

SOCIOLOGY 352 (10868)
METHODS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH
FALL 2011

MWF 10-10⁵⁰ am, Morton Hall 220

Professor Caroline Hanley
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Course overview:

This course is designed to introduce you to the types of data used in social science research and the methods that are used to extract meaning from that data. Specifically, you will learn skills necessary to evaluate the strengths/weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative approaches, interpret the main arguments of different methods, and assess whether research findings support stated conclusions. The first part of the course focuses on fundamental concepts in sociological research methods. The second part of the course emphasizes hands-on data collection and analysis using a variety of methods.

Course materials:

- Earl Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research* (earlier editions are fine)
- Katherine Newman, *No Shame in My Game: The Working Poor in the Inner City*
- Additional materials found on course Blackboard (Bb) page
- Composition notebook for in-class exercises



Requirements:

Your grade in this course will be based on the following components:

Take-home midterm exam:	20%
Research portfolio:	40%
Final examination:	25%
Participation:	15%

Numeric grades will be converted into letter grades as follows:

100-94: A
93-90: A-
89-87: B+
86-84: B
83-80: B-, etc.

Expectations and policies:

While in class please observe basic rules of courtesy: arrive on time, do not speak while others are speaking, and, if possible, remain in the room for the entire class period. Students who must leave during class or arrive late should alert the instructor in advance. Cell phones should be turned off and put away. Class notes cannot be taken on laptops except in instances of documented medical necessity.

You will need to attend class regularly to successfully complete the course. Each week there will be an in-class exercise designed to apply key concepts and underscore nuances in the material. Completion of these exercises is a key part of your participation grade.

You are responsible for material presented in lecture that may not be covered in the readings, and vice versa. Readings are due on the Wednesday of each week unless otherwise noted.

Failure to turn in an assignment will result in a zero for that assignment. Receiving an extension because of an absence requires notice from the Health Center or the Dean of Students. Late assignments will be penalized 2/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late (i.e., an A- handed in one day late becomes a B).

Papers and exams will be returned within 2 weeks of the due date. You are advised to keep all graded work that has been returned until final grades are issued, and to keep all documentation of indispositions. If you choose to dispute a grade you have received, you must come to the instructor's office hours with the assignment in question and a short written statement of why you feel the grade should be changed. Grade re-evaluations will take into account both previously unnoticed strengths and previously unobserved weaknesses.

Academic integrity:

Academic dishonesty will be treated with the utmost seriousness. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating on tests and plagiarizing the work of others. You are urged to review the College's policies on academic dishonesty on the website maintained by the Dean of Students.

Course Schedule:

I. PRINCIPLES OF RESEARCH DESIGN

WEEK 1: Logic of Social Scientific Inquiry (August 24th – 26th)

- Gross, Neil. 2011. "American Academe and the Knowledge-Politics Problem." Pp. 111-141 in *The American Academic Profession: Changing Forms and Functions*, edited by Joseph Hermanowicz. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. (Bb)

WEEK 2: Paradigms, Theory & Research (August 29th – September 2nd)

- Babbie Ch. 1 (pp. 2-28), 4 (pp. 97-101, 116-122)
- Babbie Ch. 2 (pp. 32-48)

WEEK 3: Concepts, Variables & Measurement (September 5th – 9th)

- Gladwell, Malcolm. 2007. "None of the Above: What I.Q. Doesn't Tell You about Race." *The New Yorker*. (Bb)
- Fischer, Claude et al. 1996. Ch. 2-3 in *Inequality by Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Bb)
- Babbie Ch. 5 (pp. 128-148, 156-163)
- TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM ASSIGNED

WEEK 4: Qualitative Vs. Quantitative Research Design (September 12th – 16th)

- Newman Preface, Ch. 1-3, 6, 8

WEEK 5: The Logic of Sampling (September 19th – 23rd)

- Babbie Ch. 7 (pp. 202-215) & review Newman Ch. 2

WEEK 6: Experiments & the Logic of Research Design (September 26th – 30th)

- Babbie Ch. 8 (pp. 245-260)
- Steele, Claude and Joshua Aronson. 1995. "Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 69, 5: 797-811. (focus on pp. 797-801) (Bb)

II. APPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH DESIGN

WEEK 7: The Ethics and Politics of Social Research (October 3rd – 7th)

- MIDTERM EXAM DUE Monday October 3rd
- Burawoy, Michael. 2005. "For Public Sociology." (Bb)
- Babbie Ch. 3 (pp. 64-89)

~~ No class Monday Oct 10th ~~

WEEK 8: Survey Research (October 12th – 14th)

- Babbie Ch. 9 (pp. 269-186, 303-305), Ch. 5 (pp. 149-153), Ch. 6 (pp. 167-171, 180-181)

WEEK 9: Survey Research, con'd. (October 17th – 21st)

- Babbie Ch. 14 (pp. 448-467)

WEEK 10: Participant Observation & In-depth Interviewing (October 24th – 28th)

- Babbie Ch. 10 (pp. 314-323, 327-331, 336-350)

WEEK 11: Participant Observation & In-depth Interviewing, con'd. (October 31st – November 4th)

- Babbie Ch. 13 (pp. 418-431, 442-444)

WEEK 12: Content Analysis / Comparative & Historical Research (November 7th – 11th)

- Babbie Ch. 11 (pp. 354-368, 375-384)

WEEK 13: Content Analysis / Comparative & Historical Research, con'd. (November 14th – 18th)

- No new reading.

-- No class Friday November 25th --

WEEK 14: (Re)Assessing Methods' Strengths & Weaknesses (November 21st – 23rd)

- No new reading.

WEEK 15: Critical Analysis of Research Report (November 28th – December 2nd)

- RESEARCH PORTFOLIO DUE Wednesday November 30th
- Pager, Devah and Lincoln Quillian. 2005. "Walking the Talk? What Employers Say Versus What They Do." *American Sociological Review* 70, 3 (June): 355-380. (Bb)

Final Examination Wednesday December 7th 2-5pm (location t.b.a.)