SOCIOLOGY 355WR: SOCIAL RESEARCH I
Spring Semester 2013
Tarbutton 120A

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Wed 1-2:30

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COURSE OVERVIEW
This course is a practical introduction to research methods commonly used by social scientists. It will focus on four central questions: How do I translate a theoretical issue into a concrete research question? Which research method is most appropriate to investigate this research question? How do I make sense of data collected? How do I best communicate my findings? Taking a hands-on approach, the class will conduct a survey with Emory undergraduates and you will collect and analyze these data as the basis for your final empirical research paper. This course will give you the competence and skills necessary to not only understand and critically evaluate arguments and data presented to you at work or in the media every day, but also to engage in social inquiry yourself.

Blackboard site: https://classes.emory.edu
Log in, and then click on Soc355WR: Social Research I-001 (Browne). This site will include all materials that are handed out in class (the syllabus, instructions for written assignments, etc.), as well as outlines of the lectures. Any important announcements will also be posted on this site.

READINGS
The book listed below is the required text for this course. It is available in the Emory Bookstore and on reserve in the Woodruff Library (Note: You can use earlier editions of the book (e.g. 12th edition), but you are responsible for finding the appropriate chapters/ readings as the page numbers have shifted between editions.)


Reserve Readings
There are a few additional readings to help you understand the research process. Some are already part of the syllabus, and are marked with an asterisk (*) in the Class Schedule below (pp. 4-7 of this syllabus). Others will be announced as we go through the semester. These readings will be in e-reserves in electronic format.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
The goal of this class is to teach you to DO social research, thus, we focus on activities that involve doing different aspects of research. Because there are no exams, you are expected to put a lot of energy and effort into the assignments and the final paper!
A. **Class Participation (10%)**  
**Participation in class discussions and in-class exercises is very important. Attendance is strongly encouraged.** Missing more than 2 required classes will lead to deductions in points, as will little or no participation. (Note: if you are shy and have difficulty speaking in class, please see me; there will be other options for this requirement – e.g., writing memos about the readings.)

Many classes will involve **in-class exercises.** Some are already noted on the syllabus; other exercises will be determined as we go through the semester. These exercises will not be graded beyond: participation or no participation.

B. **8 written assignments (50% total)**  
These 8 assignments are integral to the course and your final research paper. Together they account for 50% of your final grade.

- Assignments 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, & 8 are worth 5% each (30% total)
- Assignments 2 & 5 are 10% each (20% total)
- The first 4 assignments constitute the beginning of your research project. The 1st assignment has you choose a research topic and formulate research questions based on that topic. The 2nd assignment is an annotated bibliography on your topic which will be the basis of your literature review in the final paper. The 3rd assignment focuses on clarifying your hypotheses and your research design. The 4th assignment is data collection for the class survey.
- Assignments 5 & 6 are exercises on using other (non-survey) research methods such as in-depth interviews and content analysis.
- Assignments 7 & 8 involve analyses of the survey data collected for your research project using SPSS.

C. **Extra-Credit Reading Memos**  
For 10 of the readings (marked by * on class schedule below), I will post discussion questions on Blackboard (under ‘extra-credit’). Each extra-credit assignment is worth .5 points towards your final grade. Memos must be typed and given to me in class. I do not accept late submissions of extra credit assignments.

D. **Final Research Paper (40%)**

- The Final Research Paper will be 15-20 pages in length.
- It is due Thursday, May 2nd by 7pm.

All written assignments must be typed and given to me during class. I do not accept assignments through email. **You will submit your final paper on Blackboard through SafeAssign.**

The overall goal of this class is to teach you how to develop your own sociological research project, implement it, and write it up. Thus, the major assignment for this class is completion of a research paper, based on your own sociological research topic. For practical reasons, everyone’s research project will involve the method of a) **survey research** and b) **in-depth interviews.** We will develop and implement the survey as a class and you will develop the in-depth interviews individually. The survey will be broad enough to allow many different research questions. Many of the short assignments will
be preliminary sections of the paper. More specific instructions for the paper will be handed out separately.

Overview of Assignments and Due Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment #</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Developing a research question</td>
<td>Jan-29</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>Feb-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Conceptualization, Operationalization and Hypotheses</td>
<td>Feb-26</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Survey Project which consists of several parts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pilot test Online Survey</td>
<td>Feb-05</td>
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<td>1st EMAIL for Online Survey</td>
<td>Feb-10</td>
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<td>2nd EMAIL for Online Survey</td>
<td>Feb-19</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3rd EMAIL for Online Survey</td>
<td>Mar-17</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Interview study</td>
<td>Apr-11</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Content Analysis (in class)</td>
<td>Apr-04</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Univariate Data Analysis</td>
<td>Apr-18</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bivariate Data Analysis</td>
<td>Apr-25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>May-02</td>
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OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Accommodating Disabilities:
If you have or acquire any sort of condition that may require special accommodation(s), please inform me AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (e.g., not the day of an exam) so that we may make the appropriate arrangements. Proper documentation from the Office of Disabilities Services will be required. Please contact their office to get more information on available services and accommodations, as well as documentation requirements. They can be reached at 404-727-9877 or via the web at http://www.ods.emory.edu.

Academic Conduct:
All students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the policies of Emory College with respect to conduct and academic honesty. Anyone engaging in acts that violate these policies, such as plagiarism or cheating, will be referred to the Honors Council. For more information on the Emory Honor Code, see http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html.

Late Assignments:
I will accept late assignments, but your grade on the assignment will be lowered by 10% per day (e.g. if the assignment is worth 5 (or 10) points, I will deduct 0.5 (or 1) point) for each day the assignment is late. Assignments turned in to my office, to my box, under my door, via stork, or via email are considered late, so give yourself plenty of time to complete assignments. ONLY assignments handed DIRECTLY TO ME IN CLASS on the DAY THE ASSIGNMENT IS DUE are considered on time. Most reasons to turn in a late assignment are not valid. I will be the judge of what constitutes a valid excuse and what does not. Personal illness and family emergencies are valid excuses, but they still will require documentation. Oversleeping, trips out of town, interviews, car trouble, and work-related absences are not valid excuses for missing an assignment.
The use of cell phones, pagers or other electronic devices is not permitted in this class. Please turn OFF your phones and pagers before entering the classroom. Receiving phone calls or texting during class will lower your participation grade.

**TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE**  (subject to change)

### WEEK 1
**Why Research Methods?**

- **Jan 15:** Introductions
- **Jan 17:** Babbie, Chapter 1 – Human Inquiry and Science (pp. 3-29)
  *Tanenbaum, Deborah. *SLUT! Growing Up Female with a Bad Reputation.*
  - *In class exercise: Journalism vs. Empirical Research
  - *Assignment #1 handed out

### WEEK 2
**Theory and Research: How do they relate?**

- **Jan 22:** Babbie, Chapter 2 – Paradigms, Theory and Social Research (pp. 30-59)
  - Read Blog: “What the heck is research anyway?” (Link on BB)
- **Jan 24:** Babbie, chapter 4 – Research Designs (pp. 88-118)
  - Discuss Questions for Surveys & Pilot Testing Surveys
  - *In class exercise: Research Questions
  - *Assignment #2 handed out

### WEEK 3
**Research Design: Decisions, Decisions**

- **Jan 29:** Babbie, Chapter 17 – Reading and Writing Social Research (pp. 498-521)
  - Liz McBride presentation for completing Assignment 2
  - *Assignment #4 handed out
  - Assignment #1 due
  - *In class exercise: Critique of Stack & Gundlach
  - *PILOT TEST SURVEY sometime over weekend (part of Assignment 4)*

### WEEK 4
**Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement**

- **Feb 5:** Babbie, Chapter 5 – Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement (pp. 124-156)

**Assignment #3 handed out**

**Feb 7:** Babbie, Chapter 6 – “Indexes, Scales and Typologies” pp.158-166 (read until end of “Examination of Empirical Relationships”), 177-178 (Likert Scaling)

**Send first survey email on Sunday, Feb 10 (part of Assignment 4)**

**WEEK 5**

**Surveys and Survey Design**

**Feb 12:** Babbie, Chapter 9 – Survey Research (pp. 252-274)  

**Assignment #2 due**

**Feb 14:** Babbie, Chapter 9 – Survey Research (pp. 274-291)  

**In Class Exercise:** Survey Design

**WEEK 6**

**Sampling: How to decide who will be in the study?**

**Feb 19:** Babbie, Chapter 7 – The Logic of Sampling (pp. 187-205)  

**In Class Exercise:** Sampling

**Send 2nd survey email on Tuesday, Feb. 20th (Assignment #4)**

**Feb 21:** Babbie, Chapter 7 – The Logic of Sampling (pp. 206-224)  

**WEEK 7**

**Writing a Literature Review**

**Feb 26:** Babbie, Chapter 17 – Reading and Writing Social Research (pp. 498-521)

**Assignment #3 due**

**Feb 28:** Work on literature review

**WEEK 8**

**Ethics in Research**

**Mar 5:** Babbie, Chapter 3 – Ethics and Politics of Social Research (pp. 60-83)

**In Class Exercise:** Ethics
Mar 7:  

Mar 11-15: **Spring Break!**

**WEEK 9**  
**Experiments**  
Mar 19:  
Babbie, Chapter 8 – Experiments (pp. 228-251)  
*Assignment #5 handed out*  
**SEND 3rd SURVEY EMAIL on Tues, Mar 19 (Assignment #4)**

Mar 21:  

**WEEK 10**  
**Qualitative Methods**  
Mar 26:  
Babbie, Chap. 10 – Qualitative Field Research (pp. 294-328)

Mar 28:  

**WEEK 11**  
**Qualitative Methods: Analysis**  
**Unobtrusive Research: Content Analysis & New Modes of Research**

Apr 2:  
Babbie, Chapter 13 – Qualitative Data Analysis (pp. 389-403 until end of “concept memoing”)  
*Glasser, Carol L., Belinda Robnett, and Cynthia Feliciano. 2009. —Internet Daters’ Body Type Preferences: Race-Ethnic and Gender Differences. *Sex Roles*, April 14th, Published Online.*

Apr 4:  
Babbie, Chapter 11 – Unobtrusive Research (pp. 329-403 until end of “strengths and weaknesses of content analysis”)  
*Assignment #6 in class*

**WEEK 12**  
**Quantitative Data Analysis I:** Data Entry and Univariate Analysis in SPSS  
Apr 9:  
Babbie, Chapter 14 – Quantitative Data Analysis (pp. 414-429, up to “Bivariate Analyses,” pp. 437-438, “Ethics and Quantitative Data Analysis”  
*Assignment #7 handed out*

Apr 11:  
Babbie, Chapter 16 – Statistical Analyses (pp. 459-465, up to “Regression Analysis”)  
Work on Assignment #7 in class  
*Assignment #5 due*
Assignment #8 handed out

WEEK 13  
**Quantitative Data Analysis II:** Bivariate Analysis and Creating Tables in SPSS
*Apr 16:* Babbie, Chapter 14 – Quantitative Data Analysis (pp. 430-434 “Bivariate Analysis”)  
Babbie, Chapter 16 – Statistical Analyses (pp. 469-480, “Inferential Statistics”)

*Apr 18:* **Assignment #7 due**  
Work on Assignment #8 in class

WEEK 14  
**Putting It All Together: Writing Up Your Research Study**
*Apr 23:* Work on Assignment #8 in class  
Final paper instructions handed-out

*Apr 25:* **LAST DAY OF CLASS**  
Review resources and examples under “Guidelines & Resources” on BB  
**Assignment #8 due**

*May 2 (Thurs):** Final Paper due by 7pm (post in SafeAssign on Bb)