

**SOCY202 Introduction to Research Methods in Sociology; (4 credits)
January 30 – May 21, 2008**

Times and Locations:

Lecture: W..... 1:00pm- 3:40pm (ASY 2203)

Labs on 1/31 -

Th.... 9:00am-10:50am (ARC 1101)
Th... 11:00am-12:50pm (ASY 3217)

Labs on 2/1 -

F.... 9:00am-10:50am (ASY 3217)
F... 11:00am-12:50pm (ARC 1123)

Labs on 2/7 and 2/8 2008 and thereafter are in Lefrak

Thursday..9:00am-10:50am Lefrak Hall 225
Thursday.. 11:00am-12:50pm Lefrak Hall 225

Friday.... 9:00am-10:50am Lefrak Hall 214
Friday... 11:00am-12:50pm Lefrak Hall 214

Attendance is taken at labs (10 points for attending on time/lab up to 20 points, extra thereafter)

Learning Facilitation Team:
Stephen F. Steele, Ph.D.
Office Hours: By appointment,
W 3:45- 4:00 pm (after class)

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Email is always better to reach me.

Nihal Celik
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Course Description:

Prerequisite: SOCY 201. The underlying logic, major strategies, specific techniques and skills of sociological research. Research design, measurement, data collection, sampling, field research experiments, surveys, index and scale construction, data analysis, interpretation and report writing. To be taken immediately after SOCY 201. Required for majors. Grade Method: REG/P-F/AUD.

Course Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, learners will be able to –

To understand the characteristics of social and behavioral research

- To know and apply basic definitions (examples: Measurement, Applied vs Basic)
- To know and apply research design (examples: Experimental, Quasiexperimental)
- Recognize and act on ethical concerns as they impact on research
- To know and use a variety of research techniques (examples: Quantitative techniques,
- Qualitative techniques)

To understand, construct and apply research designs to basic and applied problems

- To recognize and understand designs
- To choose and to construct a design
- To implement a design in a real-time problem

To develop awareness, knowledge and use of basic statistical techniques.

- To understand the logic, selection, and use of common statistical techniques
- To utilize computer software to analyze primary and secondary data (SPSS for Windows)

To convert data and results into words.

- To analyze data
- To write and graphically present findings for an appropriate client
- To develop innovative strategies for presentation of research methods and statistics results

To broaden the awareness of the variety of applications through presentation of the results.

- To effectively present research results
- To effectively critique the findings of others

Delivery Course presentation varies

- Lecture, Lab
- Discussion
- Collaborative learning.
- Support on WebCT <http://elms.umd.edu>

What is it?	What's it worth?	Possible extra credit?	When is it due?	Who gets it?
First Cumulative Exam (best score out of 4 attempts)	200		1/30/08	Dr. Steele in class. Make-ups with TA's. Contact your TA!
Lab Participation grade (14 labs, possible 10 points extra credit i.e. required 12 labs x 10=120 +2 additional =140)	120 (12/14 labs)	10 (13/14 labs) 20 (14/14) labs	Assessed and Posted weekly by your TA	Assessed and Posted weekly by your TA. Please note that your TA sets the criteria for sufficient completion of lab work.
One-page Client Letter – see assignment explanation	25		2/13/08	Submit one hard copy to Dr.Steele
Project Draft Part 1	40		In lab 2/21 & 2/22/08	Submit to TA's for feedback and grading by end of lab these dates.
Complete the SPSS Exercise in Pavkov, T. and K. Pierce by completing items 1- 3 on page 7. Report the results on a one-page, word-processed paper. Submit this and discuss at the beginning of class.	25		In lab 2/28 & 2/29/08	Submit during lab to TA's for grading and feedback.
Writing, conducting a Survey and Sampling Design SPSS Program	70		In lab 3/6 & 3/7/08	Submit during lab to TA's for grading and feedback.
Crosstabs and Chi Square: Complete the SPSS Exercise in Pavkov, T. and K. Pierce by completing items 1- 3 on page 80 Report the results on a one-page, word-processed paper. Attach a copy of your crosstab. Submit this and discuss at the beginning of class.	25		In lab 3/13 & 3/14/08	Submit during lab to TA's for grading and feedback.
Correlation: Complete the SPSS Exercise in Pavkov, T. and K. Pierce by completing items 1- 4 on page 62 Report the results on a one-page, word-processed paper. Attach a copy of your SPPS printout. Submit this and discuss at the beginning of class.	25		In lab 3/13 & 3/14/08	Submit during lab to TA's for grading and feedback.
Second Cumulative Exam (best score out of 4 attempts)	(best out of 200)		3/26/08	Dr. Steele in class. Make-ups with TA's
Independent and dependent t-tests: Complete the SPSS Exercise in Pavkov, T. and K. Pierce by completing items 1- 4 on page 32. Report the results on a one-page, word-processed paper. Attach a copy of your SPPS printout. Submit this and discuss at the beginning of class.	25		In lab 3/27 & 3/28/08	Submit during lab to TA's for grading and feedback.
One-way ANOVA: Complete the SPSS Exercise in Pavkov, T. and K. Pierce by completing items 1- 4 on page 46 Report the results on a one-page, word-processed paper. Attach a copy of your SPPS printout. Submit this and discuss at the beginning of class.	25		In lab 3/27 & 3/28/08	Submit during lab to TA's for grading and feedback.
Third Cumulative Exam (best score out of 4 attempts)	(best out of 200)		4/23/08	Dr. Steele in class. Make-ups with TA's
Project Draft Part 2	40		4/9/08	Submit to TA's for feedback and grading.
Your Professional Resume Use the "Terp Career and Job Search Guide" distributed at the Career Center.	30		4/23/08	Submit to Dr. Steele In class hard copy
5 minute Power Point Presentation, Executive Summary	100		5/1, 2 5/8,9/08	Graded presentations in Labs by TA's.
Final Project	250		5/7/08	In class or before. Graded by Dr. S Rcd by 5/2/08 +5 extra; Rcd by 5/5 0 extra Will not accept after 5/7/08
Last Cumulative Exam (best score out of 4 attempts)	(best out of 200)		to be determined	In class at a scheduled time.
Total	1000			

Required Texts and Materials:

- Babbie, E. The Basics of Social Research 3rd edition, Wadsworth.2008, ISBN 0-534-63036-7
- Pavkov, T. and K. Pierce Ready, Set Go! A Student Guide to SPSS 13.0 and 14.0 for Windows, 2nd ed. McGraw –Hill, 2008.
- Data set <http://sda.berkeley.edu/archive.htm>
- Supported on *Blackboard* <https://elms.umd.edu>

Elaboration of Assignments/Topics/Readings/Exercises:

	Lecture	Labs
1. Define it 1/30/08	In Lecture - Course Overview Assigned Reading for this session: Babbie, E. <u>The Basics of Social Research</u> Chapter 1 Human Inquiry and Science Power Point slides for class may be downloaded from WebCT.	Part 1 – Research questions, hypotheses, and bibliography In Lab this Week - Under the guidance and input from your TA's:- Transition to Labs Get to know each other and your TA's!
Something Due?	In Lecture - The First Attempt at the Cumulative Exam today! Professional discussion and collegial discussion expected. Class and lab participation are essential.	In Lab – Get to know your TA's. Get to know each other. Introduction to the labs and talk about how to create research questions. Discuss the course requirements. Lab Participation grade (14 labs, possible 10 points each, extra credit i.e. required 12 labs x 10=120 +2 additional =140)
2/6/2008	In Lecture - Looking for Reality, Multiple Dimensions of Research: The Five D's of Social Research Human Inquiry and Science: An Overview Basic Research and Applied Research The Theory-Research Connection: Inductive and Deductive Hypotheses Creation: Creating them; writing them! Assigned Reading for this session: Babbie, E. <u>The Basics of Social Research</u> Chapter 1 Human Inquiry and Science Chapter 2 Paradigms Theory and Research	In Lab this Week - Under the guidance and input from your TA's:- In LeFrek hereafter - see page 1 for room number... Objectives: Orientation to GSS data, students begin to choose variables.
Something Due?	Professional discussion and collegial discussion expected. Class and lab participation are essential.	In Lab - Complete in-lab exercises and learning experiences at your TA's discretion.
2/13/2008	In Lecture - Basic Ethical Considerations, Money, Time and Politics Define it! Defining the Research Problem .. Beginning to measure things Assigned Reading for this session: Babbie, E. <u>The Basics of Social Research</u> Chapter 3 The Ethics and Politics of Social Research	In Lab this Week - Under the guidance and input from your TA's:- Conduct literature review and work on annotated bibliography (at least 5 articles). turn in-lab exercises and learning experiences at your TA's discretion.
Something Due?	Class participation and lab participation are essential. One page client letter is due to Dr. S	In Lab – Complete in-lab exercises and learning experiences at your TA's discretion.
2. Design it 2/20/2008	In Lecture - Assigned Reading for this session: Review: Babbie, E. <u>The Basics of Social Research</u> Chapter 1 Human Inquiry and Science Chapter 2 Paradigms Theory and Research	In Lab this Week - Under the guidance and input from your TA's- Objectives: 1 st assignment (annotated bibliography). *Create survey instruments, (use GSS as an example to create surveys and SPSS program but

	<p>Chapter 3 The Ethics and Politics of Social Research</p> <p>Designs versus Techniques: Quantitative Surveys and Survey Research; Sampling Designs</p> <p>Assigned Reading for this session: Chapter 7 The Logic of Sampling Chapter 9 Survey Research</p>	<p>we need to divide the usual Survey assignment into two pieces if we will require them to conduct the survey.</p> <p>*TAs provide feedback on survey instruments, and students can use the entire week to conduct up to 10 surveys and create the SPSS program and turn the second part of the survey assignment in week 6.</p>
Something Due?	Class participation and lab participation are essential.	
2/27/2008	<p>In Lecture - Continued - Designs versus Techniques: Quantitative Surveys and Survey Research; Sampling Designs</p> <p>Assigned Reading for this session: Chapter 7 The Logic of Sampling Chapter 9 Survey Research</p>	<p>Part 2 Analyze collected data</p> <p>In Lab this Week - Under the guidance and input from your TA's- Objectives: Part 2 Analyze collected data in SPSS program In lab learn how to write an SPSS program and complete one for your survey research project.</p>
Something Due?	Professional discussion and collegial discussion expected. Class participation and lab participation are essential.	Complete the SPSS Exercise in Pavkov, T. and K. Pierce by completing items 1- 3 on page 7. Report the results on a one-page, word-processed paper. Submit this and discuss at the beginning of class. Late papers will not be accepted.
3. Decode it 3/5/2008	<p>In Lecture - Design it and Decode it! Creating a Research Design Translating the research design to measurement and computer analysis.</p> <p>Assigned Reading for this session: Chapter 4 Research Design Chapter 5 Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement</p>	<p>In Lab this Week - Under the guidance and input from your TA's- Objectives: Recoding and data manipulation. Other tasks as required by TA's.</p>
Something Due?	Professional discussion and collegial discussion expected. Class participation and lab participation are essential.	
3/12/2008	<p>In Lecture - Decoding it... Indexes and Scales</p> <p>Assigned Reading for this session: Babbie, E. <u>The Basics of Social Research</u> Chapter 6 Indexes, Scales and Typologies</p>	<p>In Lab this Week - Under the guidance and input from your TA's- Objectives: Chi-Square and correlation.</p>
Something Due?	Professional discussion and collegial discussion expected. Class participation and lab participation are essential.	<p>In Lab - Due: Crosstabs and Chi Square: Complete the SPSS Exercise in Pavkov, T. and K. Pierce by completing items 1- 3 on page 80 Report the results on a one-page, word-processed paper. Attach a copy of your crosstab. Submit this and discuss at the beginning of class. Late papers will not be accepted.</p> <p>Correlation: Complete the SPSS Exercise in Pavkov, T. and K. Pierce by completing items 1- 4 on page 62 Report the results on a one-page, word-processed paper. Attach a copy of your SPSS printout. Submit this and discuss at the beginning of class. Late papers will not be accepted.</p>
3/17-21/08	Spring Break	

4. Do it 3/26/2008	In Lecture - 1-2 pm Cumulative Exam 2- 3:40 pm Design it and Do it! Creating a Research Design Quantitative and Qualitative Designs Experimental and Quasi-experimental Designs Research Design Contexts Assigned Reading for this session: Babbie, E. <u>The Basics of Social Research</u> Chapter 8 Experiments	In Lab this Week - Under the guidance and input from your TA's– Objective: T-test and ANOVA
Something Due?	In Lecture - Second Cumulative Exam (best score out of 4 attempts) 1- 2:00 pm Professional discussion and collegial discussion expected. Class participation and lab participation are essential.	In Lab - Due: Independent and dependent t-tests: Complete the SPSS Exercise in Pavkov, T. and K. Pierce by completing items 1- 4 on page 32. Report the results on a one-page, word-processed paper. Attach a copy of your SPSS printout. Submit this and discuss at the beginning of class. Late papers will not be accepted. One-way ANOVA: Complete the SPSS Exercise in Pavkov, T. and K. Pierce by completing items 1- 4 on page 46 Report the results on a one-page, word-processed paper. Attach a copy of your SPSS printout. Submit this and discuss at the beginning of class. Late papers will not be accepted.
4/2/2008	In Lecture - Basic Statistics - What are they and What do you need? "Back to the Future..." Think about the statistics you've learned. What you need to complete the project. Assigned Reading for this session: Babbie, E. <u>The Basics of Social Research</u> Chapter 14 Quantitative Data Analysis	Part 3: Focus on your paper and presentation In Lab this Week - During this time work on papers under the guidance of TAs (creating tables, writing bibliography, etc.). Write an executive summary and create power point presentation
Something Due?	Professional discussion and collegial discussion expected. Class participation and lab participation are essential.	In Lab –
4/9/2008	In Lecture - Data analysis and basic Statistics - What are they and What do you need? "Back to the Future..." Think about the statistics you've learned. Which statistics do you need to complete the project. Assigned Reading for this session: Babbie, E. <u>The Basics of Social Research</u> Chapter 14 Quantitative Data Analysis	In Lab this Week - During this time work on papers under the guidance of TAs (creating tables, writing bibliography, etc.). Write an executive summary and create power point presentation Supervised work toward completion of your project by our professional TA's!
Something Due?	Due: Class participation and lab participation are essential.	
4/16/2008	In Lecture - Designs versus Techniques: Qualitative Designs: Doing Focus Groups Assigned Reading for this session: Chapter 13: Qualitative Data Analysis Chapter 10 Qualitative Field Research Chapter 11 Unobtrusive Research	In Lab this Week - During this time work on papers under the guidance of TAs (creating tables, writing bibliography, etc.). Write an executive summary and create power point presentation Supervised work toward completion of your project by our professional TA's!
Something Due?	Professional discussion and collegial discussion expected. Class participation and lab participation are	

	essential.	
4/23/2008	In Lecture - 1-2:00 pm Cumulative Exam (best score out of 4 attempts) Presenting a client-centered report Writing a client-centered report Writing and presenting your report	In Lab – During this time work on papers under the guidance of TAs (creating tables, writing bibliography, etc.). Write an executive summary and create power point presentation Supervised work toward completion of your project by our professional TA's!.
Something Due?	Professional discussion and collegial discussion expected. Class participation and lab participation are essential.	
4/30/2008	In Lecture - Using what we've learned – valuable applied Techniques: Needs Assessment and Evaluation Assigned Reading for this session: Chapter 12: Evaluation Research	In Lab this Week - Deliver it: 5 minute Power Point Presentation, Executive Summary Graded presentations in Labs
Something Due?	Professional discussion and collegial discussion expected. Class participation and lab participation are essential.	
	Go online and provide a course evaluation for this course.	
5/7/2008	In Lecture - Futures methods. Some ways to address the future... some added tools.	
Something Due?	In Lecture - Your project is due today! Before the next lecture complete the brief lecture quiz on WebCT if appropriate. Professional discussion and collegial discussion expected. Class participation and lab participation are essential.	In Lab Due: Deliver it: 5 minute Power Point with executive summary ...Presentation, Executive Summary Graded presentations in Labs
5/13/08	Study Day	
5/14 - 21/2008 To be determined	In Lecture - Take the Cumulative Exam: Last Try Assigned Reading for this session: All assigned reading and course material!	In Lab this Week – No more labs scheduled!

Assessment/Grading Scale:

- Professional discussion and collegial discussion expected.
- Class and lab participation are essential.
- A project based on a secondary analysis of GSS that implements the research methods, quantitative and qualitative tools learned in the course;
- Exercises reflecting competencies and objectives in the course that leads to project completion.

Grades	Points
A	950-1000
A-	900-949
B+	867-899
B	833-866
B-	800-833
C+	767-799
C	733-766
C-	700-733
D+	600-699
D	550-599
D-	500-549

Assignment Criteria -

Cumulative Exam

Points 200

Criteria:

- 1) Study and learn the major concepts in this course.
- 2) Complete this multiple choice exam as many as four times, but at least once through out the course.

You will receive your single, best score.

Procedure: Four in-class opportunities awarded your highest score.

SPSS Exercise in Pavkov, T. and K. Pierce

Points 25 each

Complete the SPSS Exercises in Pavkov, T. and K. Pierce by completing items as indicated. Report the results on a one-page, word-processed paper. Submit this and discuss at the beginning of lecture class.

Late papers will not be accepted.

Procedure: Complete as assigned, turn in to TA's as indicated. They will grade and return.

One-page Client Letter

Points 25

Criteria:

- 1) Select and complete an interview with a client. This must NOT be another student. Choose a person who has a management position – business, government, religion, community, education. Strive to determine the general research needs of this person.
- 2) Comprehensively and accurately list the general research objectives, in a "Bulleted" format.
- 3) Provide appropriate word-processed one-page business letter format with proper level of sentence structure, spelling and grammar as required to complete this exercise.
- 4) **While not required, I encourage you to send a copy to your client.**

Procedure: One hard copy to Dr. Steele by due date.

Lab Participation

Points 14 labs, possible 10 points extra credit i.e. required 12 labs x 10=120 + extra 2 additional =140)

Criteria:

Attend labs. Lab participation is assessed during labs (10 points for attending on time/lab =14 labs, possible 10 points extra credit i.e. required 12 labs x 10=120 + extra 2 additional =140).

Procedure: Complete weekly.

Lecture attendance and participation.

Your total grade will be multiplied by a proportion)

Criteria:

Attend lecture and participate. Your total grade will be multiplied by a proportion

Your final point total $x[\text{Your lecture participation} / 14] \times 100$ (max 100%)

Example:

For two persons making 900 points

Person 1 14/14 attendances = 100% x 900 = 900 Grade= A

Person 2 10/14 attendances = 71% x 900= 639 Grade= D

A lecture participation sign up will be provided sometime during the lecture (usually associated with an exercise). You must be present to sign in or no credit is given for that day.

Procedure: Complete weekly.

Your personal resume

Points: 30

Criteria:

You will learn employable skills in this class. Your task is to integrate them into a practical, professional resume that you can use in search of employment. Procedure: Complete as assigned, turn in to your TA.

Project Draft Part 1

Points 40

Cover Sheet, Table of Contents; Section 1: Executive Summary (this will be blank for now); Section 2 : Purpose - Background

Information and Literature Review (3-5 pages);
Section 3: Methods (1-2 pages)

Criteria:

1) Complete a Draft of
Cover Sheet,
Table of Contents

Section 1: Executive Summary (this will be blank for now)

Section 2 : Purpose - Background Information and Literature Review (3-5 pages)

Section 3: Methods (1-2 pages)

2) Provide appropriate level of sentence structure, legibility or typing, spelling and grammar as required to complete this draft.

3) Be guided by the feedback from your TA's to improve this work.

Procedure: Turn this in on time for grading and feedback to your TA.

Writing, Conducting and Sampling Design, SPSS Program Points 70

Criteria:

1) Select a single research topic.

2) Write a one –two page survey instrument including instructions for completion and with at least one of each of the following items :

- An open-ended factual item
- A close-ended factual item
- An open-ended opinion item
- A close-ended opinion item
- A close-ended contingency item.

3) Make copies of the survey and collect data from any 10 persons (gender balance is important here).

4) Write an SPSS Program that formats the items in your survey.

5) Submit:

a. The survey in 2 above.

b. A hard copy of the SPSS Program in 3 above.

c. Write a brief sampling design for random sample for a telephone survey of 1,000,000 households.

Indicate the minimum sample size, the confidence intervals, and the standard error for this sample.

d. A printout of the frequency runs for all variables.

6) Provide an appropriate level of sentence structure, legibility or typing, spelling and grammar as required to complete this exercise.

Procedure: Work on this in lab or before. And give it to your TA for assessment.

Project Draft Part 2 Points 40

Section 4 Findings/Results (2-5 pages); Section 5 Summary and
Conclusions (pages 1-2); Section 6 References (pages 1-2).

Criteria:

1) Complete a Draft of

Section 4 Findings/Results (2-5 pages);

Section 5 Summary and Conclusions (pages 1-2);

Section 6 References (pages 1-2).

2) Provide appropriate level of sentence structure, legibility or typing, spelling and grammar as required to complete this draft.

3) Be guided by the feedback from your TA's to improve this work.

Procedure: Turn this in on time for grading and feedback to your TA.

5 minute Power Point Presentation, Executive Summary Points 100

Criteria:

1) Complete a final one-page executive summary with proper structure, spelling and organization.

2) Create a final Power Point presentation that summaries your research report in no more than 6 slides and no less than 3 slides.

3) Be prepared to load the file on a computer and make a 5-minute (no more) articulate presentation of the research findings.

Procedure: Oral presentation during lab. Assessment will be made during the presentation. Turn in hard copy of the Power point slides in handout form and hard copy of executive summary.

Final Project Points 250

Criteria:

1) Complete, double-spaced final report including sections on Introduction, Literature Review, Definitions, Limitations, Methods, Analysis, Results, Discussion, References.

2) Comprehensively and accurately state and analyze a two or three-variable hypothesis, using data from Data set <http://sda.berkeley.edu/archive.htm>

3) Provide appropriate level of sentence structure, project organization, citations, spelling and grammar as required to complete this exercise.

Procedure: Provide hard copy of the final project at the last lecture session. Do not email. If you want Dr. Steele to return your graded project, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope of the appropriate size for this purpose.

CHECKLIST for Project Components: SOCY202

Front Cover

. Title of the Project

If only a small number of variables are studied, the title should name the variables.
If many variables are studied, only the *types* of variables should be named.
The title of a journal article should be concise; the title of a thesis or dissertation may be longer.
A title should indicate what was studied – not the results or conclusions of the study.

. Name of the Researcher

. Period of Time Covered by the Report

. To whom the report was submitted (client's name)

. Date the report was submitted

. Make the cover appealing--know your corporate culture

Next page


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	Page
Section 1:	
	<i>Executive Summary</i>
Section 2	Purpose - Background Information and Literature Review (2-5 pages)
Section 3	Methods (1-2 pages)
Section 4	Findings/Results (2-5 pages)
Section 5	Summary and Conclusions (pages 1-2)
Section 6	References (pages 1-2)

Next page

Section 1: Executive Summary

- . One or, at the most, two pages
- . "What's and why's" of the project
- . Central findings
- . Use "bullets" or something like them

Tool		What is it? Tool: Creating an Executive Summary
Creating an Executive Summary		Busy people don't always have time to read your work... even if you think it's important! Many clients don't want a complete report. This is where an executive summary can be useful. Executive summaries are usually found in two places: At the beginning of a report, and Standing alone as a handout which summarizes the report.
Write or outline your entire report or presentation first!		How do I do it? While the executive summary is the first thing in a report it is likely to be the last thing that you will write. In order to write the most complete executive summary and only write it <u>once</u> : 1. Write your entire report or outline your presentation completely, then, 2. Extract the key parts for your summary.
Summarize four key parts: • Title and your name		With your target length one (or at the very most) or two pages, do the following: 1. The title of the report as it appears on the front cover of the paper or presentation and your name at the top of the page. You may want to add the date.
• Overview		1. Identify the next section as Overview. Immediately below this write a brief, well constructed paragraph that States the problem (what you did), Why you did it, Who was involved, When it happened, and, Who you did it for... your client.
• Key Findings and results		Write summary of what you found out. Start with one or two "lead-in" sentences and follow that with a series of short, terse statements that capture the central findings. This is a good place to use "bullets." Example: Findings and Results Six key outcomes characterized this project ... • Result 1 • Result 2 • Result... • Result 6
• Summary and Conclusions		Under Summary and Conclusions 1. Supply a short, well constructed paragraph outlining the degree to which the problem or issue was resolved, clarified or solved. Then, 2. Indicate what needs to be done next 3. If your client wants your to make recommendations, then this is a good place to put them.

Steele 2003

Next Pages

Section 2: Purpose - Background Information and Literature Review (3-5 pages)

. Origin of Project – Its Purpose

Start the introduction by describing the problem area; gradually shift its focus to specific research hypotheses, purposes, or questions.

The importance of a topic should be explicitly stated in the introduction

Sample beginning-

A “why are you doing this” statement. “Research surrounding attitudes toward abortion has a long history in the United States. The factors that influence attitudes toward abortion have been explored frequently, yet they continue to challenge researchers. Why is this important?”

Literature Review.

Start long introductions and literature reviews with a paragraph that describes their organization, and use subheadings to guide readers.

An overview of the literature surrounding abortion attitudes in the United States reveals

The literature review should be presented in the form of an essay – not in the form of an annotated list.

The literature review should emphasize the findings of previous research – not just the research methodologies and names of variables studied.

Point out trends and themes in the literature

Point out gaps in the literature.

.
Sample beginning-

Research surrounding attitudes toward abortion shows changes over the last three decades at the societal level. Yet, three variables maintained an association with this issue. In 1970 Americans indicated.... while two decades later they (literature). Throughout this period three variables maintained a significant positive association with attitudes toward abortion. (Literature cited that explains this)

Hypothesis(es) statement(s)

Sample beginning-

This project seeks to explore explain describe the association between x and y (social class and abortion attitudes; three key variables that influence abortion attitudes, etc). The association between x (x's) and y.

In light of the brief review of the literature and in the context of general changes in attitudes in the United States religiosity, social class and age have all been connected to abortion attitudes.

Religiosity and abortion attitudes.

Hypothesis 1: As religiosity increases, pro-abortion attitudes will tend to decrease.

Social Class and abortion attitudes.

Hypothesis 2: As socioeconomic status increases, pro-abortion attitudes will tend to increase.

Age and abortion attitudes.

Hypothesis 3: As age increases, pro-abortion attitudes will tend to decrease.

Writing Definitions and Limitations.

All variables in a research hypothesis, purpose, or question should be defined.

Theories and models on which the research is based should be defined.

Conceptual definitions should be specific.
Operational definitions should be provided. These are usually stated in the method section of a report or proposal.

Sample beginning-

For the purpose of this research, key variables must be defined. Conceptual definitions are provided below with their related operational definitions. Because variables for this project were selected from the General Social Survey, operational definitions align with those provide in the GSS codebook.

Variable	Conceptual definition	Operational definition
Age	The reported age of the respondent.	Date of birth? Recode into actual age in years. See pages 451 + in Babbie and Halley
Religiosity	The intensity of religious beliefs.	About how often do you pray? See pages 454 + in Babbie and Halley
Etc.		

Limitations in the study are largely due to the use of a secondary analysis of data. The connection between conceptual definitions (the intended nature of the hypothesis to be tested) and the operational definitions (the actual data that are available) are often strained. The researcher must “force” a fit between concept and available measurements in the GSS.

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Section 3: Methods (1-2 pages)

The participants should be described in enough detail for the reader to visualize them
When a sample is very small, consider providing a description of individual participants.
A population should be named, and if only a sample was studied, the method of sampling should be described.
For both unpublished and published instruments, information on reliability and validity, when available, should be reported.

This project utilizes a secondary analysis of the General Social Survey. Now see chapter 4 pages 31 – 33 Description of Your Data Sets. Summarize, but do not copy (cite this as a reference), the opening paragraphs (page 31-32, Sampling and Data Collection in 2-3 paragraphs that explain:

Where the data came from?

The overall strategy for collecting the data.

The nature of the sample.

How the data were collected.

Next Pages

Section 4: Findings/Results (3-5 pages)

Organize the analysis and results section around the research hypotheses, purposes, or questions stated in the introduction.
Standard statistical procedures need only be named; you do not need to show formulas or calculations
The scores of individual participants usually are not shown; instead, statistics based on the scores should be reported.
Present descriptive statistics first.
Organize large numbers of statistics in tables, and give each table a number and descriptive title (i.e., caption).
When describing the statistics presented in a table, point out highlights for the reader.
Statistical figures (i.e., drawings such as bar graphs) should be professionally drawn; they should be used sparingly in journal articles.

Some added thoughts on this -

Does your design have descriptive results and Does your design...

- Crosstabulate (tables) two or more things?
- Compare two or more things?
- Correlate ("relate two things")
- Cluster appropriate results around project and evaluation objectives;
- Report the general, overall findings, then,
 - a) Move on to discuss comparisons, correlations and/or crosstabulations within each objective.
 - b) Move from general to specific (subsection).

Write about results that describe the whole phenomenon first.
"Pro-abortion attitudes increased 25% between 1970 and 2000."

Then, report the findings in light of each of your hypotheses.

http://www.aacc.edu/csli/CSLI/PressRelease/PR_FA_2003.pDF

Uses a press release format, that is a good example for summarizing data. Look at the url above and other survey results on <http://www.aacc.edu/csli>.

Next pages

Section 5: Summary and Conclusions (pages 2)

Consider starting the discussion with a summary.

In the discussion, refer to the research hypotheses, purposes, or questions stated in the introduction. Point out the extent to which results of the current study are consistent with the results in the literature reviewed in the introduction.

Consider interpreting the results and offering explanations for them in the discussion section

Sample beginning-

Abortion attitudes continue to be challenging targets of study. This research tested the association between three key variables that have been linked to variation in abortion attitudes. The analysis checked hypotheses connecting changes in pro-abortion attitudes and age, religiosity, and social class.

While statistically significant findings were found for each of these independent variables, alternative variables and explanatory models may account for these outcomes....

Next pages

Section 6: References (pages 1-2)

Use APA or MLA format to site all references. Be sure to cite these references in the body of the report.
