COURSE OVERVIEW
This course is a practical introduction to research methods commonly used by social scientists, including surveys, in-depth interviews, experiments, and participant observation. The course has three main objectives. First, you will learn how to translate theoretical issues into researchable sociological questions. Second, you will learn how to choose an appropriate research design and recognize its strengths and limitations. Third, you will gain actual experience in the collection and analysis of data. The overall goal is to provide you with the critical skills necessary for being a savvy consumer and producer of social research data.

Blackboard site: https://classes.emory.edu, Log in, then click on Soc355: Social Research I - Spring 2012. This site will include all materials that we hand 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 and is available in the Emory Bookstore, and is also available on reserve in Woodruff Library:


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. 4-8 of this syllabus). Others will be announced as we go through the semester. These readings will be on reserve in electronic format.

- On the BLACKBOARD site, simply look for the button marked “Reserve Readings.” All you need to do is download the article. I recommend doing this from an on-campus location (library, dorm, cluster). Off-campus downloading efforts may be difficult or cumbersome.
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 the class does not have a lot of reading and there are no exams, you are expected to put a lot of energy and effort into the assignments and the final paper!

1. Class Participation & Presentation (10%)
Class Participation (5%)
Participation in class discussions is very important, particularly discussions that focus on developing and implementing the class survey. 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.)

Class Presentation (5%)
Each student will be required to make a brief (10 minute) presentation about a popular news article or blog post. This presentation will involve critiquing the information found in a popular news or internet source, according to the standards and logic that you learn from sociological research methods. Further instructions will be provided.

Presentations will be on some Fridays throughout the course, as well as the last week of the course (see syllabus for specific days). You must sign up for your presentation day by January 27th.

2. 8 short 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 first 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. 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.
- Assignments 7 & 8 involve analyses of the survey data collected for your research project.
3. Final Research Paper (40%)

- The Final Research Paper will be 15-20 pages in length.
- Final Paper is due **Wednesday, May 9th by 7pm**.

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 **survey** research, and will be based on a survey that we develop and implement as a class. 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.

**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 404-727-6016 or via the web at [http://www.ods.emory.edu](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](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 ½ a letter grade for each day the assignment is late. 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 some form of 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 is not permitted in this class. Please turn OFF your phones before entering the classroom.*
**TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE**  (subject to change)

**WEEK 1**  
**Why Research Methods?**  
*Jan 18:*  
Introductions

*Jan 20:*  
Babbie, Chapter 1

*Jan 23:*  
Babbie, Appendix G (p. A28 at end of book)

**WEEK 2**  
**Theory and Research: How do they relate?**  
*Jan 25:*  
Babbie, pgs 31-34, 44-61
**Assignment #1 handed out**

*Jan 27:*  
Babbie, pp. 505-521  
**Assignment #2 handed out**

**WEEK 3**  
**Research Design: Decisions, Decisions**  
*Jan 30:*  
Babbie, chapter 4.  
**Assignment #1 due**

*Feb 1:*  

*Feb 3:*  
Discuss Questions for Surveys

**WEEK 4**  
**Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement**  
*Feb 6:*  
Babbie, pp. 124-150  
**Assignments #3& #4 handed out**

*Feb 8:*  
Babbie, pp. 150-157, 161-165 (read up until Examination of Empirical Relationships), 166 box at top of page

*Feb 10:*  
Discuss Pilot Testing Surveys  
**PILOT TEST SURVEY sometime over weekend (part of Assignment 4)**
WEEK 5  Surveys and Survey Design  
Feb 13:  Babbie, pp. 254-273  
Assignment #2 due  
Feb 15:  Babbie, pp. 282-292  
Feb 17:  Discuss Implementation of Survey  
SEND FIRST SURVEY EMAIL on SUNDAY, FEB. 19 (part of Assignment #4)  

WEEK 6  Sampling: How to decide who will be in the study?  
Feb 20:  Babbie, pp. 188-208  
Feb 22:  Babbie, 208-226  
Feb 24:  3 Student Presentations  
SEND 2nd SURVEY EMAIL on TUESDAY, Feb 28 (Assignment #4)  

WEEK 7  Ethics in Research  
Feb 27:  Babbie, chapter 3  
Assignment #3 due  
Mar 2:  3 Student Presentations  
SEND 3rd SURVEY EMAIL on SUNDAY, March 4 (Assignment #4)  

WEEK 8  Experiments  
Mar 5:  Babbie, chapter 8  
Assignment #5 handed out  
Mar 9:  CLASS CANCELLED – Enjoy Spring Break!  
Mar 12-16:  Spring Break!
WEEK 9  Qualitative Methods
Mar 19:  Babbie, pp. 286-303


Mar 23:  3 Student Presentations

WEEK 10  Qualitative Methods: Analysis
        Unobtrusive Research: Content Analysis & New Modes of Research
Mar 26:  Babbie, Chapter 13

Mar 28:  Babbie, pp. 332-344

Mar 30:  Assignment #6 in class

WEEK 11  Quantitative Data Analysis I: Data Entry and Univariate Analysis in SPSS

Apr 2:  Babbie, pp. 422-436; (Optional reading: Babbie, chapter 15)
*Assignment #7 handed out*

Apr 4:  *Assignment #5 due*

Apr 6:  Work on Assignment #7
*Assignment #8 handed out*

WEEK 12  Quantitative Data Analysis II: Bivariate Analysis and Creating Tables in SPSS

Apr 9:  Babbie, pp. 436-441

Apr 11:  Discussion of Assignment #8 and Analysis Decisions

Apr 13:  Work on Assignment #8
WEEK 13 Putting It All Together: Writing Up Your Research Study

Apr 16: Babbie, chapter 17  
Assignment #7 due

Apr 18: *Review resources and examples under “Guidelines & Resources” on Blackboard

Apr 20: 3 Student Presentations

WEEK 13 Presentations & Wrap-Up

Apr 23: 3 Student Presentations  
Assignment #8 due

Apr 25: 3 Student Presentations

Apr 27: 3 Student Presentations

Apr 30: OPTIONAL CLASS: Work on your Papers

May 9 (Wed): Final Paper due by 7pm