

AMBERTON UNIVERSITY
SYLLABUS FOR LECTURE/CLASSROOM COURSE

RGS6035.01 Theory & Application of Research Methods
Fall 2026

PROFESSOR INFORMATION:

Professor: Stacia' Alexander, PhD, LPC-S
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COURSE INFORMATION:

RGS6035.01 Theory & Application of Research Methods
Level: Graduate
Beginning Date of Session: Saturday, September 12, 2026
Ending Date of Session: Thursday, November 19, 2026
Room: Garland, Room SC

Student access available to the Student Portal: Saturday, September 12, 2026.

PREREQUISITES:

None

TEXTBOOK(S) AND REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Title: Introduction to Research Methods: A Hands-On Approach
Author: Pajo, Bora
Publisher: SAGE Vantage
Year Published: 2023
Edition: 2nd
ISBN: 19781544391724 (electronic) 9781544391700 (paperback)
Price: Available at <http://amberton.ecampus.com>

Students should verify enrollment in course before purchasing textbooks. Textbook information and ordering options are available through the Amberton Virtual Bookstore. 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.

LINKS TO COUNSELING HANDBOOKS

MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

https://drive.google.com/file/d/12TkeFe1RRw-xr_RN7b4_ebUWyOcUy71z/view?usp=sharing

MA in Marriage and Family Therapy

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nuvRJRfUv7Rzsos1jYD-ri9hMSWAgDjc/view?usp=sharing>

MA in School Counseling

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TmJBUTpPoRR1CYe02fqK1Z7zG93ly7HZ/view?usp=sharing>

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 related to a given research problem.
5. Identifying ethical questions or principles in research situations.
6. Conducting literature reviews on a given topic.
7. Identifying sections of research reports indicating bias or contamination.
8. Describing and using appropriate sampling procedures.
9. Defining types of validity and reliability and their influence on research.
10. Identifying significant research methods.
11. Constructing and applying research questionnaires.
12. Evaluating threats to internal and external validity.
13. Creating experimental designs with specifications for random assignments.
14. Writing in APA format and achieving the intended purpose of research reports.
15. Understanding the available sources of data and their locations.
16. Demonstrating critical evaluation competencies in research.
17. Understanding how artificial intelligence (AI) can assist in data analysis and research methodology and evaluating the reliability of AI-generated research findings in professional environments.

ACQUIRED SKILLS:

1. Critical thinking in Research Methodologies
2. Data Analysis Using Quantitative and Qualitative Methods
3. Writing Structured Research Reports in APA format

COURSE POLICIES:

Read the entire syllabus carefully. All graded activities and tests will be administered through the Moodle learning management system, and access to course materials will be available on the first day of class. As a graduate student in an online course, the professor expects you to be able to meet submission deadlines listed in the course calendar, syllabus, and Moodle activities. All assignments must be submitted as specified in the Assignment Detailed Instructions (ADI) document, including file naming convention, file type, due date, or other noted detail. Points may be lost for failure to follow instructions.

Assignments may only be submitted during announced windows, and no late work or resubmissions are accepted without prior approval by the professor. All deadlines and class events are posted in Central Time Zone (US). All classwork must be completed and submitted fully no later than **Tuesday, 11/17/26, at 11:59 pm (CST)**. If an emergency arises that prevents the student from submitting or meeting course requirements, the professor should be contacted promptly and may extend grace at their discretion.

Additional helpful forms and documents are available on the Moodle page for the course, most notably in the

folder labeled Course Documents. Other helpful documents and resources will be posted in the weekly activity layout on the Moodle course page.

STUDENTS' 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:

Week	Topic	Assignment	Competencies Covered	Due Date
WEEK 1 9/12/26-9/18/26	Class Introductions, Course Overview, Use of Social Research, APA format, & QEP email	Ch. 1 The Purpose of Research Ch. 1 Quiz	1, 2, 3, 6, 10	Sunday night for quizzes by 11:55 pm
WEEK 2 9/19/26-9/25/26	APA Style, Paper Sections, Citations, Formatting tutorial Topic Selection	Moodle readings on APA	3, 4, 5, 13	Discussion Post/Declaring Topic of Interest

WEEK 3 9/26/26-10/3/26	Library Orientation, searching, tools, Information Organization MBTI/QEP videos	ASSIGNMENT 1	4, 5, 6, 8	ASSIGNMENT 1 (2 parts) Due by Saturday, 10/3/26 at 11:59 p.m. Learning Style paper
WEEK 4 10/3/26-10/9/26	Statement of Purpose, Interviewing, Quantitative or Qualitative or Mixed processes	Ch. 2 Formulating a Research Question Ch. 3 Researching & Writing the Literature Review Chapter Quizzes	1, 2, 6, 11	Sunday night for quizzes by 11:55 pm

WEEK 5 10/10/26-10/16/26	Quant designs, measurement, errors, validity	Ch. 4 Quantitative Designs Ch. 5 Measurement Errors, Reliability, Validity Chapter Quizzes	1 – 15	Sunday night for quizzes by 11:55 pm
WEEK 6 10/17/26-10/23/226	Data Collection and Analysis, Sampling, Results, Plagiarism	Ch. 6 Sampling Ch. 13 Results and Discussion Chapter quizzes	9, 12	Sunday night for quizzes by 11:55 pm

WEEK 7 10/24/26-10/30/26	Big Data, ProQuest Psychology, Presenting Research	Ch. 14 Presenting Your Research Ch. 15 Big Data Chapter quizzes ASSIGNMENT 2	7, 9, 10	Sunday night for quizzes by 11:55 pm ASSIGNMENT 2 Due by Saturday, Oct 31, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. Quantitative Journal Article
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WEEK 8 10/31/26-11/6/26	Quantitative designs, measurement, errors, validity	Ch. 7 Data Collection for Quantitative Research Ch. 8 Secondary Data Chapter quizzes		Sunday night for quizzes by 11:55 pm
WEEK 9 11/7/26-11/13/26	Qualitative Designs and Data Collection	Ch. 11 Qualitative Designs and Data Collection Ch. 12 Entering, Coding, and Analyzing Qualitative Data Chapter quizzes	1 – 15	Sunday night for quizzes by 11:55 pm
WEEK 10 11/14/26-11/19/26	Complete course evaluation by due date in Moodle	Final Exam		Final Exam Due Tuesday, 11/17/26 at 11:59 pm.

All work with the exception of the final exam must be submitted by Tuesday, 11/17/26, by 11:59 pm. The final exam must be completed by Tuesday, 11/17/26 at 11:59 pm.

Graded assignments are marked in Moodle with an asterisk (*).

Students must access graded assignments via the links in Moodle only.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Grading for the course is summative, in that the score on each assignment is added to all previous scores. The final grade is an accumulation of all the points awarded for assignments up to a maximum of 700 points. The grading policy for the course is included below:

Assignment #1 100 points (14.29% of final grade) Due by 11:59 pm (CST) Saturday, January 10, 2026 (Learning Style Paper)

Assignment #2 100 points Due (14.29% of final grade) by 11:59 pm (CST) Saturday, February 14, 2026 (Quantitative Journal Article Review)

Final Exam 100 points (14.29% of final grade) by 11:59 pm (CST) Tuesday, February 24, 2026 (will open Saturday February 21, 2026 at 8:00 am)

13 Quizzes 130 points (18.571% of final grade) (10 points each)

Discussion Posts 270 points (38.571% of final grade) (30 points each)

Additionally, multiple online quizzes will be given over APA format rules, readings, and lectures to earn another possible 300 points toward the course point total.

TOTAL POINTS FINAL GRADE

644 - 700 A

643 - 574 B

573 - 504 C

503 - 434 D

433 and Below F

NO WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED 11/17/26 AT 11:59 PM

Acceptance of late work or extra credit assignments is at the discretion of the professor. Students unable to meet the course requirements should contact the professor promptly and directly concerning late work or extra credit. **Late work or extra credit are only granted in emergency circumstances by the professor. Note: It is not the professor's policy to assign extra credit work.**

QEP: MY LEARNING STYLE

The Amberton University Quality Enhancement Plan, "My Learning Style," is designed to give Amberton students the opportunity to explore their own adult learning style and its impact on the learning process. This course contains an assignment designed to achieve that goal. To complete the "Learning Style" assignment, student will take the MBTI and discover their adult learning style and then review related journal articles. Each student will complete a brief 3-page reflection paper about their experience with the "My Learning Style."

Graduate

92 – 100 A

82 – 91 B

72 – 81 C

62 – 71 D
Below 62 F

GRADE NOTIFICATION AND INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK:

Students should review instructor feedback provided through Moodle or Amberton CampusWeb Portal. Final grades are processed approximately one week after the session and may be viewed through the student portal. Grades will not be released by phone or through unsecured channels. 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 granted only at the professor's discretion for emergencies or illness.

Students have 30 days from the end of the session to complete the course requirements. If the conditions are not met within this 30-day window, the "I" automatically converts to an "F".

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 delivered through Moodle. Students are expected to have reliable internet access, basic computer skills, the ability to upload/download files, use Amberton email, and submit assignments in the required format. Students needing assistance should use the Amberton SSO support/ticket process.

HOW TO ACCESS YOUR COURSE:

SINGLE SIGN-ON (SSO) INSTRUCTIONS FOR AMBERTON UNIVERSITY:

Students should access Amberton systems through the Single Sign-On portal at <https://sso.amberton.edu>. After logging in, students can access Moodle, Amberton email, CampusWeb, and other assigned applications. Students who need help accessing SSO should submit a support request through the SSO support option or contact support@amberton.edu.

MOODLE TUTORIAL:

Upon successful log in and access to the Moodle learning platform, there is a Student Moodle Tutorial course available, to learn about the basics of Moodle. Simply click on the link for the Student Moodle Tutorial 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:

Students are expected to use their Amberton email account and Moodle for course communications. Students must use their official university email account for all university related communication and should check their Amberton emails regularly for course and university notices.

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 must be submitted through the appropriate Moodle assignment link unless otherwise directed by the instructor. Students are responsible for submitting files in the format required by the instructor.

INSTRUCTOR/COURSE EVALUATION:

Students will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous course and instructor evaluation near the end of the session. Instructions and dates will be provided through Moodle and/or Amberton email.

RESEARCH RESOURCES:

The Amberton Library provides access to full-text articles, peer-reviewed databases, and research tools, with options like Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and TexShare for items outside its collection. For research assistance, students can connect with library staff during operating hours via email (library@amberton.edu), phone (972-279-6511 ext. 185), "How-to" videos, live online chat, or in person at the Garland campus. The online library is available through Single Sign On (SSO).

MICROSOFT OFFICE 365 EDUCATION:

Amberton University students may access Microsoft 365 Education resources as provided by the university.

GOOGLE WORKSPACE FOR EDUCATION:

Amberton students are assigned a Google Workspace for Education account, including Amberton Gmail, Google Drive, Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides. Students should use their Amberton Google account for course-related work when required.