research paper. As such, the course will cover the nuts and bolts of constructing research, at the same time maintaining an overall emphasis on the specific approach known as “mixed methods” research.

The course provides students with the opportunity to use survey, administrative, and interview data from the first three years of the Wisconsin Scholars Longitudinal Study (WSLS), a randomized trial of need-based financial aid ([www.finaidstudy.org](http://www.finaidstudy.org)). That study, directed by Sara Goldrick-Rab and Douglas N. Harris, is housed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It is the first statewide, longitudinal, mixed-methods study to examine how and why financial aid affects the undergraduate experience. The rich data included in the study facilitates the study of numerous topics *not* related to financial aid, including: racial/ethnic and gender differences in the transition to college; how undergraduates relate to their parents, friends, or other family members; how identity affects and is affected by the college experience; the role of motivation in college outcomes; the complex intersections of employment and schooling; the role of institutional practices and actors in student outcomes; romantic relationships in the lives of college students, and a variety of other topics. Students are encouraged to think broadly about the potential uses of the WSLS data and develop research questions related to their own areas of training and study. They are also permitted to write papers that compare WSLS data to other data sources, if they choose.

## **PREREQUISITES:**

This course is intended for graduate students interested in mixed-methods approaches to data analysis. Prior coursework in higher education is not assumed. I recommend that students have completed at least one course in quantitative methods and in qualitative methods—but this not required. The course is appropriate for both new and continuing graduate students, as there is space provided for students to work at their own pace, and time built in for instruction in “building block” research skills. The course meets the “education in context” and “measurement” requirements of the Interdisciplinary Training Program. It also counts toward the “policy” and “sociology” concentrations in Educational Policy Studies (and possibly others, according to the preferences of students’ advisers).

## **REQUIREMENTS:**

1. I expect every student to commit to attend and actively participate in every class.

This course has limited enrollment and is intended to be a seminar in which the students and the professor actively engage and interact with one another in a mutually beneficial way. This only works if all students regularly attend. I ask that you make every effort not to miss any class—I have already devoted several weeks to your independent work on papers, allowed time off for the key education conference, and recognized holidays. I also expect you to do the readings assigned *in advance* of each class. I reserve the option of introducing pop quizzes (to constitute 10% of the final grade) if attendance is uneven or if reading is not done.

I also highly recommend regular attendance at my office hours. Office hours are the most appropriate time during which to seek advising on your paper, which should be an ongoing effort throughout the year.

2. I require compliance with the Wisconsin Scholars Longitudinal Study human subjects and authorship policies.

Through this course you are granted access to a restricted-use dataset that is still being constructed and has not yet been published on. This is a rare opportunity that could pay dividends if you are successful at writing publishable papers.

Access to this data requires that you (a) complete human subjects training and sign on to the Institutional Review Board paperwork for the project (to be done during the initial weeks of class) and (b) sign the WSLs authorship agreement (to be introduced during the first week of class). No one is required to complete either; however access to the data is not allowed until both are done.

3. I require completion of the following course assignments over the two-semester academic year. Most of these (the exception is paper #1) are intended as intermediate steps en route to the final assignment (paper #2).

### MEMO 1

This memo is simply a 2-3 page description of a student's chosen WSLs research topic. It should include a draft statement of purpose, the main research questions, and ideas about plans for analysis. I encourage you to come and meet with me to discuss your ideas for this memo *before* it is due.

### PAPER 1

For this paper you will read two articles (choose one of the two pairs listed below) which represent data sources and analyses using only one method but focusing on the same program. In this brief (no more than 10 double-spaced pages) paper: (1) Suggest a few research questions raised but not answered by the analyses presented in each paper; (2) Propose additional data sources and analytic methods that you might employ to address those questions for each paper. To the best of your ability you should provide details for each suggested source and method (e.g., if proposing a semi-structured interview, then provide some interview questions and describe how you would analyze those data; if proposing an experimental intervention, then discuss the intervention design, outcome measures, and analytic methods for examining the data; and (3) Discuss how these proposed methods would work in tandem with the methods already employed in the published study. As part of this discussion, predict any points of incommensurability in the methods.

You may choose either of the following sets of papers, both of which examine a financial aid program (papers will be made available on the course Learn @ UW webpage):

#### Option A: Washington State Achievers Program

Hilberg, S., Joshi, A., & House, A. (2009). "Washington State Achievers Program: Influence of the Scholarship Program on Low-Income College Students' Achievement and Aspirations." *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*.

Institute for Higher Education. (2010). "Expanding Access and Opportunity: The Washington State Achievers Program."

## Option B: Gates Millennium Scholars Program

Boatman, A. and Long, B. No Date. “Does Financial Aid Impact Collegiate Success? The Effects of the Gates Millennium Scholars Program on Academic and Social Behaviors.” Working paper, Harvard University.

Lee, Malisa. 2008. Chapter in Resources, Assets, and Strengths among Successful Diverse Students: Understanding the Contributions of the Gates Millennium Scholars Program (Readings on Equal Education, Vol. 23), edited by William T. Trent and Edward P. St. John. AMS Press, Inc.

### MEMO #2

This memo (approx 10 pages) should describe the core of the front half of your research paper. It needs to clearly state the theoretical or policy concern you plan to address (make the case, why is this important?), describe what we need to know (and currently do not) about the issue, describe the research questions, and discuss the relevant theory and literature. The memo should setup your analysis—and remember, it must be a mixed-methods analysis.

### MEMO #3

This memo is a draft of the second half of your paper and therefore should be a summary of (1) methods employed (to date and planned) for your preliminary quantitative and qualitative analysis and (2) preliminary results of those analyses. In describing methods, you should discuss how you chose your sample, describe the data, and give an overview of key constructs and how you measured/coded them. In addition, you must submit evidence from a quantitative analysis (for example, 2 or more tables produced with a statistical package, or Excel, or Dedoose, depending on your preferences) and a qualitative analysis (for example, salient quotes and other forms of illustration of main points; these are easily generated in Dedoose)—ideally, the two will be integrated into a mixed-methods analysis. The memo will contain tables and quotes from the analysis, plus a 1-3 page discussion of methods and a 6-10 page discussion of what the preliminary results mean and what you are learning about the answer to your question.

### PAPER #2

The objective of this paper is to provide practice in analysis of different forms of data, in order to experience the challenge of presenting analyses of both forms in a single paper. Students must include a motivating statement, summary of research questions,

brief literature review, description of methods, presentation of findings, and conclusions. This paper will be limited to 30 pages (double-spaced, excluding tables and figures and references) to present the challenge of presenting both forms of analysis in a prescribed space. With permission of a student's academic adviser, this paper may overlap with or serve as a master's thesis or start to a dissertation.

### **GRADING:**

This is a two-semester course requiring activities and deliverables across both semesters. Therefore, at the conclusion of semester 1, students will be given a grade of B. At the end of semester 2, a grade will be assigned that will serve for both semesters (taking the place of the B, and assigned to semester 2). If this grading approach presents a *significant* challenge, please notify me at the start of the first semester.

The grading rubric is as follows:

Memo 1:	10%	Graded pass/fail if submitted on time and completely
Paper 1:	10%	Graded on a scale of 1-20 based on thoughtfulness of analysis
Memo 2:	20%	Graded on a scale of 1-20 based on thoughtfulness of analysis
Memo 3:	20%	Graded on a scale of 1-20 based on thoughtfulness of analysis
Paper 2:	40%	Graded on a scale of 1-100, based on criteria delineated

I will assign letter grades corresponding to the following structure:

A	94-100
B+	90-93
B	84-89
C+	80-83

### **COURSE MATERIALS:**

I endeavor to keep the costs of this course to a minimum. Except for two books, all readings and homework materials are accessible via the course website at Learn @ UW. I've placed them into a single zipped folder for ease of downloading. Feel free to download

them to your laptops and bring laptops to class for note-taking, rather than printing paper. However, I ask that you TURN OFF your internet connection during class unless explicitly instructed otherwise. Email or Facebook during class will not be tolerated.

Dedoose software is used in the class; this is accessible via Web and I am paying all fees associated with your usage. You will keep that license until the end the calendar year, following the term in which the class concludes, to allow you to revise and publish your paper!

All data for the course will be accessible online, and all other software packages you might need can be accessed via the Social Sciences Computing Cooperative (SSCC)

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

My Education building office, room 211. Email: [srab@education.wisc.edu](mailto:srab@education.wisc.edu) . I can be reached by phone at 608-265-2141. Email is faster. The WSLs project manager is Alison Bowman. She can be reached at [ambowman@wisc.edu](mailto:ambowman@wisc.edu) .

### **REQUIRED READINGS**

(I reserve the right to supplement these throughout the year based on students' needs and desires.)

Angrist, J. & Pischke, J. 2010. "The Credibility Revolution in Empirical Economics: How Better Research Design is Taking the Con out of Econometrics." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. 24(2): 3-30.

Barnhouse Walters, Pamela. 2009. "The Politics of Science: Battles for Scientific Authority in the Field of Education Research." In Walters, Lareau, and Ranis, *Education Research on Trial: Policy Reform and the Call for Scientific Rigor*. Routledge.

Becker, Howard. 1996. "The Epistemology of Qualitative Research." From Richard Jessor, Anne Colby, and Richard Schweder, eds., *Essays on Ethnography and Human Development*

Bickman, L. & Reich, S. 2008. "Randomized controlled trials: A gold standard with feet of clay?" In S. Donaldson et al (ed), *What counts as credible evidence in applied research and evaluation practice?* Sage.

Boatman, A. and Long, B. No Date. "Does Financial Aid Impact Collegiate Success? The Effects of the Gates Millennium Scholars Program on Academic and Social Behaviors." Working paper, Harvard University.

Borman, G.D. (2009). The use of randomized trials to inform education policy. In G. Sykes, B. Schneider, D.N. Plank (Eds.), *Handbook of education policy research* (pp. 129-138). New York: Routledge.

Caracelli, V. and Greene, J. 1993. "Data analysis strategies for mixed-method evaluation designs." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. 15(2).

Carter, Prudence. 2010. "A venture into mixed methods: race and cultural flexibility among students in different multiracial schools." *Teachers College Record*.

Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy. 2006. *Which Study Designs Can Produce Rigorous Evidence of Program Effectiveness? A Brief Overview*. Washington DC.

Cresell, J. & Clark, V. 2007. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. Sage.

Creswell, J. and Tashakkori, A. 2007. "Editorial: Differing perspectives on mixed methods research." *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*. 1, 303.

Deming, D. and Dynarski, S. 2009. "Into College, Out of Poverty? Policies to Increase the Postsecondary Attainment of the Poor." NBER Working Paper.

Engel, M. 2007. "Mixing methods: reliability and validity across quantitative and qualitative measures of relationship quality." In P. England and K. Edin editors, *Unmarried Couples with Children*.

Gibson, C., & Duncan, G. J. (2005). Qualitative/quantitative synergies in a random-assignment program evaluation. Pp. 283-315 in Thomas Weisner (Ed.), *Discovering successful pathways in children's development: New methods in the study of childhood and family life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Goldrick-Rab, S., Harris, D. and Trostel, P. 2009. How and Why Money Matters (or Doesn't) for College Success. *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*.
- Greene, J., V. Caracelli, and W. Graham. 1989. "Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. 11(3).
- Harding, D. , Gennetian, L, Winship, C., Sabonmatsu, L., Kling, J. (2010). "Unpacking neighborhood influences on education outcomes: Setting the stage for future research." Chapter prepared for *Social Inequality and Educational Disadvantage*, G. Duncan and D. Murnane (eds).
- Henry, G. 2008. "When getting it right matters: The case for high-quality policy and program impact evaluations." In S. Donaldson et al (ed), *What counts as credible evidence in applied research and evaluation practice?* Sage.
- Hilberg, S., Joshi, A., & House, A. (2009). "Washington State Achievers Program: Influence of the Scholarship Program on Low-Income College Students' Achievement and Aspirations." *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*.
- Hochschild, J. (2009). "Conducting Intensive Interviews and Elite Interviews." From M. Lamont and P. White, *Workshop on Interdisciplinary Standards for Systematic Qualitative Research*, National Science Foundation.
- Hossler, D. & Vesper, N. (1993). "An exploratory study of the factors associated with parental savings for postsecondary education." *Journal of Higher Education*. 64(2)
- Howe, K. (2004). "A critique of experimentalism." *Qualitative inquiry*. 10:42
- Institute for Higher Education. (2010). "Expanding Access and Opportunity: The Washington State Achievers Program."
- Johnson, R.B. and Onwuegbuzie, A. "Mixed-methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come." *Educational Researcher*. 33:14.
- Keane, M. 2010. "A Structuralist Perspective on the Experimentalist School." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. 24(2): 47-58.



Lareau, A. 2009. "Narrow questions, narrow answers: The limited value of randomized controlled trials for education research." In Walters, Lareau, and Ranis, *Education Research on Trial: Policy Reform and the Call for Scientific Rigor*. Routledge.

Larson, R. and Brown, J. 2007. "Emotional Development in Adolescence: What can be Learned from a High School Theater Program?" *Child Development*. 78(4): 1083-1099.

Leahey, Erin (2007). "Convergence and Confidentiality? Limits to the Implementation of Mixed Methodology." *Social Science Research* 36(1): 149-158.

Lee, Malisa. 2008. Chapter in Resources, Assets, and Strengths among Successful Diverse Students: Understanding the Contributions of the Gates Millennium Scholars Program (Readings on Equal Education, Vol. 23), edited by William T. Trent and Edward P. St. John. AMS Press, Inc.

Lieberson, S. 1985. *Making it Count: The Improvement of Social Research and Theory*.

London, Andrew S., Saul Schwartz, and Ellen K. Scott. 2007. "Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Data in Welfare Policy Evaluations in the United States." *World Development* 35(2): 342-353.

Maxwell, J. 2004. "Causal explanation, qualitative research, and scientific inquiry in education." *Educational Researcher*. 33:3

National Academies Press. 2008. "The Value of Education Research Using Student and School Records." And "Reconciling the access, privacy, and confidentiality of education data." Protecting Student Records and Facilitating Education Research: A Workshop Summary. Washington DC

Onwuegbuzie, A. and Johnson, R.B. 2006. The validity issue in mixed research. *Research in the Schools*.13(1): 48-63.

Pearce, Lisa. (2002) "Integrating Survey & Ethnographic Methods For Systematic Anomalous Case Analysis." *Sociological Methodology*, 32(1): 103-132.

Ragin, C. (2000). *Fuzzy set social science*. University of Chicago Press.

Scriven, M. (2008). "Demythologizing causation and evidence." In S. Donaldson et al (ed), *What counts as credible evidence in applied research and evaluation practice?* Sage.

Small, M. (2009). "Lost in translation: How not to make qualitative research more scientific." From M. Lamont and P. White, *Workshop on Interdisciplinary Standards for Systematic Qualitative Research*, National Science Foundation.

Teddlie, C. & Tashakkori, A. 2009. *Foundations of mixed methods research*. Sage.

Teddlie, C. & Yu, F. 2007. "Mixed methods sampling: A typology with examples." *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*. 1, 77.

Yoshikawa, H. et al. 2008. "Mixing qualitative and quantitative research in developmental science: uses and methodological choices." *Developmental Psychology*. 44(2): 344-354.

## **SCHEDULE**

This course proceeds in three sections; each examining a different aspect of mixed-methods research. We begin in Weeks 1-4 by examining the *meaning* and *value* of mixed-methods research. In the subsequent three weeks, we discuss the *purposes* of mixed-methods research. For the remainder of the course, we take a tour through how one actually *does* mixed-methods research.

We will have at least three guest speakers during the year who will come to class to share their perspectives as practitioners of mixed-methods research. It is especially important that you plan to attend class on the days they will join us. The speakers currently scheduled include:

*Greg Duncan*, Distinguished Professor of Education, University of California-Irvine. Professor Duncan is an economist who has published extensively on issues of income distribution, child poverty and welfare dependence.

*Alisa Hicklin*, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Oklahoma. Professor Hicklin is currently a William T. Grant Scholar studying minority success in higher education.

*Stefanie DeLuca*, Associate Professor of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University. Professor DeLuca's research focuses on the sociology of education, urban sociology, neighborhoods and social inequality in the life course.

As I guide students through the consideration of a variety of theoretical and conceptual issues related to mixed-methods research, I attempt to take them through the practical realities of getting it done. Therefore, most days the class is split into two parts: a hour or two devoted to discussing a theoretical concern, and an hour or two spent on the concrete practices, usually via a focus on the Wisconsin Scholars Longitudinal Study.

The following two tables provide the topic(s) for each week, the readings assigned, and the homework due. These tables are subject to change, with appropriate notice to the class. These are from the 2010-2011 course and will be updated.

SEMESTER 1	CLASS TIME	LOCATION	THEORY/CONCEPTUAL TOPIC	APPLICATION/PRACTICE TOPIC	READINGS DUE	HOMEWORK DUE
9/13/2010			--	Introductions, course overview, intro to WSLs; IRB		
9/20/2010			Methodological paradigms: qual vs. quant wars; experimental wars in education	WSLS Background: current higher education/financial aid research	Barnhouse Walters, 2009; Borman, 2009; Coalition, 2006; Cook 2001; Creswell 2010	Complete IRB training, send info to Alison
9/27/2010			What is mixed-methods? How does MM work in an experimental context?	Design of WSLs, main research questions	Goldrick-Rab, Harris & Trostel, 2009; Howe, 2004; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004; Song 2010	Read 3 WSLs cases and Fall 2008 survey
10/4/2010			Formulating research questions-- part 1-- what do we want to know? Why? How does our purpose align with main purposes of mm research?	Developing a good idea- a conversation with WSLs interviewers	Angrist & Pischke, 2010; Henry 2008; Keane, 2010; WSLs Baseline report; Schrag, 1989	Read 2 WSLs cases and Fall 2009 survey
10/11/2010			Formulating research questions-- how we ask the question matters	Example 1: Conceiving and conducting MM work: theory and practice. Guest: Greg Duncan.	Ragin 2000 Ch 1; Gibson & Duncan 2005; London et al. 2007; Clark & Badiee, 2010; Deluca et al 2009	Submit questions for Duncan to dropbox by 10/10. <b>Memo 1 due.</b>
10/18/2010			Formulating research questions-- how to consider data availability as we formulate questions	An introduction to in-depth interviewing	Lareau, 2009; Lieberson, 1985 Ch 5; Hochschild 2009; Morse 2010	Work on paper #1
10/25/2010			Generating hypotheses: Inductive approaches	An introduction to coding	Yoshikawa et al. 2008; Becker 1996; Bazely 2010	<b>Paper 1 due.</b>
11/1/2010			Generating hypotheses: Deductive approaches	Stats 101	Harding et al. 2010; Johnson and Gray, 2010	Schedule time to meet with Sara to discuss feedback on Memo 1; work towards Memo 2
11/8/2010			Causality, logic, statistics	Stats using Excel	Lieberson 1985, Ch 7 and 9; Scriven 2008; Popkewitz, 2004	Work on Memo 2
11/15/2010				Example 2: Conceiving and conducting MM work: theory and practice. Guest: Alisa Hicklin. Also, more discussion of prior weeks' readings-- unfinished business	Hicklin WT Grant proposal	Work on Memo 2
11/22/2010				Group discussions of memos in progress		Work on Memo 2
11/29/2010			Causality, logic, statistics		Bickman & Reich, 2008; Ragin Ch 4; Maxwell 2004; Small 2009	Work on Memo 2
12/6/2010			Dedoose training with Eli Lieber			Work on Memo 2
12/13/2010			Design issues		Creswell & Clark, 2007 Ch4; Ragin Ch 2;	Work on Memo 2
12/20/2010						<b>Memo 2 due</b>

SEMESTER 2			THEORY/CONCEPTUAL TOPIC	APPLICATION/PRACTICE TOPIC	READINGS DUE	HOMEWORK DUE
1/20/2011	12-230	298 Ed	Design issues continued		Ragin Ch 2; Greene et al. 1989; Teddie & Yu 2007	Review feedback on Memo 2
1/27/2011		298 Ed		More on design; Katherine Magnuson visit (@ 145pm)	Unmarried Couples with Children (whole book)	
2/3/2011	12-230	8417 Social Science		Part 1: Talk by Sigal Alon "Capitalizing on Spatial Segregation: Can a Need- and Color-Blind Affirmative Action Increase Diversity? "; Part 2: Alon joins the discussion	Alon, 2009; Alon & Tienda, 2007 (related papers, but not on the exact topic of her talk)	
2/10/2011	12-230	298 Ed	Data collection in the MM context		Teddie & Tashakori Ch 8; C & C 2007; Dahlberg, 2010	
2/17/2011	12-230	8417 Social Science		Part 1: Talk by Stefanie DeLuca, "How Poor Families Think about Neighborhoods and Schools: Where They Go, Why They Go, and Why They Stay"; Part 2: Discussion of DeLuca's MM work	DeLuca & Deil-Amen 2010; DeLuca and Rosenblatt, 2010	
2/24/2011	12-230	298 Ed	Discussion of Exemplar MM Book		Higher Ground, Duncan et al (whole book)	
3/3/2011	12-230	298 Ed		Group discussions of memos in progress (Alison leads class)		Come prepared to discuss Memo 3, which you are currently drafting
3/10/2011	12-230	8417 Social Science		Part 1: Talk by Judy Seltzer "Doubling Up When Times Are Tough: A Study of Obligations to Share a Home in Response to Economic Hardship"; Part 2: Discussion of lessons for MM from Seltzer's work	Lin, Schaeffer, Seltzer, Tuschen 2004; Seltzer, 2010	
3/17/2011	No class-- SPRING BREAK					<b>Memo 3 due by 12 pm 3/14</b>
3/21/2011	830-1130 am	298 Ed	Analyzing MM data	Writing IRB proposals	Pearce, 2002; Ragin Ch 5; Teddie & Tashakori Ch 11	
3/28/2011	830-1115 am	298 Ed	Ethical dilemmas in MM work	Working across methods/teamwork	Leahey, 2007; NAP parts 1 and 2; Berlinger, 2001	* EPS Visit Day-guest visitors
4/4/2011	830-1130 am	298 Ed	Analyzing MM data	Fundraising	Caracelli & Greene 1993; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson 2006	
4/14/2011	12-230	8417 Social Science		Part 1: Talk by Andy Cherlin "Instability and Family Life"; Part 2: Discussion of lessons for MM from Cherlin's work	Cherlin et al. 2008; Edin & Kefalas 2005 (excerpt to be provided)	
4/21/2011	1200-230	298 Ed	Writing about MM research	Group consultations on papers	Carter, 2010; Creswell & Clark 2007 Ch8; Jacobs 2005	
4/25/2011	830-1130 am	298 Ed	Student presentations			
5/2/2011	830-1130 am	298 Ed	Student presentations			
5/9/2011	830-1130 am	298 Ed	Student presentations			<b>Paper 2 Due</b>