MAS 501: Methods of Interdisciplinary Inquiry

Course and Faculty Information

Credits: 3
Instructor: Dr. Eduardo Pagán, The Bob Stump Endowed Professor of History
Contact Information: epagan@asu.edu | 602.543.6081 | FAB N231
Office Hours: Wednesdays 4:30-5:45, by Zoom appointment at https://asu.zoom.us/j/2942738419

Course Description

This course introduces you to the methods of interdisciplinary research. We will examine questions and issues that all of us face in interdisciplinary research. You will define interdisciplinary studies, the role of the disciplines in interdisciplinary research, and the products of and purposes for integrating the disciplines. We will also familiarize ourselves with a number of research methodologies, ranging across visual experience and discourse or narrative, cultural production and consumption, quantitative and qualitative assessment, and various modes of memory and history. Our readings provide some common ground, but discussions of student research projects will enable integration of widely shared concerns including the nature and uses of evidence, the problem of language, the role of theory, and how theoretical concerns shape the search for evidence.

The course is designed to expand your knowledge of relevant theories and methods in the humanities and social sciences, and to encourage an awareness of contemporary methodological debates among interdisciplinary scholars. Through a combination of lectures and workshops, we will ask how disciplinary boundaries shape the goals of research projects as well as the kinds of research questions asked, the types of materials used, and how researchers define our relationships with our subjects. In engaging with these issues, you are expected to participate actively in class discussions, lead a class discussion, write a literature review, and draft a research proposal in stages over the course of the semester. It is hoped that this research proposal will be the foundation of your later capstone project in MAS 585.

Research Methods deals with the process of gathering and interpreting information. Research often follows a sequence of events (some methods are loose on the proper ways to proceed but some provide a very strict set of rules to follow). While the research process varies by disciplines, scholars commonly set their goals of the study, define their problem, identify pertinent theories, choose a method, define their key terms, gather the data (if applicable), analyze the data (if applicable), and write conclusions. Throughout the whole process, researchers are making decisions about what to study and how to study it. Some research decisions produce documents that are more interesting, novel, and sound, while some research decisions do not meet such goals.

When acquiring information most disciplines expect scholars to use their senses in a particular way. Literary folks and historians often read texts, media scholars and anthropologists watch movies or human interactions, oral historians and sociologists listen to people's conversations, while political scientists and psychologists often establish patterns by counting how often things occur. This class will organize its readings and discussions around different methods that fit under the four broad senses of reading, watching, listening, and counting. Under each sensory category you will be introduced to a couple of the most utilized methods for each approach (for example, under watching we will discuss the methods of content analysis and social ethnographies). During the first day of

class, you will identify at least one of the senses that you are most likely to employ in your capstone project.

Course Learning Outcomes
MAS 501 will enable you to:
1. Understand the concept of interdisciplinary knowledge production and the ways in which it underwrites the MAIS program
2. Determine and define a manageable interdisciplinary research problem or question
3. Identify disciplines and disciplinary insights relevant to the problem
4. Create and discover common ground and conflicts among disciplinary insights
5. Become a better critical reader and thinker and writer, capable of posing, engaging, answering, and reposing a variety of complex questions
6. Know some rudimentary aspects of quantitative and qualitative research methods
7. Comprehend some ethical concerns of research

ASU Sync
This course uses Sync. ASU Sync is a technology-enhanced approach designed to meet the dynamic needs of the class. During Sync classes, you will learn remotely through live class lectures, discussions, study groups and/or tutoring. You can find out more information about ASU Sync for students here, https://provost.asu.edu/sync/students and https://www.asu.edu/about/fall-2020.

To access live sessions of this class go to myASU and click the Attend via Sync button next to this class on your schedule. The "Attend via Sync" button in your myASU schedule should direct to my PMI.

Requiring face coverings at ASU locations
Everyone will be required to wear a face cover while in ASU buildings. Face coverings will also be required in outdoor community spaces where social distancing isn't possible.

Textbooks
Required:
1. Repko, Allen F. *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory*. Third edition. London: Sage, 2017.
2. Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners.* London: Sage, 2013.
3. Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. London: Sage, 2015.
4. Additional articles available through Canvas

Supplemental:
A. *Writing*
   o Brause, R.S. *Writing Your Doctoral Dissertation: Invisible Rules for Success.* Falmer Press, 2000.
   o Locke, L. S. Spirduso, and S. Silverman. *Proposals that Work: A Guide for Planning Dissertations and Grant Proposals.* 4th Edition. Sage, 2000.
   o Thomas, Robert M. and D. L. Brubaker. *Theses and Dissertations: A Guide to Planning, Research, and Writing*. Corwin Press, 2007.

B. *Key Theories in the Humanities and Social Sciences:*
   o Tyson, L., *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. Routledge, 2014.
   o Chapters from the *Annual Review of Economics, Annual Review of Psychology, Annual Review of Sociology, Annual Review of Political Science;*

- o Anything from the "Blackwell Companion" series by Wiley Press (e.g., *The Blackwell Companion to Hermeneutics, The Blackwell Companion to Globalization, The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Geography*)

C. *Relevant Methodologies in the Humanities and Social Sciences:*
- o Charmaz, Kathy. *Constructing Grounded Theory*, Sage, 2014.
- o Gee, James Paul. *How to Do Discourse Analysis*, Routledge, 2011.
- o Lofland, J., & L.H. Lofland. *Analyzing Social Settings*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2006.
- o Hammersley, M., & P. Atkinson. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice.* Routledge, 2007.
- o McGuigan, Jim (ed.) *Cultural Methodologies*, 1997.
- o Saukko, Paula, *Doing Research in Cultural Studies: An Introduction to Classical and New Methodological Approaches*, Sage, 2003.

Course Access
Your ASU courses can be accessed by both my.asu.edu and myasucourses.asu.edu; bookmark both in the event that one site is down.

Technology Requirements
ASU Sync classes can be live streamed anywhere with the proper technology. We encourage you to use a PC or Apple laptop or desktop equipped with a built-in or standalone webcam. You will need an internet connection that can effectively stream live broadcasts. It is recommended that your internet download speed is at least 5.0 mbps. You can use this tool to test your current connection.

We do not recommend the use of iPads or Chromebooks for ASU Sync as these devices do not work for class exams that may be proctored remotely.

If you are not able to personally finance the equipment you need to attend class via ASU Sync, ASU has a laptop and WiFi hotspot checkout program available through ASU Library.

Who is eligible?
- Any currently enrolled ASU student is eligible to checkout a laptop. The current availability of laptops can be found here.
- Borrowing and returning laptop rules
- Laptops are lent on a first-come, first-serve basis, and cannot be reserved in advance. They can be returned at any time, but will be due at the conclusion of the fall 2020 semester.
- Rentals are limited to one laptop per student.
- Laptops are available for checkout at the following libraries on all four campuses. (Please check online for current library hours)
  - o Downtown Phoenix campus Library
  - o Polytechnic campus Library
  - o Tempe: Hayden and Noble Libraries
  - o West campus: Fletcher Library
- Return laptops to any ASU Library Information Desk (not at the drop box or other location)
- Refer to ASU Library Computer Use Policy and ASU Computer, Internet, and Electronic Communications Policy.
- Borrowers are responsible for loss, damage, and theft of the laptop while in their possession. Borrowers should verify the condition of the laptop at the time of check-out and upon check-in.

Additional Requirements:
This course requires the following technologies:
- Web browsers (Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, or Safari)

- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) (free)
- [Adobe Flash Player](#) (free)
- Webcam, microphone, headset/earbuds, and speaker
- Microsoft Office ([Microsoft 365 is free](#) for all currently-enrolled ASU students)
- Reliable broadband internet connection (DSL or cable) to stream videos.

Student Success
- Check the course daily
- Read announcements
- Read and respond to course email messages as needed
- Complete assignments by the due dates specified
- Communicate regularly with your instructor and peers
- Create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track
- Access [ASU Student Resources](#)
- [Review the Student Tips for Learning with Zoom,](#) https://uto.asu.edu/zoom-learning

Grading
Grades reflect your performance on assignments and adherence to deadlines. Grades on assignments will be available within 72 hours of the due date in the Gradebook.

Assignment will be graded on a point system as follows:
1. Discussion Leader 100 points
2. Research Outline 100 points
3. Bibliography 200 points
4. Literature Review 300 points
5. Research Proposal 300 points

Points	Letter Grade
970 to 1000	A+
930 to < 969	A
900 to < 929	A-
870 to < 899	B+
830 to < 869	B
800 to < 829	B-
777 to < 799	C+
70 to < 776	C
600 to < 699	D
Below 599	E
Fail, No Participation	EN
Fail, Incomplete	EU

Academic Dishonesty	XE

Assignment and Activities

Course assignments will enhance your understanding of the basic concepts, debates, and applications in interdisciplinary research. Assignments will explore your comprehension of class content and your ability to design and implement your own capstone project.

1. Careful and Engaged Reading. Our readings are of three kinds:
   A. Books: *Interdisciplinary Research* is a textbook, which defines interdisciplinary studies and outlines a step-by-step approach to interdisciplinary research. Because it provides a ready resource on interdisciplinary terminology, investigative procedures, and disciplinary methods, we will use this textbook throughout the semester to guide our research projects. *Research Design* and *Successful Qualitative Research:* are textbooks that explores different social scientific methods (surveys, experiments, interviews, ethnographies, content analysis). In these books we have a useful overview of how to do common empirical inquiries.
   B. Chapters from books on how to do research: Canvas readings on ways to conduct humanities inquiries into historical events, literary texts, and pop culture.
   C. Examples of actual research: We will also read papers that illustrate different approaches to interdisciplinary research. The readings serve as exemplars (and inspiration) for our own research.

Although our reading load will be challenging, you should strive to read attentively by jotting down notes and queries in the margins, circling key words and passages, looking up unfamiliar terms, and underlining themes or issues you find intriguing. Moreover, be sure to record any passages or ideas that are pertinent to the theories and methods that will be in your research proposal for this semester.

2. Discussion Leader:

Collaborative learning is an important part the student-centered approach. Collaborative learning promotes active processing of course materials and enhances your commitment to class content. In Week 2 of the semester, you will select a sense and method that seems most interesting and aligned to your research agenda (reading, observing, listening, or counting). After selecting one of these methods, you will lead a class discussion on one of the reading on this method. If more than one person chooses same day and reading, students must work together to complete a single group discussion on that topic. These discussions will summarize and elaborate on the main elements of the method and will address the ways that these methods can be used in research projects. Each presentation should last 15 to 20 minutes, allowing for another 10 to 15 minutes of class discussion afterward. Students not leading that presentation are expected to be lively participants during these classroom discussions.

3. Research Proposal:

The course is structured around your own Research Proposal. During the course of our 15 weeks together, we will work on the various components of the project in a sequential fashion (that will be flexible enough to allow for rethinking and revising in a non-linear manner). Each project will build on the ideas and premises of earlier documents, so you should be attentive to how all of these sections build into a final research proposal.

The elements of the Research Proposal are as follows:
Research Outline: In Week 4 of the semester, you will submit a brief research outline (1-2 pages). Each outline should: 1) define the research problem or state the focus question; 2) justify the use of an interdisciplinary approach to the problem; 3) select the potentially relevant disciplines (at least two, but no more than four) for addressing the problem; 4) Highlight some possibly relevant theories,

variables, or facets of the mentioned disciplines; and 5) identify the faculty member that will likely be your mentor for the Capstone Project-MAS 585 (due on 18 September before 5 pm on Canvas).

Bibliography: In Week 5 of the semester, you will submit a preliminary bibliography for the Research Project, which should include at least six appropriate sources for each disciplinary perspective identified in the outline. Some of these citations should include papers that are key to your theories and discussions of how to do your chosen methods well. The bibliography should help you confirm the relevance of each discipline and to continue identifying the concepts assumptions, methods, and data used by each discipline. It should include older seminal works in the field as well as newer pieces that push the literature in new ways. Make sure that at least two of these readings provides a discussion of how do your possible research methods (due on 2 October before 5 pm on Canvas).

Literature Review: In Week 12 of the semester, you will submit a detailed Literature Review (6-8 pages) for the Research Project, which should 1) discuss the literature that informs the theories of your research project; 2) situate or contextualize your interdisciplinary research problem within existing disciplinary research; 3) evaluate each disciplinary claim about the topic and interrogate the alternative and competing claims on the topic; 4) identify the deficiencies and uncertainties within the existing literature; and 5) suggest how your project will address these deficiencies and questions (due on 11 November before 5 pm on Canvas).

Final Research Proposal: At the end of the semester, you will submit a Final Research Proposal (12-16 pages). The proposal starts with your revised Literature Review (6-8 pages) and ends with new information on your research design and methods (6-8 pages). The new methods part of the proposal should 1) choose and describe the method that will guide your future; 2) argue how this methodological analysis is well suited for this project, and 3) provide a schedule on how you will complete your future capstone (due on 5 December by 5pm via Canvas). Please note that you will verbally present your research proposals to the class at the end of the semester.

Submitting Assignments
All assignments, unless otherwise announced, *must* be submitted to the designated area of Canvas. *Do not submit an assignment via email.*

Late or Missed Assignments
Notify me **before** an assignment is due if an urgent situation arises and you are unable to submit the assignment on time.

Follow the appropriate University policies to request an accommodation for religious practices or to accommodate a missed assignment due to University-sanctioned activities.

Communicating With the Instructor
ASU email is an official means of communication among students, faculty, and staff. You are expected to read and act upon email in a timely fashion. You bear the responsibility of missed messages and should check their ASU-assigned email regularly.

All instructor correspondence will be sent to your ASU email account.

Additional Course Policies
Collaboration: Our classroom is a space for collaborative learning. Please be willing to ask and answer questions and to share your skills, knowledge, and ideas. Together we are responsible for creating a productive, engaged learning environment.

Because much of our course is based on a collaborative model, I encourage you to introduce yourself to people in class, learn names, exchange contact information with several people so that you can form study groups, find out what you missed if you were absent, and help to create a sense of community in class and on our campus.

Attendance and Participation: You are required to be present and to participate in class discussion on a regular basis. Because this course is designed as an interactive seminar, active participation is essential and required and will enhance your comprehension and experience in class. Plan to come to class prepared, arrive on time, listen carefully and participate frequently.

Course/Instructor Evaluation: The course/instructor evaluation for MAS 501 will be conducted online 7-10 days before the last day of classes at the end of the semester. Your responses are anonymous. I will not have any access to them until after grades have been submitted and, even then, they remain anonymous. About two weeks before the class finishes, watch for an e-mail with "Course/Instructor Evaluation" in the subject heading and please take a few moments to fill out the evaluation. *Your feedback is very important to me.*

Syllabus Disclaimer
The syllabus is a statement of intent and serves as an implicit agreement between the instructor and the student. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. Remember to check your ASU email and the course site often.

Academic Integrity
Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, and laboratory work, academic transactions and records. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification and dismissal. For more information, see http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity

Inclusive Learning
If you feel you will need disability accommodations in this class but have not registered with Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS), please contact SAILS immediately. The SAILS West campus office is located in UCB 304. DRC staff can also be reached at: (480) 965-1234 (V) or (480) 965-9000 (TTY). For additional information, visit: www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc.

Expected Classroom Behavior
All incidents and allegations of violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student (whether on-or off campus) must be reported to the ASU Police Department (ASU PD) and the Office of the Dean of Students. If either office determines that the behavior poses or has posed a serious threat to personal safety or to the welfare of the campus, the student will not be permitted to return to campus or reside in any ASU residence hall until an appropriate threat assessment has been completed and, if necessary, conditions for return are imposed. ASU PD, the Office of the Dean of Students, and other appropriate offices will coordinate the assessment in light of the relevant circumstances. For more information please visit https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/PoliciesAndProcedures and https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/safety/ThreateningBehavior.

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or

harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs.

Arizona State University is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for the entire university community, including all students, faculty members, staff employees, and guests. ASU expressly prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation by employees, students, contractors, or agents of the university based on any protected status: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and genetic information.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling, is available if you wish discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

Copyrighted Materials
You may not upload to any course shell, discussion board, or website used by me or any material that is not your original work, unless you first comply with all applicable copyright laws; faculty members reserve the right to delete materials on the grounds of suspected copyright infringement.

Reading Schedule
Week 1 | 26 August
  o   Introduction to MAS 501

Week 2 | 2 September: Overview of Research Proposals
  o   Senft, Theresa. *Cultural Studies Proposals.* New York University, 2011. *Note: works best for the reading group* (Canvas)
  o   Maxwell, Joseph. "Research Proposals: Presenting and Justifying a Qualitative Study," 1995. *Note: Works best for the listening and observing group* (Canvas)
  o   Creswell, John W. *Research Design,* Chapter 4: "Writing Strategies and Ethical Considerations," 75-98. *Note: works best for listening, observing, and counting groups*
  o   Template for a Quantitative Research Proposal in Sociology. *Note: works best for the counting group* (Canvas)

Week 3 | 9 September: Overview of Interdisciplinary Research
  o   Chapter 1: "Defining Interdisciplinary Studies," 3-32;
  o   Chapter 2: "Mapping the Drivers of Interdisciplinary," 33-78;
  o   Chapter 5: "Identifying Relevant Literatures," 143-166.

Week 4 | 16 September: Starting the Interdisciplinary Literature Review
  o   Chapter 6: "Conducting the Literature Search," 167-192;
  o   Chapter 7: "Developing Adequacy in Relevant Disciplines," 193-224;
  o   Chapter 11: "Creating Common Ground between Concepts," 321-381.
  o   Assignment Due, 18 September: Research Outline

Week 5 | 23 September: Reading—The Basics of Textual Analysis
  o   Frey, L., Botan, C., & G. Kreps. "Textual Analysis," *Investigation Communication,* 1999 (Canvas)
  o   King, Michele. "Working In/With the Archives," *Research Methods for History*, 2012. (Canvas)

Week 6 | 30 September: Reading—The Application of Textual Analysis

- McKee, Alan. "A Beginner's Guide to Textual Analysis," *Metro Magazine* (2001), 138-149 (Canvas)
- Barrett, James and David Roediger. "In Between Peoples: Race, Nationality and the 'New Immigrant' Working Class," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16 (1997), 3-44 (Canvas)
- Supplemental: Saukko, Paula. *Doing Research in Cultural Studies: An Introduction to Classical and New Methodological Approaches*, 2003.
- McGuigan, Jim (Ed.). *Cultural Methodologies*. 1997.
- Assignment Due, 2 October: Bibliography

Week 7 | 7 October: Observing—The Basics of Content Analysis and Ethnography
- Altheide, David. "Ethnographic Content Analysis," *Qualitative Media Analysis* (1996), 14-24. (Canvas)
- Delamont, S. "Ethnography and Participant Observation," *Qualitative Research Practice*, (2004), 217-229 (Canvas)

Week 8 | 14 October: Observing—Examples of Content Analysis and Ethnography
- Messner, Michael and Montez de Oca, Jeffery. "The Male Consumer as Loser: Beer and Liquor Ads in Mega Sports Media Event." *Signs* 30 (2005), 1879-1909 (Canvas)
- Snow, David A., and Leon Anderson, "Identity Work Among the Homeless: The Verbal Construction and Avowal of Personal Identities," *American Journal of Sociology* (1987), 1336-1371 (Canvas).
- Supplemental: Lofland, J., & L. H. Lofland. *Analyzing Social Settings,* 2006.
- Hammersley, M., & P. Atkinson. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice,* 2007.

Week 9 | 21 October: Listening—The Basics of Semi-Structured Interviews
- Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. *Successful Qualitative Research* Chapter 1, 3-18 (focus on qualitative sensibilities);
- *Ibid.,* chapter 2: "Ten Fundamentals of Qualitative Research" (focus on 19-40);
- *Ibid.,* chapter 3: "Planning and Designing Qualitative Research," 42-73.

Week 10 | 28 October: Listening—Examples of Semi-Structured Interviews
- *Successful Qualitative Research,* chapter 4: "Interactive Data Collection 1—Interviews," 77-105.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. "The Linguistics of Colorblind Racism: How to Talk Nasty about Blacks without Sounding 'Racist'," *Critical Sociology* 28 (2002), 41-64 (Canvas)
- Supplemental: Charmaz, Kathy. *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 2014.
- James Paul Gee. 2011. *How to Do Discourse Analysis*

Week 11 | 4 November: Counting—The Basics of Survey Analysis
- *Research Design,* chapter 3: "Use of Theory," 49-74;
- Ibid., chapter 5: "The Introduction," 101-115;
- Ibid., chapter 8: "Quantitative Methods," 147-177.

Week 12 | 11 November: Counting—Examples of Survey Analysis
- Smart, J. C. "Attributes of Exemplary Research Manuscripts Employing Quantitative Analyses," *Research in Higher Education,* 46:4 (2005), 461-477 (Canvas)
- Meyer. Ivan. "Minority Stress and Mental Health in Gay Men," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 36 (1995), 38-56 (Canvas)
- Assignment Due, 13 November: Literature Review

Week 13 | 18 November: Interdisciplinary Research Presentations
- Students research project presentations

Week 14 | 25 November: Thanksgiving Break
- o Class does not meet

Week 16 | 2 December
- o Class does not meet—individual consultation via Zoom
- o Final Draft of the research proposal due, 4 December