

Irene Browne
(she/her/hers)
Sociology 501
Research Methods and Models: Design
Fall 2021
TuTh 8:30-9:45 pm

SYLLABUS

“One has explained nothing and understood nothing by establishing the existence of a correlation between an ‘independent’ variable and a ‘dependent’ variable. Until one has determined what is designated in the particular case, i.e., in each particular relationship, by each term in the relationship (for example level of education and knowledge of composer) the statistical relationship, however precisely it can be determined numerically, remains a pure datum, devoid of meaning.” Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinctions*, p. 18.

Goals: The aim of this course is to teach the fundamentals of research design and the techniques of data collection used in sociological research. By the end of the course, you should be able to: 1) understand, analyze and critique empirical studies in the sociological literature; 2) design and execute your own research project; and 3) communicate your findings in a presentation and a research paper that is suitable for presenting at a Sociology conference.

Approach: With attention to the debates over social science methodologies, the course takes a practical, “hands-on” approach to research methods. With the assistance of the instructor, your advisor, and your peers, you will identify a research question that could develop into a viable second year paper. Through staged assignments throughout the semester, you will design a study to answer your research question, execute the study by collecting pilot data or downloading secondary data, and analyze your results. You will present these results in an empirical paper at the end of the semester. As a requirement for our class, you must become certified in research with human subjects by taking the on-line CITI course *by Sept 13*. (You can use a valid CITI certificate from another institution).

Required texts:

- Lofland, Lofland and Snow. *Analyzing Social Settings, 4th Edition*.
- Weisberg, Herbert. 2005. *The Total Survey Error Approach*. University of Chicago Press.
- Articles on electronic reserve through e-reserves (with a link in Canvas).
- *Recommended for qualitative projects:* Schostak, John. 2006. *Interviewing and Representation in Qualitative Research*.

(Please note that we will not be discussing all of the assigned readings in class. However, as developing researchers earning your PhD, you are expected to know the information in the assigned readings that we do not discuss. You are also welcome to post to the “continue the conversation” forum on Canvas with comments about any reading.)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Assignments, guidelines and other course documents are available on Canvas. You should check Canvas daily for announcements regarding any changes in the syllabus. The syllabus may change, depending on unforeseen issues that arise, particularly during November when you are engaged in data collection or data download.

Grading will be based on the following:

IRB Certification (prerequisite for passing course)

All students are required to take the online CITI exam and become certified in human subjects research by Sept 13, 2019. Here are the steps:

1. Go to the Emory IRB website, www.irb.emory.edu.
2. Towards the top of the screen, click onto "Education" tab.
3. Click onto "Courses" on the panel at the left side of the screen.
4. Click onto "CITI training."
5. Click onto "Log onto CITI." This will take you to the online CITI training site.
6. Register on the CITI site.
7. Take the Social and Behavioral Science course.
8. Note that you can take each quiz multiple times if you do not pass.
9. When you have passed the course (all of the Social Science modules), print your CITI certification document and give a copy to me.

Note that if you intend to use the data that you collect this semester for a publication or as part of a larger research project, you must receive approval for the study from the IRB by submitting an IRB protocol. To fulfill the requirements for Soc501, you only need to complete the CITI certification – not a full IRB protocol.

Leading Class Discussion (8 pts.) You are required to lead discussion on the readings in one class, marked with a "*" next to the date. (Students will sign-up for their discussion dates during the first week of class). Your discussion should focus on how the readings illuminate the *methodological topic* for your assigned day (including the topic in brackets under the readings). You must post at least 5 discussion questions on Canvas **at least 24 hours** prior to the day that you will be leading the discussion. You must also bring hard copies of your discussion questions to class for your peers and the instructor. Note that we will be devoting some class time to the assignments, class survey or lecture material, so the discussion will occupy only part of class time (30-60 minutes). Also note that the Discussion due date on Canvas corresponds to the day that you are *facilitating*. To receive full credit, you need to upload your questions to the Discussion Board at least 24 before this date. Refer to the rubric in the individual discussions to see the expectations for leading discussion.

Meetings with Prof. Browne (5 pts) You are required to schedule 2 meetings with Prof. Browne to discuss your research project. The first meeting should occur at the beginning of the semester when you are formulating your research question. The second meeting should occur towards the end of the semester when you are collecting and/or analyzing data.

Meetings with your faculty advisor You are required to schedule a meeting with your faculty advisor to discuss your research project. Your first meeting should take place by Sept. 24. In your meeting, you can discuss initial ideas (Assignment 1) and ask for guidance in delineating the research design to answer a specific research question (Assignment 4). Your faculty advisor also needs to approve the research question and methods that you describe in Assignment 4 via email, so that you can include the email approval when you submit the assignment.

Assignments (47 pts.)

The assignments will take you through the steps to conduct an empirical research project. Your study can be based upon quantitative or qualitative research. Your pilot data should be relatively small in scope, with just 1-2 dependent variables and 3-5 independent variables. After completing the assignments, you should have collected pilot data on your own project and be able to report your results.

Proposal Review (2 pts)

You will be required to write reviews of 2 dissertation completion proposals that Michael Vaughn submitted to the NSF. The proposals cover the same project. The first proposal was rejected. The second proposal was funded. I will provide additional instructions for this assignment on Canvas.

Final empirical paper (35 pts)

Your paper should incorporate and build upon the work that you conducted for your assignments. You will need to expand the literature review and theory discussion from Assignments 2 & 3, describe your methods and write-up your results. All of these components should be tightly linked (this is one of the trickiest parts of writing a research paper). You can conduct your study and write your paper on a topic related to another class, but you cannot write one paper to satisfy requirements for two classes.

In-class time to discuss student projects (3 pts)

Students will be required to present their final project in class. You do not have to have a polished presentation and finished project. Receiving feedback from your peers can be particularly helpful in working -through a conceptual or methodological issue. You can also request class time on a day when we have readings assigned if you would like feedback on your project.

Please bring your laptop to class. During many of the class sessions, you will need your laptop. If possible, please just bring your laptop to class each day.

Please download readings at least 24 hours before class; contact me if you are unable to find a reading.

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PRELIMINARY COURSE SCHEDULE

8/26 (Th) **Introduction to the Course**

Overview: the organization of the class

Assignment 1 distributed

*10/31 (Tu) **Feminist Methods and Issues of “Objectivity”**

LeBlanc, Lauraine. Preface and Chap. 1 in *Pretty in Punk* (on e-reserve).

LeBlanc, Lauraine. Chap. 2 in *The Flowers in Your Dustbin: Women in The North American Punk Subculture of the 1990s*. (This is a dissertation available electronically through discoverE. Just search on the title.)

Tannenbaum, Leora. Introduction and Chapter 1 in *SLUT! Growing Up Female with a Bad Reputation*.

Watch video: “How Can Social Science Improve the Public Discourse in a Polarized Society?” (Mario Small) <https://www.spencer.org/news/aera-2019> (note: video is 1:30 hours long)

[What are “feminist methods?” Why are we covering feminist methods in our class? What is “objectivity?” What are features of a good research design? What are features of a poor research design?]

9/2 (Th) **Research Questions and Resources**

Lofland, Lofland and Snow. 2006. *Analyzing Social Settings, 4th Edition*. NY: Wadsworth, Chapter 1, “Starting Where You Are.”

Aldrich, Howard. Writing a Literature Review.
<https://howardaldrich.org/2015/12/using-the-literature-in-your-writing-interpretive-notes-not-summaries/>

Recommended (if you are having difficulty identifying a topic): Bryman, Alan. 2012. “Formulating Suitable Research Questions.” Pp. 85-91 in *Social Research Methods, 4th ed.* Oxford Press.

Guest presenter, Rob O’Reilly.

[What are data resources that are available to students and faculty at Emory? Steps in the research process. Finding a topic and developing a question.]

9/6 (M) **Assignment 1 due**

9/7 (Tu) **Theory and Research: How Do They Relate?**

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): 443-464.

Schwalbe, Michael, Daphne Holden, Douglas Schrock, Sandra Godwin, Shealy Thompson, and Michele Wolkomir. "Generic processes in the reproduction of inequality: An interactionist analysis." *Social forces* 79, no. 2 (2000): 419-452.

Snow, David A; Morrill, Calvin; Anderson, Leon. 2003. "Elaborating Analytic Ethnography: Linking Fieldwork and Theory." *Ethnography* 4 (2):181-200.

[What is the research question? What is the dependent variable? What is the independent variable? What is a conceptual definition? How do we find our conceptual definition? How do we use theory in designing a study to address our research question? How do we diagram the relations between the dependent and independent variables?]

9/9 (Th) **Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement**

IRB CITI certification due

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.

Westbrook, Laurel and Aliya Saperstein. 2015. "New Categories are Not Enough: Rethinking the Measurement of Sex and Gender in Social Surveys." *Gender & Society* 29(4): 534-560.

Howell, Junia and Michael Emersen. 2017. "So What 'Should' We Use? Evaluating the Impact of Five Racial Measures on Markers of Social Inequality." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 3(1):14-30.

[What is a dependent variable? What is an independent variable? What is the difference between a conceptual definition and an operational definition? What is an operational definition of a variable? How are these two related?]

- 9/14 (Tu) **Writing a Research Proposal**
Proposal Review Due at 8 am
Vaughn, Michael. "Tops, Bottoms, and the Ghost of HIV: An Investigation of the Impact of Collective Memory on the Behavior-Group Identity Relationship Among Gay Men." NSF Proposal #1 (2017)
- Vaughn, Michael. "Tops, Bottoms, and the Ghost of HIV: An Investigation of the Impact of Collective Memory on the Behavior-Group Identity Relationship Among Gay Men." NSF Proposal #2 (2018)
- *9/16 (Th) **Selecting a Research Method**
Stack, Steven; Gundlach, Jim. 1992. "The Effect of Country Music on Suicide." *Social Forces* 70 (5):211-218.
- Thrasher, et al. 2012. "Theory-Guided Selection of Discrimination Measures for Racial/Ethnic Health Disparities Research among Older Adults." *Journal of Aging Health* 24(6):1018-1043.
- Bryan, Alan. 2012. "Asking Questions." Chapter 11 in *Social Research Methods: Fourth Edition*. Oxford Press.
- [What types of questions can we answer with each research method? What types of data can we gather? Variation: so what?]
- 9/20 (M) **Assignment 2 due**
- 9/21 (Tu) **Validity and Reliability**
Liang, Christopher, Lisa Li and Bryan Kim. 2004. "The Asian American Racism-related Stress Inventory: Development, Factor Analysis, Reliability, and Validity." *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 1:103-114.
- McAlpine, Donna, Ellen McCredy and Sirry Alang. 2018. "The Meaning and Predictive Value of Self-rated Mental Health among Persons with a Mental Health Problem." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 59(2):200-214.
- Carr et al. 2018. "Evaluating Research: Reliability and Validity." Chapter 5 in Carr et al., *The Art and Science of Social Research*. NY:Norton ad Co.
- *9/23 (Th) Validity and Reliability, cont.

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

Stuesse, Angela. 2014. "Postscript: Home to Roost Reflections on Activist Research." In *Scratching Out a Living: Latinos, Race and Work in the Deep South*. Univ. of California Press.

9/28 (Tu) **Sampling Theory and Statistical Thinking**
Weisberg, Chapter 10, "The Need for Representativeness."

Wasserman, Melanie et al. 2005. "A Church-based Sampling Design for Research with Latina Immigrant Women." *Population Research and Policy Review* 24:647-671.

9/30 (Th) *** Individual meetings w Prof. Browne ***

10/5 (Tu) *** Workshop projects ***

*10/7 (Th) Wright, Richard, Scott Decker, Allison Redfern, and Dietrich Smith. 1992. "A Snowball's Chance in Hell: Doing Fieldwork with Active Residential Burglars." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 29:148-6.

Small, Mario. 2009. "How Many Cases Is Enough? On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-based Research." *Ethnography* 10(5):1-35.

10/12 (Tu) *** FALL BREAK ***

*10/14 (Th) **Sampling: Qualitative Research; workshop projects**

Contreras, Randol. "The Broken Ethnography: Lessons from an Almost Hero." *Qualitative Sociology* 42, no. 2 (2019): 161-179.

Weisberg, Herbert. 2005. *The Total Survey Error Approach*. Chapter 8, "Nonresponse Error at the Unit Level: The Response Rate Challenge."

10/19 (Tu) **Survey Research**

Weisberg, Herbert. 2005. *The Total Survey Error Approach*. Chapter 5: Measurement Error Due to Respondents I: Question Wording Problems." University of Chicago Press.

Weisberg, Herbert. 2005. *The Total Survey Error Approach*. Chapter 6: Measurement Error Due to Respondents II: Questionnaire Issues." University of Chicago Press.

Maticka-Tyndale, Eleanor, E. Herold and D. Mcwhinney. "Casual Sex on Spring Break: Intentions and Behaviors of Canadian Students." *Journal of Sex Research* 35(3):254-264.

[What is survey error? How can we reduce error? How to format a survey? How to administer a survey? How to ask questions?]

10/20 (W) **Assignment 3 due**

*10/21 (Th) **Survey Research, cont.**

Mensch, Barbara, Paul Hewett and Annabel Erulkar. "The Reporting of Sensitive Behavior by Adolescents: A Methodological Experiment in Kenya." *Demography* 40:247-68.

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.

Weisberg, Chapter 7, "Non-response Error at the Item Level: The Scourge of Missing Data."

[How can we maximize survey response rates? How can we evaluate survey results?]

10/25 (M) **Assignment 4 due**

10/26 (Tu) **Experimental Design**

Complete the online experiment exercise in Canvas before reading these articles.

S. Michael Gaddis and Raj Ghoshal. 2020. "[Searching for a Roommate: A Correspondence Audit Examining Racial/Ethnic and Immigrant Discrimination among Millennials.](#)" in *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World* 6.

Sims, Jennifer Patrice, Whitney Laster Pirtle, and Iris Johnson-Arnold. "Doing hair, doing race: the influence of hairstyle on racial perception across the US." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (2019): 1-21.

Correll, Shelley.

[What are the elements of a good experimental design? What can sociologists learn from experiments?]

10/28 TBD

11/1 (M) **Assignment 5 due**

*11/2 (Tu) **Qualitative Research Design: Fieldwork**

Lofland, Lofland and Snow. 2006. *Analyzing Social Settings, 4th Edition*. NY: Wadsworth, Introduction, Chaps. 2-4.

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

11/4 (Th) **Qualitative Research Design, cont.**

Lofland, Lofland and Snow. 2006. *Analyzing Social Settings, 4th Edition*. NY: Wadsworth, Chaps. 5-8.

Neyfakh, Leon. 2015. "The Ethics of Ethnography." *Slate*.

http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/crime/2015/06/alice_gofman_s_on_the_run_is_the_sociologist_to_blame_for_the_inconsistencies.html

Darwin, Helana. 2017. "Doing Gender Beyond the Binary: A Virtual Ethnography." *Symbolic Interaction* 40:317-334.

(we will also view a video related to the reading in class:

<http://tinyurl.com/y7odrxbd>)

*11/9 (Tu) **Ethical Issues**

Schneider, Nathan. 2015. "Intellectual Piecework." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb 20.

http://chronicle.texterity.com/chronicle/20150220a?sub_id=hM6EMrnN5211#pg20

Paul, Charlotte. 2015. "Defenses of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study: Assessment of Empirical Claims." Working paper.

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/dsm/otago116834.pdf>

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

*11/11 (Th) **Ethics, cont.**

Maher, Lisa. 1997. "Appendix: On Reflexivity, Reciprocity, and Ethnographic Research." Pp. 217-232 in *Sexed Work: Gender, Race and Resistance in a Brooklyn Drug Market*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Watch: First 15 minutes of lecture by Alice Goffman at UBC:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sz2XVtCABqg>

Goffman, Alice. 2014. "A Methodological Note." Pp. 225-263 in *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*.

Ralph, Lawrence. 2015. "The Limitations of a 'Dirty' World." *Du Bois Review*, 12(2), p.441.

Additional readings on Goffman study (if you're interested):

Rios, Victor. 2015. Book Review: *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. *American Journal of Sociology*.

Lewis-Kraus, Gideon. 2016. "The Trials of Alice Goffman." *NY Times Magazine*. Jan. 12. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/17/magazine/the-trials-of-alice-goffman.html>

11/16 (Tu) **Student project workshop and meetings with Prof. Browne**

Mustillo, Sarah, Omar Lizardo, and Rory McVeigh. 2018. "Editors Comments: A Few Guidelines for Quantitative Submissions." *American Sociological Review* 83(6):1281-1283.

11/18 (Th) **Qualitative Data Analysis/Topic Modeling**

Browne, Irene, John Bernau, Katharine Tatum and Jieu Jiao. 2021. "Immigration Coverage in the Black Press and the General Audience Press: What Can a Mixed Methods Approach Reveal about Race and Immigration?" *The Sociological Quarterly*.

11/19 (F) **Assignment 6 due**

11/23 (Tu) ***** No class, Thanksgiving *****

11/25 (Th) ***** No class, Thanksgiving *****

11/30 (Tu) Student presentations

12/2 (Th) Student presentations

12/7 (Tu) WRAP UP

12/13 (M) Paper due (upload to Canvas by 11:59 p.m.)

Schedule of Assignments
Soc 501
Fall 2021

Assignments 1-6 are staged activities that will enable you to develop your own research project that could be expanded into a viable second year paper. These activities include: formulating a research question that you can answer with empirical data (Assignments 1-3), designing a study to answer that question (Assignments 4-5), collecting or downloading and analyzing your data (Assignment 6), and presenting your results (Final Paper). Throughout this process, you will get all the support that you need from your instructor, faculty advisor, and peers (so don't panic...). No one will be "left behind."

Due date	Assignment	Task
9/6 (M)	1	State broad research question(s)
9/20 (M)	2	Produce Annotated Bibliography <i>You should have met with your advisor by this date.</i>
10/20 (W)	3	Write "Theory Summary" for your project (1 theory) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: you should be working on Assignment 4 as you develop this summary
10/25 (M)	4	Design Study (preliminary) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate RQ as "How does x affect y?" • Present conceptual definitions of variables • Present operational definitions of the variables: Identify methods and identify/create measures • State hypotheses
11/1 (M)	5	Develop Research Plan with Deadlines <i>Requires advisor approval.</i>
11/19 (F)	6	Generate Descriptives/Pilot Test [individual adjustments to the due date may be necessary, depending on research plan]

12/13 (M)	***	FINAL PAPER DUE
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***** PLEASE NOTE THAT MOST ASSIGNMENTS ARE NOT DUE ON A TUESDAY OR THURSDAY. *****
ASSIGNMENTS 1-6 ARE DUE AT 11:59 PM. YOU ARE EXPECTED TO BE WORKING ON THE TASKS DEFINED IN THESE ASSIGNMENTS A FEW WEEKS BEFORE THE ASSIGNMENT IS ACTUALLY DUE.