

Draft: August 18, 2024. Check Canvas for latest version.

EDU S582: Research Partnerships for Improving Education
Fall 2 Module: Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:30-9:45 am

Instructor

Susan Dynarski dynarski@g.harvard.edu
Office Hours: [Make an appointment](#)

Teaching Fellows

Ashutosh Bhuradia ashutosh_bhuradia@g.harvard.edu
Bri Kightlinger bkightlinger@fas.harvard.edu

Course Description

This course will train practitioners, leaders, and policy analysts to form productive research partnerships in education. The course focuses on the *practicalities of research partnerships*: finding the right partner, defining research goals, drafting memoranda of understanding, ensuring that research meets ethical and legal standards, and the use and limits of administrative data.

We will learn from those who have worked in research-practitioner partnerships. Guest speakers (from think tanks, non-profits, agencies, and universities) will include both the researcher and practitioner from each partnership, so we can see the story from both perspectives.

Our class includes students from S598: Design and Analysis of Field Experiments in Education, a semester-long course for doctoral students planning careers in education research. The aim of us learning *together* is for academic researchers and practitioners to better understand each other's vocabularies, incentives, and goals, thereby strengthening their capacity to build productive partnerships.

Prerequisites

The course is designed for master's students in education, public policy, and related fields.

We will read quantitative research, some of which uses advanced statistical methods. We do not expect that you have mastered advanced methods, since we will generally focus on the findings rather than the statistical methodology. That said, to evaluate findings you should be comfortable with interpreting confidence intervals, standard errors, t-tests, and p-values.

Completion of introductory statistics or concurrent enrollment in a course such as S-012, S-040, or S-052 is sufficient preparation.

Course Format and Evaluation

Classes will be a mix of speaker visits, lectures, discussions, and exercises. Outside of the classroom, you will prepare for our meetings.

1. You will *prepare for guest speakers* with materials they have shared, including policy briefs, news articles, research papers, and videos. One day before the visit, you will post on Canvas two questions you would like to ask the speakers, as well as responses prompts to we provide about the materials. You will *participate in class. 40% of final grade discussions.*
2. You will *prepare for lectures* by reading articles and watching videos. You will post on Canvas questions you have about these materials, as well as reply to prompts. You will *participate in class discussions. 30% of final grade*
3. You will *complete online training* that will prepare you to engage in research partnerships. This will include modules on data privacy and research ethics. You will post certificates of completion of these modules to Canvas. *30% of final grade*

Guest Speakers and Topics

Improving Developmental Education at the City University of New York

[Colin Chellman](#), Professor and University Dean for Institutional and Policy Research, CUNY
[Veronica Minaya](#), Senior Research Associate and program lead, Community College Research Center.

Understanding Charter Schools in Massachusetts

[Cliff Chuang](#), Superintendent, Bedford Public Schools; Former Senior Associate Commissioner at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

[Carrie Conaway](#), Senior Lecturer on Education, Harvard University; Former Chief Strategy and Research Officer for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Building a Better Pre-K in Boston and Beyond

[Jason Sachs](#), Gates Foundation; Former Executive Director for Early Childhood Education in Boston Public Schools

[Christina Weiland](#), Professor of Education and Public Policy, University of Michigan

Tennessee Partnership for Teaching and Learning

[Nathaniel Schwartz](#), Director of Applied Research and Professor of the Practice, Brown University; Former Chief Research and Strategy Officer for the Tennessee Department of Education

[Laura Booker](#), Executive Director, Tennessee Education Research Alliance; Formerly Tennessee Department of Education

Topics for Lectures and Professional Training Activities

FERPA: Privacy and Security for Student Data

FERPA 201: Data Sharing under FERPA

<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/training/ferpa-201-data-sharing-under-ferpa>

Create account and complete course (~40 minutes)

IRB Certification

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Social & Behavioral Research

IRB training for Harvard faculty, staff, and non-undergraduates

<https://cuhs.harvard.edu/required-ethics-training>

Using Administrative Data for Research

You will learn about the types of administrative data typically collected by school districts, postsecondary institutions, and state agencies.

Data Use Agreements (DUAs) and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)

You will review sample DUAs and MOUs and learn what they should contain to protect students, researchers, and partners.

Collecting Your Own Data

We will discuss how to supplement administrative data with focus groups, surveys, and classroom observation.

Good News and Bad News: Sharing Research Findings

We will discuss how to share research with colleagues and stakeholders.

Draft: August 18, 2024. Check Canvas for latest version.

			<i>Class Topic</i>	<i>Guests</i>
Wed	Oct	16	Introduction to Research Partnerships	
Mon	Oct	21	<i>Partner Visit</i> Understanding Massachusetts Charter Schools	Cliff Chuang Carrie Conaway
Wed	Oct	23	Using Administrative Data for Research	
Mon	Oct	28	<i>Partner Visit</i> Building a Better Pre-K in Boston and Beyond	Jason Sachs Christina Weiland
Wed	Oct	30	FERPA: Privacy and Security for Student Data	
Mon	Nov	04	<i>Partner Visit</i> Tennessee Partnership for Teaching and Learning	Laura Booker Nathaniel Schwartz
Wed	Nov	06	Collecting Your Own Data	
Mon	Nov	11	<i>No Class, Veteran's Day</i>	
Wed	Nov	13	<i>Partner Visit</i> Developmental Ed at City University of New York	Colin Chellman Veronica Minaya
Mon	Nov	18	Ethical Research and IRB Certification	
Wed	Nov	20	Data Use Agreements & Memoranda of Understanding	
Mon	Nov	25	Good and Bad News: Sharing Research Findings	
Wed	Nov	27	<i>No Class, Thanksgiving Break</i>	
Thu	Dec	02	Sustaining the Relationship	

Readings and Activities

Oct 16 Introduction to Research Partnerships

Readings

- <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-evolving-world-of-education-research-practice-partnerships/>
- <https://kappanonline.org/new-day-education-research-practice-farley-ripple>

Oct 21 Partner Visit: Massachusetts Charter Schools

Readings

- Cohodes, Sarah and Susan Dynarski. "[Massachusetts charter cap holds back disadvantaged students](#)." *Evidence Speaks*. Brookings Institution, 2016.
- Abdulkadiroglu, A., Angrist, J., Cohodes, S., Dynarski, S., Fullerton, J., Kane, T., & Pathak, P. (2009). "[Informing the Debate: Comparing Boston's Charter, Pilot, and Traditional Schools](#)." Boston Foundation Report. Read sections 1, 2, 3, and 6; skim 4 and 5.

Oct 23 Using Administrative Data for Research

Readings

- The Promise of Administrative Data in Education
<https://direct.mit.edu/edfp/article/12/2/129/10264/The-Promise-of-Administrative-Data-in-Education>
- Figlio, David, Krzysztof Karbownik, and Kjell G. Salvanes. "Education research and administrative data." *Handbook of the economics of education*. Vol. 5. Elsevier, 2016. (pp. 76-95)
- Feeney, Laura, et al. "Using administrative data for randomized evaluations." J-PAL North America, Boston (2015). (pp. 1-28)

Oct 28 Partner Visit: Pre-K in Boston

Readings

- "[Fast Response Research to Answer Practice and Policy Questions](#),"
- Boston Pre-K [Video](#)
- [Findings on Boston Prekindergarten Through Early Elementary School](#)
- [Brookings Writeup](#) of Boston Prekindergarten Research
- [Media writeup](#) about Boston Pre-K research

Optional Reading (Required for doctoral student,)

- Weiland, C., Unterman, R., Shapiro, A., Staszak, S., Rochester, S., & Martin, E. (2020). The Effects of Enrolling in Oversubscribed Prekindergarten Programs Through Third Grade. *Child Development*, 91(5), 1401–1422. (Library Reserves)

Draft: August 18, 2024. Check Canvas for latest version.

Oct 30 FERPA: Privacy and Security for Student Data

Readings

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhlDkS8hvMU&ab_channel=U.S.DepartmentofEducation (video)
- “Guidance on the Use of Financial Aid Information for Program Evaluation and Research,” Department of Education (<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/guidance-use-financial-aid-information-program-evaluation-and-research>)
- https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/sites/default/files/resource_document/file/CaseStudy2_HeadStart_0.pdf (Case Study, Department of Education)

Activity

- FERPA Training
- <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/training/ferpa-201-data-sharing-under-ferpa> Create account and complete course (~40 minutes)

November 04 Partner Visit: Tennessee Partnership for Teaching and Learning

Readings

- Booker, L., Conaway, C., Schwartz, N. (2019) Five ways RPPs can fail and how to avoid them: Applying conceptual frameworks to improve RPPs. William T. Grant Foundation. (15 pages)
- Bipartisan Policy Center. (2019). Evidence works: Cases where evidence meaningfully informed policy. Improving literacy: Investing in reading coaching and evaluation in Tennessee. Pp. 150-157. (7 pages)
- Morris, W., Ronfeldt, M., Bardelli, E., & Truwit, M. (2020). Learning from the Best: Promising Practices in Preparing Tennessee’s Future Teachers. Tennessee Education Research Alliance. (7 pages)
- Research Review Committee Form (**Do not circulate beyond class**)
- Data Use Agreement (**Do not circulate beyond class**)

November 06 Collecting Your Own Data

Readings

- **Skim:** Primary Data Collection (https://dimewiki.worldbank.org/Primary_Data_Collection)
- **Skim:** Piloting Questionnaire (<https://www.povertyactionlab.org/resource/questionnaire-piloting>)
- DeLuca, Stefanie, and Peter Rosenblatt. "Does moving to better neighborhoods lead to better schooling opportunities? Parental school choice in an experimental housing voucher program." *Teachers College Record* 112.5 (2010): 1443-1491.

Optional

- Hill, Heather C., Laura Kapitula, and Kristin Umland. "A validity argument approach to evaluating teacher value-added scores." *American Educational Research Journal* 48.3 (2011): 794-831.

November 13 Partner Visit: Developmental Ed at City University of New York

Readings

Draft: August 18, 2024. Check Canvas for latest version.

- Out and Up: Socioeconomic Mobility at the College-to-Work Transition—Project Proposal to setup RPP between City University of New York (CUNY) and Columbia's Community College Research Center (Library Reserves)
- Scott-Clayton, J. (2012). Do High-Stakes Placement Exams Predict College Success? CCRC Working Paper No. 41. In *Community College Research Center, Columbia University*. Community College Research Center.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529866.pdf> (read pages 1-12 (from Introduction to Data & Sample) + pages 32-38 (summary of empirical results onwards) and skim the rest)
- Scott-Clayton, J., Libassi, C. J., & Sparks, D. (2022). *The fine print on free college: Who benefits from New York's Excelsior Scholarship?* Urban Institute: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/fine-print-free-college-who-benefits-new-yorks-excelsior-scholarship>

November 18 Ethical Research and IRB Certification

Readings

- **Skim:** Practicalities of IRB (<https://www.povertyactionlab.org/resource/institutional-review-board-irb-proposals>)
- NYT IRB op-ed: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/22/science/social-science-research-institutional-review-boards-common-rule.html>
- Ethical Validity: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/impactevaluations/taking-ethical-validity-seriously>
- Ethical Validity Response: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/impactevaluations/taking-ethics-seriously-response-1>

Activity

- IRB Training
- Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative, Social & Behavioral Research, IRB training for Harvard faculty, staff, and non-undergraduates
- <https://cuhs.harvard.edu/required-ethics-training>

Nov 20 Data Use Agreements (DUAs) and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)

Readings

- DUA: Harvard University's 'Research Data Management' page (<https://research.harvard.edu/2020/06/26/research-data-management/>)
- DUA: Cole, Shawn, et al. "Handbook on using administrative data for research and evidence-based policy." (2020). (**Chapter 3**)
- MOU: <https://doresearch.stanford.edu/policies/research-policy-handbook/definitions-and-types-agreements/memoranda-understanding-and-letters-intent>
- MOU: Stanford University's MOU template
- MOU: <https://wtgrantfoundation.org/five-ways-rpps-can-fail-and-how-to-avoid-them-applying-conceptual-frameworks-to-improve-rpps> (Sample MOU, William T. Grant Foundation)

Activity

- Harvard Research Data Security Training Course (University-Wide): [link](#)

Nov 27 Good News and Bad News: Sharing Research Findings

Readings

- Schwabish, J. (Ed.) (2020). *Elevate the debate: A multilayered approach to communicating your research*. Washington, DC: John Wiley and Sons. **Chapter 1**
- Gordon, Nora, and Carrie Conaway. *Common-sense evidence: The education Leader's guide to using data and research*. Harvard Education Press, 2020. **Chapter 6**
- Writing and Submitting an Opinion Piece:
<https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2020/05/04/writing-submitting-opinion-piece/>
- Sue's Op-Ed about Debt Relief: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/30/opinion/student-loan-debt-relief-biden.html>

December 02 Sustaining Relationships

Readings

- Connors, M. C., Pacchiano, D. M., Stein, A. G., & Swartz, M. I. (2021). Building Capacity for Research and Practice. *The Future of Children*, 31(1), 119-136.
- Penuel, W. R., & Gallagher, D. J. (2017). *Creating Research Practice Partnerships in Education*. Harvard Education Press. 8 Story Street First Floor, Cambridge, MA 02138. **Chapter 7, Sustaining Partnerships**
- William T. Grant Foundation. "Forming and Sustaining a Research-Practice Partnership: Lessons from Our Experience at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services." William T. Grant Foundation, October 10, 2019. <https://wtgrantfoundation.org/forming-and-sustaining-a-research-practice-partnership-lessons-from-our-experience-at-the-u-s-department-of-health-and-human-services>.

Academic Integrity

HGSE is committed to cultivating and maintaining a learning environment characterized by high academic standards and integrity. It is important for students to be familiar with expectations for academic work and to conduct themselves as academic professionals throughout their time and experiences at HGSE.

All work submitted to meet course requirements is expected to be the student's own. In the preparation of all assignments -- including written assignments, oral and/or visual presentations, or any other form submitted to meet course and degree requirements -- students must distinguish between ideas that are their own and those that have been derived from other sources.

Information and opinions drawn from all sources must be attributed specifically to these sources. It is the student's responsibility to learn and use the proper forms of citation. In written assignments, quotations must be properly placed within quotation marks and must be fully cited. All paraphrased material must also be fully cited. In all cases where ideas or material presented are derived from a student's reading and research, the source used must be indicated. Students who submit work either not their own or without clear attribution to the original source, for whatever reason, face sanctions up to and including dismissal and expulsion.

Unless otherwise specified by your instructor, it is a violation of the HGSE Academic Integrity Policy to use generative AI to create all or part of an assignment for a course (e.g., a paper, memo, presentation, or short response) and submit it as your own. If you use generative AI tools in other ways as you complete course assignments, including using them to improve the readability or language of your submission, you must acknowledge and document their use. In your assignment submission, include a statement explaining what tool(s) you used, prompts you provided (if applicable), and how you integrated the output into your work.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and believe you may require accommodations, please reach out to Shayna Kessel (shayna_kessel@gse.harvard.edu) or Kevin Boehm (kevin_boehm@gse.harvard.edu) in the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) to assess your accommodation needs and address any support you might need. You can also refer to the information on HGSE's website about [Accommodations and Accessibility](#).

Please note that the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) also offers assistance for students facing stress, anxiety, or other challenges.

Draft: August 18, 2024. Check Canvas for latest version.