

SOCIOLOGY 355W: RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIOLOGY

Fall Semester 2018

Tarbutton 106

10 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

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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.

Canvas site: <https://classes.emory.edu>,

Log in, and then click on **Soc355W: Social Research I-000 (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.

Carr, Deborah, Elizabeth Hegere Boyle, Benjamin Cornwell, Shelley Correll, Robert Crosnoe, Jeremy Fresse, Mary Waters. 2017. *The Art and Science of Social Research*. [Referenced as “Carr et al.” in the syllabus]

Reserve Readings

There are additional readings on the syllabus to help you understand the research process. Some are already part of the syllabus. Others will be announced as we go through the semester. These readings will be in e-reserves in electronic format and can be accessed through Canvas.

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, 5, 7, & 8 are worth 5% each (30% total)
- Assignments 2 & 6 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. Reading Preps (5%)

You are required to complete 10 of the reading preps (marked by * on class schedule below). (I'll take the 8 highest scores if you do more than 10). Each reading prep assignment is worth .5 points towards your final grade. Reading preps must be typed and submitted through Canvas. I do not accept late submissions of reading preps.

D. Final Research Paper (35%)

- The Final Research Paper will be 15-20 pages in length.
- It is due Friday, Dec. 14 by 11:59 pm.

All written assignments must be typed and submitted through Canvas. I do not accept assignments through email. You will submit your final paper on Canvas.

Goal and class format: 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 and will be posted on Canvas.

Overview of Assignments and Due Dates

Assignment #	Assignment	Due Date
1	Developing a research question	Sept 13
2	Annotated Bibliography	Sept 27
3	Conceptualization, Operationalization and Hypotheses	Oct 23
4	Survey Project which consists of several parts	
	Pilot test Online Survey	Sept 16
	1 st EMAIL for Online Survey	Sept 23
	2nd EMAIL for Online Survey	Oct 14
	3rd EMAIL for Online Survey	Oct 28
5	Content Analysis (in class)	Nov 8
6	Interview study	Nov 18
7	Univariate Data Analysis	Nov 29
8	Bivariate Data Analysis	Dec 4
Final Paper	Final Paper	Dec 14

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 one day before the assignment due date) 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 submitted on Canvas BEFORE 1 p.m. 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)

TOPIC 1 Why Research Methods?

Aug 30: Introductions

Sept 4: Carr et al. Chapter 1: "The Art and Science of Social Research: An Introduction."
*Tanenbaum, Deborah. Introduction. *SLUT! Growing Up Female with a Bad Reputation*.
In class exercises: journalism vs. empirical Research; confirmation bias; correlation and causation

TOPIC 2 Research Design: Decisions, Decisions

Sept 6: *Stack, Steven; Gundlach, Jim. 1992. "The Effect of Country Music on Suicide". *Social Forces* 70 (5):211-218.
Read Blog: "What the heck is research anyway?" (Link on Canvas)

In class exercises: Critique of Stack & Gundlach
Assignment #1 distributed

TOPIC 3 Theory and Research: How do they relate?

Sept 11: Carr et al. Chapter 2: "Research Foundations: Linking Sociological Theory to Research."

* Steers, Maily, Robert Wicham and Linda Acitelli. 2014. "Seeing Everyone Else's Highlight Reels: How Facebook Usage is Linked to Depressive Symptoms." *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 33(8):701-731.

Sept 13: Librarian presentation for completing Assignment 2
Discuss surveys
Assignment #2 distributed
Assignment #1 due

Sept 16: **PILOT TEST SURVEY by Sunday 9/16, 11:59 p.m. (Assignment #4a)**

Sept 18: Discuss Questions for Surveys & Pilot Testing Surveys
Bobo, Larry and Camille Zubrinsky. 1996. "Attitudes on Residential Integration: Perceived Status Differences, Mere In-Group Preference, or Racial Prejudice?" *Social Forces* 74(3):883-909.

Pescosolido, Bernice A., Elizabeth Grauerholz and Melissa A. Milkie. 1997. "Culture and Conflict: The Portrayal of Blacks in U.S. Children's Picture Books Through the Mid- and Late-Twentieth Century." *American Sociological Review* 62(3) Pp. *443-446 only (stop at "Data and Methods").

TOPIC 4 Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement

Sept 20: Carr et al. Chapter 4: "From Concepts to Models: Hypotheses, Operationalization, and Measurement." (Pp. 100-108)

*Pescosolido, Bernice A., Elizabeth Grauerholz and Melissa A. Milkie. 1997. "Culture and Conflict: The Portrayal of Blacks in U.S. Children's Picture Books Through the Mid- and Late-Twentieth Century." *American Sociological Review* 62(3). **Read pp. 446-end.**

In-class exercise: Identifying and writing operational definitions

Sept 23: **SEND FIRST SURVEY EMAIL on Sunday, SEPT 23 (part of Assignment #4b)**

Sept 25: Carr et al. Chapter 4: "From Concepts to Models: Hypotheses, Operationalization, and Measurement." (Pp. 109-130)

*Armstrong, Elizabeth, Paula England, and Alison Fogarty. 2012. "Accounting for Women's Orgasm and Sexual Enjoyment in College Hookups and Relationships." *American Sociological Review* 77(3): 435-462.

In class exercise: Hypotheses and measurement

TOPIC 5 Surveys and Survey Design

Sept 27: Carr et al. Chapter 7: "Survey Research."

* Simons, Ronald, Christine Johnson, and Rand Conger. 1994. "Harsh Corporal Punishment Versus Quality of Parental Involvement as an Explanation of Adult Maladjustment." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 56:591-607.

Assignment #3 distributed

Assignment #2 due

Oct 2: *Laumann, Edward O., John H. Gagnon, Robert T. Michael, and Stuart Michaels. 1994. "The Study Design." (Chap. 2) in *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ingall, Marjorie. 2004. "S-E-X in the U.S.A.: Wake Us When It's Over." *MS Magazine*, January.

In Class Exercise: Survey Design

TOPIC 6 Sampling: How to decide who will be in the study?

Oct 4: Carr et al. Chapter 6: "Sampling Strategies."

For those familiar with probability sampling theory: Gerlitz, Caroline, and Bernhard Rieder. 2013. "Mining One percent of Twitter: Collections, Baselines, Sampling." *M/C Journal* 16.2

<http://www.Journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/620>

For those unfamiliar with probability sampling theory: PEW Research Center video: "What are Nonprobability Surveys?" <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/12/methods-101-random-sampling/>

and

PEW Research Center. "How Can a Survey of 1000 People tell You What the Whole U.S. Thinks?" <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/12/methods-101-random-sampling/>

In Class Exercise: Sampling

Oct 9: ***** NO CLASS. FALL BREAK *****

Oct 11: *Joe, K. and Chesneyind, M. 1995. "Just Every Mother's Angel – An Analysis of Gender and Ethnic Variations in Youth Gang Membership," *Gender & Society* 9(4): 408-431.

Oct 14: **SEND 2nd SURVEY EMAIL on SUNDAY, Oct. 14th (Assignment #4c)**

TOPIC 7 Writing a Literature Review

Oct 16: Carr et al. Chapter 17: "Communicating Social Science Research Findings."

Aldrich, Howard. Writing a Literature Review.

<http://howardaldrich.org/2015/12/using-the-literature-in-your-writing-interpretive-notes-not-summaries/>

TOPIC 8 Ethics in Research

Oct 18: *Humphreys, Laud. 1970. The Sociologist as Voyeur. Chapter 2 in *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co.
Carr et al. Chapter 3: Ethics in Social Science Research

Oct 23: *Watch first 38 minutes of Alice Goffman at
UBC: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sz2XVtCAbqg>

*Ralph, Laurence. 2015. "The Limitations of a 'Dirty' World." *Du Bois Review*, 12(2), pp. 441-446.

*Students of Ethnographic and Qualitative Methods. 2018. "An Open Letter to Alice Goffman." www.publicseminar.org/2018/05/an-open-letter-to-alice-goffman

(* One RP for all three assigned 'readings')

In Class Exercise: Ethics

Assignment #3 due

TOPIC 9 Experiments

Oct 25: Carr et al. Chapter 8: "Experimental Research."
*Dittmar, Helga et al. 2006. "Does Barbie Make Girls Want to Be Thin?"
Developmental Psychology.
Assignment #5 distributed

Oct 28: **SEND 3rd SURVEY EMAIL on Sun, Oct 28 (Assignment #4d)**

TOPIC 10 Qualitative Methods

Oct 30: Lee, Jooyoung. 2017. *Blowin' Up: Rap Dreams in South Central*. "Introduction"
(Chap. 1) and "Methods Appendix" (pp. 229-240).

Carr et al. Chapter 11: "In-Depth Interviewing."

Assignment #4 due

Nov 1: *Scully, Diane. 1990. "A Glimpse Inside" In *Understanding Sexual Violence*.
Boston: Unwin-Hyman.

TOPIC 11 Qualitative Methods: Analysis

Unobtrusive Research: Content Analysis & New Modes of Research

Nov 6: *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.

Nov 8: Carr et al. Chapter 12: "Materials-Based Methods."

Assignment #5 in class

Assignment #6 distributed

TOPIC 12 Quantitative Data Analysis I: Data Entry and Univariate Analysis in SPSS

Nov 13: ***** Class meets in Woodruff library room 312 *****

Carr et al. Chapter 14: "Univariate and Bivariate Analysis of Quantitative Data"
(Just the sections on univariate analyses)

Wheelan, Charles. 2013. "Deceptive Description: He's got a great personality!" Ch. 3 in *Naked Statistics*. NY: Norton & Company.
Assignment #7 handed out

Nov 15: Work on Assignment #7 in class
*** **Class meets in Woodruff library room 312** ***
Assignment #8 handed out

Nov. 18: **Assignment #6 due (Sunday)**

Nov 20-22: ***** NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING *****

TOPIC 13 Quantitative Data Analysis II: Bivariate Analysis and Creating Tables in SPSS

Nov 27: *** **Class meets in Woodruff library room 312** ***

Carr et al. Chapter 14: "Univariate and Bivariate Analysis of Quantitative Data."
(Sections on bivariate analyses)

Wheelan, Charles. 2013. "Correlation: How Does Netflix Know What Movies I Like?" Ch. 4 in *Naked Statistics*. NY: Norton & Company.

Nov 29: **Assignment #7 due**
*** **Class meets in Woodruff library room 312** ***
Work on Assignment #8 in class
Final paper instructions handed-out

TOPIC 14 Putting It All Together: Writing Up Your Research Study

Dec 4: Analysis and Writing Discussion
Assignment #8 due

Dec. 6: *In class: Work on final paper*

Dec. 11: *Wrap-up*

Dec 14: **Final Paper due by 11 pm (submitted through Canvas)**

List of Assignment Due Dates

	Task	Date Due
Assignment 1	Develop a broad research question(s)	9/13
Assignment 2	Annotated bibliography	9/27
Assignment 3	Specific research question, conceptual and operational definitions, and hypothesis	10/23
Assignment 4	Pilot test and administer the survey: <i>a) Pilot test Online Survey</i> <i>b) 1st EMAIL for Online Survey</i> <i>c) 2nd EMAIL for Online Survey</i> <i>d) 3rd EMAIL for Online Survey</i>	9/16 9/23 10/14 10/28
Assignment 5	Content analysis (in class)	11/8
Assignment 6	Conduct 4 interviews; write fieldnotes and report	11/18
Assignment 7	Conduct univariate analyses of survey data	11/29
Assignment 8	Conduct bivariate analyses of survey data	12/4
Paper	Incorporate and expand upon assignments	12/14