

**AMBERTON UNIVERSITY**  
**e-COURSE SYLLABUS**

**RGS6035.E2 Theory & Application of Research Methods**  
**Winter, 2025**

**PROFESSOR INFORMATION:**

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**COURSE INFORMATION:**

RGS6035.E2 Theory & Application of Research Methods  
Level: Graduate  
Beginning Date of Session: Saturday, December 7, 2024  
Ending Date of Session: Thursday, February 27, 2025  
**Student access available to the Student Portal: Saturday, December 7, 2024**

**Winter Holiday Break:**

**Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, through Friday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025**  
**(Classes resume on Saturday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025)**

*Students enrolled in distance learning courses are not assessed any additional fees for security or identity verification.*

**COURSE PREREQUISITES:**

None

**TEXTBOOK(S) AND REQUIRED MATERIALS:**

Title: Research Methods: The Essential Knowledge Base  
Author: William Trochim, James P. Donnelly, Kanika Arora  
Publisher: Cengage Learning  
Year Published: 2016  
Edition: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition  
ISBN: 13: 9780357692684 (E-Book) 9781133954774 (paperback)  
Price: Available at <http://amberton.ecampus.com>

Amberton University has an agreement with eCampus.com to provide a full-service online bookstore to students. The Amberton University Virtual Bookstore is accessible through the University's website, [www.Amberton.edu](http://www.Amberton.edu). There is also a bookstore link in the Student Portal.

The AU Virtual Bookstore provides an easy to use interface, online buyback of books, and same day shipment of most titles with an average delivery time of 2-3 days depending on the student's location. Textbook options include new, used, rental, and electronic media as available.

Since no books are sold on campus, students should plan accordingly and purchase their books in advance of the first day of class, allowing time for shipping. Be certain you are enrolled in the course before purchasing your book(s). All textbook information (Title, Author, ISBN, etc.) is available in the course syllabi so students can shop competitively. Most textbooks can be purchased from many different textbook vendors. Some textbooks may only be available on the University's Virtual Bookstore. Students should be careful to obtain the exact resource(s) required for the course.

**APA Requirement**

APA (American Psychological Association) style is most commonly used to cite sources within the social sciences. This resource, revised according to the 7th edition, offers examples for the general format of APA research papers, in-text citations, endnotes/footnotes, and the reference page. For more information, please

consult the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (7th ed.). All coursework at Amberton University will comply with the standards contained in the APA Publication Manual.

### **COURSE COMPETENCIES:**

The following represents the course competencies for this class. Competencies are equivalent for all lecture and distance learning courses. Following each competency is the assignment used to gain mastery of this area of study.

The course presents the issues relevant to the understanding and application of research methods in the study of human behavior and organizational variables. Aspects of conducting research, methodologies for analysis, and studying and preparing a research project are covered.

### **UPON COMPLETION OF THE COURSE, THE STUDENT WILL BE COMPETENT IN:**

1. Describing and discussing the research process and the scientific method.
2. Selecting procedures to locate unsolved research problems in given areas of interest.
3. Listing and describing the components of a sound research plan.
4. Writing hypotheses and research questions that relate to a given research problem.
5. Identifying aspects of a research situation that involve ethical questions or principles.
6. Conducting a review of the research literature on a given topic.
7. Identifying sections of research reports and aspects of research design that indicate possible bias or contamination.
8. Describing, discussing, and using appropriate sampling procedures.
9. Defining and illustrating the types of validity and reliability and their influence on the research process.
10. Identifying and discussing the significant methods of research.
11. Applying procedures and guidelines for constructing questionnaires.
12. Critically evaluating possible threats to the internal and external validity of a research project.
13. Creating commonly used experimental designs, including specifications for random assignment, formulation of experimental and control groups, and use of pretests and posttests.
14. Writing a document that employs correct grammar, mechanics, and diction; follows APA format for research reports; and achieves the intended purpose of the document.
15. Understanding the available sources of data and where they can be located.
16. Demonstrating the ability to apply the critical evaluation competency in various contexts.
17. Explaining the relevance of critical evaluation and applying concepts to key roles and duties.

### **COURSE POLICIES:**

#### **Late Assignment Policy:**

All assignments must be turned in by the due date by 11:59 CT. Any assignment submitted after the due date will automatically lose a letter grade unless arrangements are made with the instructor. All assignments submitted after the second week they are due will automatically receive a failing grade unless arrangements are made with the instructor. No assignments will be accepted after the last day of class unless an extension is granted by the instructor.

#### ***Student's Responsibilities***

This syllabus contains information, policies, and procedures for a specific course. By enrolling, the student agrees to read, understand, and abide by the policies, rules, regulations, and ethical standards of Amberton University as contained in the current university catalog and schedule of classes.

#### ***Attendance Policy:***

Regular and punctual class attendance and engagement is expected at Amberton University. In case of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact the professor as soon as possible. If a student intends on withdrawing from a course, it is the student's responsibility to follow the university's policy on formally withdrawing from a course. **Ceasing to attend classes does not constitute an official withdrawal.**

Attendance in a lecture course is defined as punctual arrival to, and engagement in, a full lecture session. A Student in a lecture course missing more than 20% (two class periods for weekday classes or one class period

for Saturday classes) of the class meetings may be assigned a grade of an “F” or withdrawn at the discretion of Amberton University.

Attendance in a distance learning course is defined as active participation in the weekly online class sessions. “Active participation” can be defined as: submitting an academic assignment, taking an exam, engaging in an interactive tutorial, participating in an online discussion forum (or chat session), or initiating (or responding to) a communication with a faculty member about an academic assignment or the subject matter of the course. A student not meeting these requirements may be assigned a grade of an “F” or withdrawn at the discretion of Amberton University.

### **Plagiarism Policy**

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else’s work as though it were your own. If you use another person’s words, ideas, or information; or if you use material from an outside source – whether a book, magazine, newspaper, business publication, broadcast, speech, or electronic media – you must acknowledge that source. Plagiarism is a violation of the University’s code of student ethical conduct and is one that is taken seriously. Amberton University operates on an honor system; therefore, honesty and integrity are essential characteristics of all who are associated with the institution. All Amberton students are expected to abide by the honor system and maintain academic integrity in all their work. Amberton University and its instructors monitor student work for plagiarism and reserve the right to submit such work to technology-based plagiarism detection services and applications at any time.

Self-plagiarism means reusing work that you have already published or submitted for a class. It can involve:

- Resubmitting an entire paper
- Copying or paraphrasing passages from your previous work

Self-plagiarism misleads your readers by presenting previous work as completely new and original. Students may not submit the same paper in substance in two or more classes without prior written permission of the instructors involved.

Amberton University students who use Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated content must adhere to the following policies:

**Originality:** Students must avoid presenting AI generated content as their own original work. It is essential to acknowledge the involvement of AI in the content creation process in order to maintain academic and ethical standards.

**Paraphrasing:** When using AI generated content, students must rephrase and/or modify the generated text. Paraphrased AI generated content should also be properly cited.

**Acknowledgement:** When using AI generated content in any assignment, proper credit must be given to the AI system that generated the content. <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

Students agree that by taking this course, all required assignments may be subject to submission for a textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism and self-plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in future papers. Use of Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com website.

Turnitin is a writing improvement and plagiarism prevention tool which uses special algorithms, to compare text-based student submissions to the Turnitin database and other online sources. Turnitin produces a detailed **similarity report** that can be customized and viewed by instructors and students.

Turnitin “Draft Coach” is a Google based add-on to Turnitin which supports students in developing high-quality academic writing; and serves as an integrity coach. Draft Coach helps address errors and improve the quality of student’s writing by highlighting grammar mistakes, identifying incorrectly cited sources, and scanning for similarity across several databases. By providing formative feedback on how to address citation issues, incorrect grammar, and matches with the Turnitin database, Draft Coach provides explanations to help

students become more confident writers, capable of producing higher quality work both in academics and in the workplace.

### **COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR:**

Overall, students will gain knowledge and skills in research methods, including qualitative and quantitative approaches, sampling, measurement, experimental design, data analysis, inferential analysis, and communication of research. Assignments include readings, quizzes, discussion boards, and writing assignments to reinforce learning and practical application of research concepts. The competencies targeted include research design, ethical considerations, data analysis, and effective communication of research findings.

Week	Topic	Assignment	Competencies Covered	Due Date
1	Introduction, Ethics	Read Chapters 1-2; Class Introductions (graded). Discussion Board 1 (APA 7) Quiz 1,2	1,3,4,6	Sunday, 12/8
2	Qualitative Approaches to Research	Read Chapter 3 Discussion Board 2 Quiz 3	1,3,4,6	Sunday, 12/15
3	Sampling	Read Chapter 4 Discussion Board 3 Quiz 4 Writing Assignment 1	2,5,8	Sunday, 1/5
4	Introduction to Measurement, Scales, Tests, and Indexes, Survey Research	Read Chapters 5-7 Discussion Board 4 Quiz 5, 6, 7	2,8-9,12	Sunday, 1/12
5	Introduction to Design, Experimental Design, Quasi-Experimental Design	Read Chapter 8-10 Discussion Board 5 Quiz 8, 9, 10	10,13	Sunday, 1/19
6	Introduction to Data Analysis: Foundations of Data Analysis	Read Chapter 11 Discussion Board 6 Quiz 11 Writing Assignment 2	10,13	Sunday, 1/26
7	Inferential Analysis	Read Chapter 12 Discussion Board 7 Quiz 12	10-11,13,15	Sunday, 2/2
8	Communicating Research	Read Chapter 13 Discussion Board 8 Quiz 13 Start Working on Literature Review	7,10-11,13	Sunday, 2/9
9	Writing an APA-Style Research Report	Discussion Board 9 Complete Literature Review	6-7,14	Sunday, 2/16
10	Conclusions on Research Methods	Discussion Board 10 – Reflection	6	Wednesday, 2/19

## **GRADING CRITERIA:**

Grades are based on a point total with the maximum points totaling 1000. Each discussion board (including the Introduction) is worth 25 points and full points will be awarded for a substantive initial post of at least 300 words plus citations/references by Thursday 11:59 PM CT, and a reply to at least two classmates of at least 150 words each with commentary to drive the conversation forward by Sunday 11:59 PM CT. Discussion Board 10 – Reflection is the only one that has all posts due by Wednesday at 11:59 PM CT since it is the last week of class. There will be 13 quizzes (one for each chapter to test your knowledge), worth approximately 20 points each (260 points total). There will be 2 writing assignments worth 100 points each. The final project (literature review) will be worth 210 points. Your grade will be computed by taking the total points earned out of 1000, and the percentage will align with the scale below.

**AI Addendum:** Since this is a research course, you are encouraged to conduct independent research for any resources that you cite. If you choose to reference AI, paraphrase, and cite it as described above, for this course, you are also required to include at least one reference found from our library that validates the content generated from AI, along with screenshots walking through the process of using the library and finding the reference. In addition, you are also required to discuss why it relates in at least 300 words to show that you checked its validity. You are also required to include screen shots of your prompts and output from AI that you paraphrased. All of this will need to be submitted as an APA 7 formatted appendix to your assignment or discussion.

The reason for this is simple. AI can generate false information, so if you choose to use it, then you will have to validate it. I think you will find that the writing process will be more fulfilling and take less time by avoiding the use of AI. Remember, I am here to help, and if you have questions or concerns, feel free to reach out!

Graduate	
92 – 100	A
82 – 91	B
72 – 81	C
62 – 71	D
Below 62	F

## **GRADE NOTIFICATION AND INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK:**

A successful distance learning experience requires a flow of communication between instructor and student throughout the session. Instructor comments are considered essential to the learning process. Therefore, each assignment/exam submitted will be reviewed, graded, and returned to the student in a timely manner along with the appropriate commentary. Students should carefully review all comments.

Final grades are processed approximately one week after the last day of the session and may be located in the My Grades section of the online registration portal as well as being emailed to the student's Amberton University email. Amberton University staff will not release grades over the phone. University instructors will not leave a message with comments or grades in any type of media that is not secure.

For questions regarding grades after the semester has ended, students should use their university email account and contact the instructor at the faculty email address as provided above in *Professor Information* area.

### ***Incomplete Grades***

An "I" (incomplete grade) is given at the discretion of the professor and may be given only when an emergency or illness prevents the student from completing course requirements. Should an "I" be granted, the student has 30 days from the end of the session to complete the conditions of the incomplete. An "I" which is not properly removed within 30 days following the session enrolled will become an "F" grade.

### ***How To Withdraw From a Course***

To be official, the class withdrawal must be in writing and signed by the student requesting the withdrawal; no withdrawal is accepted verbally. Please review the "Schedule of Classes" (online or in-print) for procedures for class changes or withdrawals and the refund policy and schedule.

## **COURSE DELIVERY METHODOLOGY:**

This course is offered as a distance-learning course through the Moodle Learning Platform. Amberton's distance learning courses, called e-Courses, are identical to classroom courses in terms of learning outcomes, competencies, and instructor expectations. A student choosing to take an e-Course must have the following skills and technical capabilities:

1. Access to the Internet
2. General knowledge in:
  - Internet browser settings and configuration
  - e-mail and file attachments
  - Uploading and downloading files
  - Using a word processing package
3. Ability to conduct on-line research

Students who have not mastered these skills should not enroll for this course but should consider enrolling in MIS2110 Computer Concepts and Internet Technologies for instruction in these areas.

## **HOW TO ACCESS YOUR COURSE:**

### ***Through the Amberton University Student Portal***

Students enrolled in distance learning courses using the Moodle Learning Platform may access the course through the Amberton University Student Portal. The site may be accessed through the University's main page (<http://www.Amberton.edu>) or at <http://apps.Amberton.edu>. After selecting the "Student Portal" link, you will be prompted for a Username and Password.

Use your assigned **username and password** (AUID) as described below to enter the AU Student Portal:

**Username** = your capitalized firstname **initial**+lastname+last 3 digits of your SSN.

\* Use your name exactly as it is listed on the University's records, including any suffixes or hyphenations, such as Jr, Sr, or II, as a part of your username.

For example: James Jones, Jr. SSN: 123-45-6789  
Username: JJonesJr789

**Password** = your Amberton University ID# (AUID) **including the dashes**

For example: 04-999-999

Once your login has been validated, you may select from a variety of menu options, including your individual E-Course, email account, Remote Research, General Tools, all Syllabi and Research Tutorials.

If you are accessing the Student Portal from a public or shared computer, close the browser completely when finished, or click on the Logout button. For security purposes, no other person should have access to your Username or Password. If you feel your information has been compromised or if you experience technical difficulties, contact the e-course system administrator at: [e-sysop@amberton.edu](mailto:e-sysop@amberton.edu)

If you have lost or do not know your Amberton ID#, please contact the Student Services Office 972/279-6511 or [advisor@Amberton.edu](mailto:advisor@Amberton.edu) for a replacement AUID card. You must know your Amberton ID# to gain access to the course and to send an email to your professor.

### ***Through the Amberton University Moodle Website***

Students enrolled in distance learning courses using the Moodle Learning Platform may also access the course by going to: <http://moodle.Amberton.edu>

For those utilizing Moodle for the first time, the **username and password** for the Moodle Learning Platform will be emailed to the student's University email account prior to the start of the course. For those returning to Moodle who do not remember their username and password, click on the link "*Forgotten your username or password*" available on the Moodle log in page (<http://moodle.Amberton.edu>). Otherwise use the same username and password as previous session.

### **Moodle Tutorial:**

Upon successful log in and access to the Moodle learning platform, there is a *Student Moodle Tutorials* course available, to learn about the basics of Moodle. Simply click on the link for the *Student Moodle Tutorials* and read through the various learning topics: Navigating; Communicating; Assignments & Exams; Grades; and Student Resources.

### **COURSE COMMUNICATIONS:**

Students will communicate with faculty through the Moodle Learning Platform or the Amberton University email system.

### **Email Communication**

Each student enrolled is assigned an Amberton email account, which gives the student access to the Amberton email system ([my.Amberton.edu](mailto:my.Amberton.edu)). This email account is provided by Google Apps for Education. Students are encouraged to check their email regularly for University news, notices, and to communicate with instructors.

The student's assigned email address would be Username@my.Amberton.edu

Example: LJones-Smith789@my.Amberton.edu

The student Username is determined by:

firstname initial+lastname+last 3 digits of student ssn.

For example: Linda Jones-Smith   SSN: 123-45-6789  
Email Address = LJones-Smith789@my.Amberton.edu

Students will be prompted for a Username and Password when accessing their email account. Use the Username portion of the email address as the username (Example: LJones-Smith789) and your Amberton ID# (including the dashes) as the password.

If you already have a Google Gmail account, you might be prompted to add this account to your current account. Click 'Yes' and you will be logged into your my.Amberton.edu email account. It will be a separate email account from your personal Gmail account.

If you need assistance with your email account, please visit <https://support.google.com/mail>

**Students are responsible for reviewing the "Communication Guidelines" provided on the individual E-Course for specific instructor requirements.**

Upon completion of a session, all communication and course specific information is removed from the Moodle system. If a student needs to maintain a record of communications or assignments, the student is strongly encouraged to print out or download these items to a disk for their own records.

### **FORMAT AND SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS:**

Assignments are to be submitted to the appropriate assignment Drop Box in the Moodle system. Specific directions and guidelines for submission of assignments are located on-line in the "Communication Guidelines" of the e-course. Due to compatibility issues, Office 2007 files cannot be read by earlier versions of Microsoft Office. Before submitting an exercise file, confirm the file is in the proper format for grading by the instructor.

**INSTRUCTOR/COURSE EVALUATION:**

Each session, all Amberton students are provided with the opportunity to evaluate their courses and instructors. The evaluation process is an important one and provides students with an anonymous and confidential way to give meaningful feedback to the University. Summary information and comments are provided to faculty after the close of the session. All information provided is anonymous.

The Instructor/Course Evaluation will be open for completion during week 9 of the session. An evaluation assignment will be placed in week 9 of the Moodle course, along with the instructions on how to complete the evaluation. Prior to week 9, the University will send out an email containing instructions and dates for the evaluation period.

**RESEARCH RESOURCES:**

The Library provides access to full-text, and peer reviewed articles, and digital research tools. Students can search Library holdings through the online catalog and databases search engines available on the Library website or browse the physical library space and holdings located at the Garland campus.

Research items not contained in the Amberton Library collection can be located through interlibrary Loan (ILL) or through the TexShare program with the help of the Library staff. Students with questions about available services, resources, or research, may contact the Library via email at [Library@amberton.edu](mailto:Library@amberton.edu).

**RESEARCH ACCESS:**

Databases can only be accessed by authorized users, and students at Amberton must enter their Amberton ID credentials-same as Moodle login-to gain access when off-campus. Use an Amberton website, such as the University site ([Amberton.edu](http://Amberton.edu)) or the library site ([Library.amberton.edu](http://Library.amberton.edu)) to find links to databased and digital books. Online resources are available all day, every day.

***Library Live Chat Feature***

Library staff are available to assist students with research problems or questions during Library hours through a live online chat feature, telephone, email, "How-to" videos, or in person. The library telephone is (972-279-6511 ext. 185). You can email questions to [library@amberton.edu](mailto:library@amberton.edu) or visit the library in person on the Garland campus for assistance.