

SOCIOLOGY 355W: SOCIAL RESEARCH I

Spring Semester 2017

PAIS 250

Professor: Dr. Sonal Nalkur

E-mail: snalkur@emory.edu

Office: Tarbutton, Room 213

Office Hours: Mondays, 11:30-12:30

Wednesdays, 1pm-2pm

Teaching Assistant: Ryan Gibson

Email: ryan.gibson@emory.edu

Office: Tarbutton, Room 112

Office Hours: Thursdays, 2-4pm

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is a practical introduction to research methods commonly used by social scientists, including surveys, in-depth interviews, and experiments. 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 evaluating and producing social research data.

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

Log in, then click on “**Research Methods I – Spring 2017**” or “**Soc355: Social Research I - Spring 2017.**” 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:

Babbie, Earl. 2016. The Practice of Social Research (14th Edition). Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.

Reserve Readings

There are a few additional readings to help you understand the research process. Some are already part of the syllabus, and others will be announced as we go through the semester. These readings are marked with an asterisk (*) in the syllabus. **They will be on BlackBoard 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 & Exercises (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.

Class Exercises (5%)

A number of 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 be graded on the simple basis of: participation or no participation.

2. Eight 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 should be 15-20 pages in length
- Final Paper is due **Wednesday, May 3rd by 5:30pm**

Additional information about the class goal and 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 **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.

Overview of Assignments and Due Dates

Assignment #	Assignment	Due Date
1	Developing a research question	Jan-25
2	Annotated Bibliography	Feb-20
3	Conceptualization, Operationalization and Hypotheses	Feb-27
4	Survey Project which consists of several parts	
	Pilot test Online Survey	Jan-23
	1 st EMAIL for Online Survey	Jan-29
	2nd EMAIL for Online Survey	Feb 5 or 7
	3rd EMAIL for Online Survey	Feb-12
5	Interview Research	Apr-5
6	Content Analysis (in class)	Mar-29
7	Univariate Data Analysis	Apr-12
8	Bivariate Data Analysis	Apr-19
Final Paper	Final Paper	May 3

SOME GROUND RULES

General Communication

I provide very detailed information and instructions in all of the course documents. I will also send periodic BlackBoard announcements and/or emails about any further course information.

- **Please read all of the written course communications thoroughly!**
- If you have questions after you have read everything in a particular course document (syllabus, paper instructions, study guide), then feel free to ask me.
- **Do NOT ask/email me questions that I have already answered** in a course document or via posted announcement/emails. I will not respond to these questions.

Email Communication:

I generally try to respond to emails within 24 hrs, but I do not guarantee a response within 24 hrs. I do not answer emails after 6pm at night.

General Conduct:

Please be mindful of the general code of conduct that you would use in any classroom setting. I expect us all to be respectful of one another.

- Please do not arrive late to class.
- Once in class, please refrain from carrying on private conversations with your neighbor(s). This is distracting for everyone else in the room.
- Please refrain from texting, checking Facebook, or any other non-class activities during all class meetings. If you are found to be engaging in these activities, you will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class.

The use of cell phones is not permitted in this class. Please turn OFF your phones before entering the classroom.

Missed Classes: You are responsible for missed material. Please get notes from one of your classmates. After you have read all of the missed material, if you still have questions, please come to my office hours. (Do not email me to ask about missed class material.)

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.

Extra Credit: There are no extra credit assignments available in this course.

Video/Audio: You may not video or audiotape lectures without my express consent.

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 Access, Disabilities Services, and Resources (ADSR) 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:

Phone: 404-727-9877

Email: adsrstudent@emory.edu

Via the web: <http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/students/index.html>

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://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE (subject to change)**TOPIC 1 Why Research Methods?**

Jan 11 (W): Introductions
(Assignment #1 posted – see Blackboard)

Jan 16 (M): Martin Luther King Day (no class)

Jan 18 (W): Babbie, Chapter 1: Human Inquiry and Science
In Class Exercise: Evaluating Information

TOPIC 2 Theory and Research: How do they relate?

Jan 18 (W): Babbie, Chapter 2: Paradigms, Theory, and Social Research
*Steven D. Levitt & Stephen J. Dubner. 2006. Pp. 139-162 in Freakonomics. Rev. Ed.
New York: William Morrow.

(Assignment #2 posted on BB)
(Assignment #4 posted on BB)

By Jan 23: PILOT TEST SURVEY sometime over weekend (part of Assignment 4)

Jan 23 (M): Babbie Chapter 17: Reading and Writing Social Research
*Andrea Scott. 2013. Formulating a Thesis. In Writing Commons: The Home for Writers. Retrieved from <http://writingcommons.org/open-text/writing-processes/focus/856-formulating-a-thesis>

TOPIC 3 Research Design: Decisions, Decisions

Jan 25 (W): Babbie, Chapter 4: Research Designs
Assignment #1 due

Jan 29 (Su): SEND 1st SURVEY EMAIL on SUNDAY, Jan 29 (part of Assignment #4)

Jan 30 (M): Literature Searches: Special Session by Sociology Librarian

Feb 1 (W): *Stack, Steven; Gundlach, Jim. 1992. The Effect of Country Music on Suicide. Social Forces 70 (5):211-218.
In Class Exercise: Critique of Stack & Gundlach

**Feb 5 (Su) SEND 2nd SURVEY EMAIL on Sunday, Feb 5 OR Tuesday, Feb 7 (Assignment #4)
OR Feb 7 (Tue)**

TOPIC 4 Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement

Feb 6 (M): Babbie, Chapter 5: Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement;
(Assignments #3 handed out)

Feb 8 (W): Babbie Chapter 6: Indexes, Scales and Typologies; read pp. 156-164, 174-175 (Likert-Scaling)
In Class Exercise: Operationalization in the U.S. News College Rankings

TOPIC 5 Surveys and Survey Design

Feb 13 (M): Babbie, Chapter 9: Survey Research; read pp. 246-267
In Class Exercise: Survey Construction

Feb 15 (W): Babbie, Chapter 9; read pp. 267-286

Feb 19 (Sun): SEND 3rd SURVEY EMAIL on SUNDAY, Feb 12 (Assignment #4)

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

Feb 20 (M): Babbie, Chapter 7: The Logic of Sampling; read pp. 182-201
Assignment #2 due

Feb 22 (W): Babbie, Chapter 7; read pp. 201-222
*READING TBA
In Class Exercise: Evaluating claims in journalism articles

TOPIC 7 Ethics in Research

Feb 27 (M): Babbie, Chapter 3: Ethics and Politics of Social Research
In Class Exercise: Evaluating Information from Social Media

Mar 1 (W): Assignment #3 due

*Laud Humphreys. 1970. The Sociologist as Voyeur. Chapter 2 in Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co.

Mar 6-10: Spring Break - enjoy!

TOPIC 8 Experiments

Mar 13 (M): Babbie, chapter 8: Experiments
(Assignment #5 handed out)

Mar 15 (W): *Haney, Craig, Curtis Banks, and Philip Zimbardo. 1973. "Interpersonal Dynamics in a Simulated Prison." International Journal of Criminology and Penology 1:69-97.
READ: "Methods" section, pp. 72-80. SKIM the rest of the article.
*Johnson, Cathryn. 1994. "Gender, Legitimate Authority, and Leader-Subordinate Conversations." American Journal of Sociology 59:122-135.
READ: "Methods" section, pp. 126-129. SKIM the rest of the article.

TOPIC 9 Qualitative Methods

Mar 20 (M): Babbie, Chapter 10: Qualitative Field Research

Mar 22 (W): *Leslie Perlow. 1998. "Boundary Control: The Social Ordering of Work and Family Time in High-Tech Corporation." Administrative Science Quarterly 43:328-357.
READ: "Methods" section, pp. 332-337. SKIM the rest of the article.
In Class Exercise: Qualitative Interviewing

TOPIC 10 Unobtrusive Research: Content Analysis & New Modes of Research

Mar 27 (M): Babbie, Chapter 11: Unobtrusive Research; read 322-334 (stop at Analyzing Existing Statistics)
 Babbie, Chapter 13: Qualitative Data Analysis; read 382-393 (stop at Computer Programs for Qualitative Data)

Mar 29 (W): Qualitative Methods: Analysis

*Katharina Linder. 2004. "Images of Women in General Interest and Fashion Magazine Advertisements from 1955 to 2002." *Sex Roles* 51:409-421.

READ: "Method" and "Results" sections, pp.413-418. SKIM the rest of the article.

Assignment #6 in class: Analyzing Ads

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

Apr 3 (M): How do we organize our data?
 Babbie Chapter 14: Quantitative Data Analysis; read 412-425 (stop at Bivariate Analysis), 429-430 (Ethics and Quantitative Data Analysis).
 [*Wheelan, Charles. 2013. "What's the Point?" Ch. 1 in *Naked Statistics: Stripping the Dread from the Data*. NY: Norton & Company.]

Apr 5 (W): How do we find trends in our data?

Assignment #5 due

Babbie Chapter 16: Statistical Analyses; read 451-456 (stop at Regression Analysis)
 *Wheelan, Charles. 2013. "Descriptive Statistics: Who was the best baseball player of all time?" Ch. 2 in *Naked Statistics*. NY: Norton & Company.
In Class Activity: Learning SPSS: Frequencies & Recoding
 (Assignment #7 handed out)

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

Apr 10 (M): How are our concepts related to one another?
 Babbie Chapter 14: Quantitative Data Analysis; read 425-429 (start at Bivariate Analysis)
 Babbie Chapter 16: Statistical Analysis; read 460-470 (start at Inferential Statistics, stop at Other Multivariate Techniques)
 *Wheelan, Charles. 2013. "Deceptive Description: He's got a great personality!" Ch. 3 in *Naked Statistics*. NY: Norton & Company.
 (Assignment #8 handed out)

Apr 12 (W): **Assignment #7 due**

*Wheelan, Charles. 2013. "Correlation: How does Netflix know what movies I like?" Ch. 4 in *Naked Statistics*. NY: Norton & Company.

In Class Activity: Work on Assignment 8 in class

TOPIC 13 Writing up Your Research Study

Apr 17 (M): Babbie, Chapter 17: Reading and Writing Social Research

Apr 19 (W): **Assignment #8 due**

*Review Andrea Scott article.

*Review resources and examples under "Guidelines & Resources" on Blackboard

TOPIC 14 Wrap-Up

Apr 24 (M): Further Analysis & Writing Discussion

May 3 (Wed): Final Paper due by 5:30pm