

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIOLOGY

Spring 2008: Sociology 202, Sections 0101,0102,0103,0104

Lecture: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 – 12:15 PM, 1213 Art-Sociology Building
Lab: Monday, 9:00 – 10:50AM or 11:00 – 12:50 PM, 3217 Lefrak Hall Room 5 - 0214
Lab: Friday, 9:00 – 10:50AM or 11:00 – 12:50 PM, 3217 Lefrak Hall Room 5 - 0214

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description

This course will explore various aspects of sociological research from how the research methodology you choose shapes the questions you ask, to how it frames your research. We will explore the qualitative and quantitative paradigms and their related methodologies. Through lectures, labs, and assignments this course will introduce you to the process and practice of social research.

Course Goals

The goals of this course are for you to learn how to design, conduct, and report your research in a clear and concise manner. You will also acquire the skills to critique social science research. You will be able to identify and conduct sound social research while learning some of the important issues we face as social scientists.

Course Organization

We begin by examining fundamentals of social science inquiry such as causation, conceptualization, and sampling. Next, we discuss ethical issues in social science research. Next we explore key methods or ways of making observations about social life. Finally, we discuss the analysis of data and reporting of findings. In labs, you will explore data from the General Social Survey (GSS) and complete SPSS exercises while learning and building skills that you will use throughout the course.

REQUIRED TEXT

Required Textbooks

Babbie, Earl. (2006). *The Practice of Social Research*. 11th Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Babbie, Earl; Fred Haley; and Jeanne Zaino. (2007). *Adventures in Social Research: Data Analysis Using*

SPSS 14.0 and 15.0 for Windows. 6th Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

The required textbooks are available for purchase at the campus bookstore.

Required Readings

1. Rubin, Zick. 1970. "Measurement of Romantic Love." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 16:265-273.
2. Humphries, Laud. 1970. "Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places." Pp. 85-114 in *The Research Experience*, edited by M. Patricia Golden. Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock Pub.
3. Haney, Craig, W. Curtis Bank, and Philip G. Zimbardo. 1973. "Interpersonal Dynamics in a Simulated Prison." *International Journal of Criminology and Penology*, 1:69-97.
4. Ransford, Edward H. 1968. "Isolation, Powerlessness, and Violence: A study of Attitudes and Participation in the Watts Riot." *American Journal of Sociology*, 73:581-591

These required readings will be accessible through the university library, posted on ELMS (Blackboard), and/or available from the TAs.

You should read over the reading(s) indicated on the syllabus *prior to* lecture and lab. Some material will not be discussed in class. You should be certain you understand the main points of each chapter or article, and how they relate to social research as a whole. You should focus on making connections among ideas in readings, from lecture, and from lab work.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Participation

Attendance at lecture and lab is required. You are required to be at lecture and lab for the entire period. If you are late to class, or leave early, you are considered absent. If you are absent it is your responsibility to consult with another student to obtain a complete set of notes and to find out about any assignments that you may have missed. If you have a university-authorized excuse for missing an in-class assignment or turning in a homework assignment late, it must be documented in writing and turned in the following class period (for missed in-class exercises) or attached to your late assignment for consideration. Since attention to lecture, and participation in discussion and group exercises are important to the learning process both for the class as a whole and for you, attendance and participation are counted as part of your overall course grade.

Labs and Computing

For labs, meet in Art-Sociology lab Lefrak Hall Room 5 - 0214 unless directed otherwise. Do not go to the room indicated on the schedule of classes. Be sure to have a BSOS student computing account by September 8, 2008. You will need this to print in the lab room, which is required for certain in-lab assignments. To do so, present a valid student ID in room 0221, Lefrak Hall during business hours. Put a small amount of money (~\$5) on your account for printing on the laser printers (10 cents per page). Bring with you to lab each week: *Adventures in Social Research*, GSS diskette, jump-drive, and a calculator. If you are not already comfortable with computing, you should plan to spend time outside of lab during the first weeks of the semester to make yourself familiar with SPSS. You can work in small groups (no more

than three students) but each member will turn in their own lab assignments.

Homework Assignments

You will have regular (approximately weekly) assignments that will help you learn and understand concepts and prepare for class discussions, the final project, and exams. Due dates are usually Thursdays at 9:30AM in lecture, but will be specified on assignment handouts. We will not accept or grade late assignments. Assignments turned in after 9:30AM on the due date are considered late. This means that if you are late to class, your assignment is late and will not be graded. Towards the end of the semester, we will implement a “free day” where you are able to turn in one missing assignment for half credit. The free day will not be announced in advance.

Final Project

Your final project is to conduct original research on a topic of interest to you using the 2000 General Social Survey and to write up a 10-12 page professional paper; including a literature review, methods section, results of your data analysis, and a discussion. You should start thinking now about what concepts and variables you may be interested in examining. You can also access the website www.icpsr.umich.edu/GSS/ to give you ideas. You will turn in assignments related to the final project during the semester to get feedback regarding your ideas. The final project is due **Tuesday, December 9, 2008 by 9:30AM**. Final projects turned in after 9:30AM on the due date are considered late. This means that if you are late to class that day, your final project is also late. We will not accept or grade late projects.

Exams

Two in-class exams (including the final) are worth a total of 40% of your course grade. Exams are cumulative in the sense that concepts introduced early on will be used throughout the course. For the exams be sure to read the materials thoroughly, take notes, and understand the relations among readings and class materials. Make-up exams will not be offered except for documented university-authorized absences—death of a close family member, travel with a university sports team or serious illness on the day of the exam only. If you fail to notify me *prior to* a missed exam, you will fail the exam. For illnesses, I will only accept a handwritten note signed by your doctor and including a phone number to contact him/her indicating that you were incapable of taking the exam on the day it was scheduled. I will not accept pink slips indicating you were seen at the health center.

Grading

Your final grade is computed based on the following:

<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Final Grade</u>
Attendance and Participation	10%
Homework/Lab Assignments	30%
Exam I	20%
Final Project Proposal	5%
Final Project	15%
Final Exam	20%

In accordance with university policy you must have attempted each of the exams, assignments and the final project for a passing grade; grades of "incomplete" are not given except in extreme situations, and the following letter grades will be awarded:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%

C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	Below 60%

Academic Integrity

Cheating or any form of academic dishonesty can result in a permanent grade of “F/dishonesty” for the course. Written documents regarding late assignments or missed exams that contain false information are considered academic dishonesty cases and will be handled accordingly. Additionally, in accordance with the university’s nationally recognized Honor Code, on every homework and lab assignment, exam, and on the final project, you must write by hand the following honor pledge at the top of your work “*I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/exam*” and sign your name.

Students with Learning, Emotional, Psychological and Physical Disabilities

In accordance with university policy, every effort will be made to accommodate students who are registered with the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office and who provide me with a University of Maryland DSS Accommodation form that has been updated for the Fall 2008 semester. This form must be presented to me no later than October 1, 2008. I am not able to accommodate students who are not registered with DSS or who do not provide me with documentation that has been reviewed by DSS after October 1, 2008. If you are having difficulties in reading, note taking, writing, or preparing for exams, please take advantage of the campus Learning Assistance Service. See www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS for further information.

Disruptive Students

It is university policy and my policy that students are expected to treat each other with respect. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who are unable to show civility with one another, the teaching assistants, or myself will be subject to being referred to the Office of Student Conduct or to Campus Police. You are expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct. See www.jpo.umd.edu for further information.

Medical Excuses

Campus Senate policy requires students who are absent due to illness/injury to furnish documentary support to the instructor. I require students to contact me by email or by phone prior to class time to indicate that you have an illness or an injury. You must provide written documentation verifying your illness/injury immediately upon your return to class. You will not be allowed to turn in missed assignments or make up quizzes, tests, papers, etc. if you have not provided this documentation. Documentation not presented to me in a timely manner will not be accepted. In addition, if it is found that you have falsified the documentation provided, I will refer you to the University’s Student Conduct Office.”

Religious Observance

In accordance with university policy on religious observance, by **September 16, 2008**, students must provide me in writing a request for a make up exam if I have indicated a date on this syllabus that you are unable to make due to a specific religious observance (specify) on a specific date. Please see refer to the Online Undergraduate Catalog Policy on Religious Observance.

Inclement Weather

If campus is closed due to inclement weather or other campus emergencies, and assignments and/or

exams are schedule during the closure, the assignments and/or exams are due the next time our class meets.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

PART I: UNDERSTANDING FUNDAMENTALS OF INQUIRY

01/27, 01/29	Lecture: Overview and Human Inquiry Reading: Babbie, Practice, Chapter 1 Reading: Babbie, Adventures, Chapter 1-3	01/30, 02/02	Lab 1: Explore SPSS and describing your data Reading: Babbie, Adventure, Chapter 4-5
02/03, 02/05	Lecture: Theory Reading: Babbie, Practice, Chapters 2	02/06, 02/09	Lab 2: Presenting your data Reading: Babbie, Adventure, Chapter 6
02/10, 02/12	Lecture: Ethical Issues Reading: Babbie, Practice, Chapter 3 Reading: Laud, Humphries (1970)	02/13, 02/16	Lab 3: Recoding your data Reading: Babbie, Adventure, Chapter 7
02/17, 02/19	Lecture: Scholarly Literature Reading: Appendices A	02/20, 02/23	Lab 4: Univariate Analysis Reading(s): Babbie, Adventure, Chapters 8

PART II: METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

02/24, 02/26	Lecture: Research Design Reading: Babbie, Practice, Chapters 4-5 Reading: Rubin, Zick (1970)	02/27, 03/02	Lab 5: Univariate Analysis Continued Reading: Babbie, Adventure, Chapter 9
03/03, 03/05	Lecture: Sampling Readings(s): Babbie, Practice, Chapter 7	03/06, 03/09	Lab 6: Draw sample from GSS Reading: Babbie, Practice, Appendix B
03/10, 03/12	Lecture: Exam Review 03/10 MIDTERM EXAM: THURSDAY 03/12		
03/16-03/20	SPRING BREAK		

PART III: MODES OF SOCIAL OBSERVATION

03/24, 03/26	Lecture: Experimental Research Reading: Babbie, Practice, Chapter 8 Reading: Haney et al. (1973)	03/27, 03/30	Lab 7: Bivariate Analysis Reading: Babbie, Adventure, Chapter 10
03/31, 04/02	Lecture: Survey Design Reading: Babbie, Practice, Chapter 9 Reading: Ransford, Edward H. (1968)	04/03, 04/06	Lab 8: Bivariate Analysis Continued Reading: Babbie, Adventure, Chapters 11-12
04/07, 04/09	Lecture: Qualitative Field Research Reading: Babbie, Practice, Chapter 10	04/10, 04/13	Lab 9: Conduct Field Research Reading: TBD
04/14, 04/16	Lecture: Unobtrusive Measures Reading(s): Babbie, Practice, Chapter 11	04/17, 04/20	Lab 10: Work on proposals

PART IV: ANALYZING DATA AND REPORTING THE RESULTS

04/21, 04/23	Lecture: Quantitative Data Analysis Lecture: Reviewing Tables Reading(s): Babbie, Practice, Chapters 14 PROJECT DRAFT DUE TUESDAY (04/21) 9:30AM	04/24, 04/27	Lab 11: Measure of Association Reading(s): Babbie, Adventure, Chapter 13
04/28, 04/30	Lecture: Elaboration Model Lecture: Statistical Analysis Reading(s): Babbie, Practice, Chapter 15-16	05/01, 05/04	Lab 12: Chapter 14, Complete Project, Final Review
05/05, 05/07	Student Presentations PROJECT DUE TUESDAY (05/05) 9:30AM	05/08, 05/11	Lab 13: Final Exam Review
05/14	FINAL EXAM: TUESDAY (8:00 – 10:00AM)		

NOTE: The order or coverage of these topics may change as we move through the semester!