**ADVANCED RESEARCH METHODS**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

At the heart of every science are the methodological strategies that distinguish the scientific perspective from other forms of knowledge-building. Sociology has been a maturing science for more than a century, with a wide range of methods that trained researchers use to investigate social phenomena. The present course serves as an introduction to the dominant approaches and important tools that sociologists often employ to study social life. By the end of the academic term, students should have a much greater appreciation for what distinguishes sociological research from other disciplines (e.g., the humanities) and other approaches to knowledge-building such as religious authority, tradition, common sense, and mass media communications. In combination with our introductory class in statistics, the course ideally should provide students with a range of practical skills and prepare students for more advanced study in social research methods and statistics.

**Grade breakup:**

Class participation and attendance 10%

Quizzes 20%

Mid-term exam 30%

Final Exam 40%

**REQUIRED TEXT**

The following text is required reading and available at the bookstore:

Neuman, W. Lawrence, and Karen Robson. 2012. *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (2nd Canadian edition). Toronto: Pearson Education Canada.

**Week 1**

Part I: Philosophy of Science

Introduction to the class and Forms of Knowledge

Forms of Knowledge Continued

**Reading Assignment:** Babbie Chapter 1

Theory in the Social Sciences

**Reading Assignment:** Babbie Chapter 2

**Note:** Writing Assignment 1 Handed Out and Discussed

**Week 2**

The Relationship between Theory and Data

Causality in the Social Sciences

**Reading Assignment:** Babbie Chapter 4, pages 92-104

Causality Continued

**Writing Assignment 1 Due**

**Week 3**

Ethics in the Social Sciences

**Reading Assignment:** Babbie Chapter 3

An Example of Questionable Ethics

**Week 4**

Exam Review

**Exam 1**

Part II: Designing a Research Project

Research Design

**Reading Assignment:** Babbie Chapter 4

**Week 5**

Discussion of Exam 1 and The Literature Review

**Reading Assignment:** Babbie Chapter 15, pages 457 and 458

**Note:** Writing Assignment 2 Handed Out and Discussed

Conceptualization

**Reading Assignment:** Babbie Chapter 5, pages 120-135

Operationalization

**Reading Assignment:** Babbie Chapter 5, pages 135-144

**Week 6**

Operationalization Continued

Measurement

**Reading Assignment:** Babbie Chapter 5, pages 144-151

Measurement Continued

**Week 7**

Mid-term Exam

**Week 8**

Part III: Methods of Data Collection

Experimental Methods

**Reading Assignment:** Babbie Chapter 8

**Week 9**

Discussion of Exam 2 and Experiments Continued

Discussion of an Experiment

**Reading Assignment:** Drachman, Davidand Stephen Worchel.

(1976). “Misattribution of Arousal as a Means of Dissonance Reduction.” *Sociometry*, Vol. 39, No. 1, pp. 53-59

Sampling

**Reading Assignment:** Babbie Chapter 7

**Week 10**

Sampling Continued

Sampling vs. Random Assignment

Surveys

**Reading Assignment:** Babbie Chapter 9

**Week 11**

Surveys Continued

Discussion of a Survey

**Reading Assignment:** Marler, Penny L. and C. Kirk Hadaway. (2000).

“Being Religious or Being Spiritual in America: A Zero-Sum Proposition.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion.* Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 289-300

**Week 12**

Field Research

**Reading Assignment:** Babbie Chapter 10

**Note:** Writing Assignment 4 Handed Out and Discussed

Field Research Continued

Discussion of Field Research

**Reading Assignment:** Snow, David A. and Leon Anderson.

(1987). “Identity Work Among the Homeless: The Verbal Construction and Avowal of Personal Identities.” *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 92, No. 6, pp. 1336-1371

**Week 13**

Part IV: Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis – Coding

**Reading Assignment:** Babbie Chapter 14

Quantitative Data Analysis – Data Cleaning and Missing Data

**Week 14**

Qualitative Data Analysis

**Reading Assignment:** Babbie Chapter 13

**Week 15**

Qualitative Data Analysis Continued

**Writing Assignment 5 Due**

Discussion of Writing Assignment 5

**Week 16**

**Research Proposal Due**

Final Exam Review

**Final Exam**

1. Alwin, Duene F. 2007. Margins of Error; A Study of Reliability in Survey Measurments. U.S.A. : John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
2. Babbie, Earl. 2004. The Practice of Social Research. 10th Edition. Belmont: CA Words Worth Publishing.
3. Bridge Semekh & Culhy. 2005. Research Methods in the Social Science. New Delhi: Vistaar Publiser.
4. Christopher Winship, 2003, Sociological Methods and Research. London: Sage Publications.
5. Schutt, Russell K. (1999) *Investigating the Social World:  The Process and Practice of Research*.  Second Edition.  Thousand Oaks, CA: [Pine Forge Press.](http://www.pineforge.com)
6. Schutt, Russell K. and Matthew Archibald (1999) *Study Guide and Activities to Accompany Investigating the Social World*.  Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
7. Supplementary (not required): Shaffer, Richard, et al. (2000) [*SPSS for Windows, Version 9: A Brief Tutorial*.](http://www.csubak.edu/ssric/Modules/SPSS/SPSFirst.htm)