

Research Principles and Practice

Fall 2012

Monday 9:45 am

Wednesday 8:15 am

Instructor: Dr. Lynda Harling Stalker

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Office Hours: Tuesday 9-11am and 1-2pm; Wednesdays 1-2pm; Friday 9-11am; or by appointment

Course description

This course addresses how various theoretical assumptions shape the aims and practices of research in sociology. It provides students with empirical research design principles and an introduction to methods of collecting and recording data, assessing reliability and validity, and conducting data analysis. Different research strategies are introduced. The ethical implications of research will be discussed.

Course objective

Sociology 202 aims to:

- give the student a theoretical and practical overview of the work of a sociologist
- introduce the student to the basic concepts of sociological methods as preparation for more specialised courses in the field
- help the student acquire basic literacy of sociological methodologies

In order to attain the objectives, the student should be able to do the following:

- reflect critically upon the social, political and economic context of the research process;
- display a critical awareness of the main theoretical and methodological perspectives surrounding the practice of research in the social sciences;
- identify how these perspectives have actively shaped our approaches to researching the social world;
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a range of methodological techniques across the quantitative and qualitative spectrum;
- display a reflexive understanding of the ethical frameworks and competing ethical claims which surround social sciences research.

Textbooks



Social Research: Issues Methods and Practices, 4th ed. Tim May.

This is available at the Campus Bookstore

Evaluation

In-class tests (2 x 35% of final grade)

These in-class tests will test the material from readings and lectures up to time of the test.

Final test (30%)

This will be scheduled by the registrar's office. You will have to read and critically evaluate a piece of sociological research. More details will be provided closer to the time.

Plagiarism and cheating

Copy of direct quotes or ideas without acknowledging the original author is considered plagiarism. Handing in a paper that you did not write, or a paper that you handed in for another class without permission of the instructor is also considered an infraction. These are serious academic offences. Cheating is producing any work that is not your own, either by copying off a fellow classmate or extra aids. Any such offences will result in a ZERO in this course and referred onto university officials. For more information on plagiarism see the university calendar.

Special Needs

If a student requires special accommodations, please see the instructor as soon as possible.

Electronic guidelines for this course

- Mobile communication devices are not permitted during class time. This includes cell phone and laptops. If you are noticed using one, you will be asked to leave the classroom. If you require a laptop for notetaking, please speak with the instructor. In such cases, you will be asked to sit in the first couple of rows of seats.

Class schedule

September 5: Introduction to Course
Introduction

September 10: What is / is not Social Science Research?

September 12: Social Science Theories – Part one
Chapter one

September 17: Social Science Theories – Part two

September 19: Linking theory and research
Chapter two

September 24: Values
Chapter three

September 26: Ethics

October 1: TEST

October 3: Official Statistics
Chapter four

October 8: NO CLASS

October 10: Survey research
Chapter five

October 15: Interviewing
Chapter six

October 17: Interviewing

October 22: Participant Observation
Chapter seven

October 24: Documentary research
Chapter eight

October 29: Case study research
Chapter nine

October 31: Comparative
Chapter ten

November 5: TEST

November 7: Research in practice and the research report
Chapter eleven

November 12: Summarising the research report

November 14: Quantitative research report

November 19: Quantitative research report

November 21: Qualitative research report

November 26: Qualitative research report

November 28: Review and further practice