

RESEARCH METHODS II

SOCI-35400 (3 credits)

Fall 2007

Jim Rothenberg

Department of Sociology

Syllabus

Note: Many of the materials and exercises for this course were originally developed by Susanne Morgan.

RESEARCH METHODS II

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Fall 2007

MWF 1:00-1:50 in CHS 104

Instructor: Jim Rothenberg

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00-12:00, Friday 11:00-1:00, and by arrangement.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS and other course information can be found on WebCT **online** at:

<http://courses.ithaca.edu>

You will be asked for your username (same as your IC3 username) and a password (your Ithaca College I.D. number - once at the site, you can change your password)

Social research is the systematic observation of social life for the purpose of finding and understanding patterns among what is observed.

(Earl Babbie, The Principles of Social Research, p.2)

Objectives:

Sociology majors should be familiar with the essential elements of social science research, so they will be well prepared for work or further education, and so they will be informed consumers of research. After completing this course a student will be able to:

- Choose methods appropriate to the research question and context.
- Analyze existing survey data, using a computer statistical package.
- Engage in qualitative research and analyze qualitative data.
- Prepare a research plan including protection of human subjects, instrument design, and sampling plan.
- Collect original data, probably using an anonymous paper and pencil survey.
- Analyze original data, including frequencies, percentage tables, correlations, and statistical tests.
- Write a formal research report and present in a public symposium using slides and tables.
- Demonstrate the ability to manipulate data by recoding, constructing scales or indexes, and performing bivariate and multivariate analysis.
- Understand the theory and application of probability sampling and tests of statistical significance.
- Understand the logic and demonstrate the elaboration model of analysis.

Format and Attendance:

The class involves reading, discussing, and applying concepts from texts and a workbook. Much of the course is hands-on work and the class meets in a computer lab. Participation, being well prepared for class, and engaging in the in-class exercises, are important parts of the course. Attendance in class is *required*. *More than three absences* will result in a *reduction* of your final grade.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

- Wed 8/29 Introduction to **Research Methods II**
- Fri 8/31 Review
READ: Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*
Chapter 1. What is Social Research?
- Mon 9/3 Labor Day - NO CLASSES
- Wed 9/5 Revising literature reviews
Bring your Review of the Literature paper and sources
Preliminary Project Proposal Due (NOT GRADED)
- Fri 9/7 More review – Data analysis
READ: Sweet and Grace-Martin, *Data Analysis with SPSS*
Chapter 1, Key Concepts in Social Science Research
- Mon 9/10 Questionnaire design, preparing interview schedules, planning observations, preparing for content analyses
In class we will work together to design basic demographic questions.
READ: Schutt, *Investigating the Social World*
Chapter 8, pages 233-256
- Wed 9/12 Video: Causation
Revised Literature Review Due (GRADED)
- Fri 9/14 Qualitative Methods
READ: Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*
Chapter 2. Strategies for Beginning Research
Chapter 8. Making Sense of Data, pages 151-176
- Mon 9/17 Intensive Interviews
READ: Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*
Chapter 5. Interviews
Schutt, *Investigating the Social World*
Chapter 9, pages 309-318
- Wed 9/19 Exercises on questionnaire design, preparing interview schedules, planning observations, preparing for content analyses
BRING TO CLASS: copy of your questionnaire, interview schedule, plans for observation or content analysis
- Fri 9/21 Writing a research proposal and HSR petition
Handout: Ithaca College Review Board for Human Subjects Research
Groups draft proposal for research with human beings.
- Mon 9/24 Sampling
Questionnaire, interview schedule, plan for observations, or plan for content analysis Due (NOT GRADED)
- Wed 9/26 Sampling
READ: Schutt, *Investigating the Social World*
Chapter 5, pages 132-167
- Fri 9/28 Ethical issues in conducting research
READ: Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*
Chapter 3. Ethical Issues

- Mon 10/1 Content Analysis: Analyzing Texts and Material Artifacts;
 READ: Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*
 Chapter 6. Unobtrusive Measures: Analyzing Texts and Material Artifacts
 Review Chapter 8. Making Sense of Data, pages 151-176
 Schutt, *Investigating the Social World*
 Chapter 13, pages 428-438
- Wed 10/3 Content Analysis – in class exercise
Project proposal and HSR petition (if needed) Due (GRADED)
- Fri 10/5 Content Analysis – in class exercise
- Mon 10/8 Content Analysis – in class exercise
- Wed 10/10 Observation Research
 READ: Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*
 Chapter 4. Observation: Participant and Otherwise
- Fri 10/12 DATA ANALYSIS
 READ: Sweet and Grace-Martin, *Data Analysis with SPSS*
 Chapter 2
- Mon 10/15 Sweet and Grace-Martin, *Data Analysis with SPSS*
 Chapter 3
 READ: Schutt, *Investigating the Social World*
 Chapter 14, pages 446-466
- Wed 10/17 DATA ANALYSIS
 READ: Sweet and Grace-Martin, *Data Analysis with SPSS*
 Chapter 4. Constructing Variables, pages 67-75.
 In class we will work through exercises, pages 68-74
Content Analysis Project DUE
- Fri 10/19 Fall Break – **NO CLASSES**
- Mon 10/22 Discuss final project; DATA ANALYSIS
 READ: Sweet and Grace-Martin, *Data Analysis with SPSS*
 Chapter 5. Assessing Association through Bivariate Analysis
 In class we will work through exercises, pages 91-95, 98-101.
 Schutt, *Investigating the Social World*
 Chapter 14, pages 466-474
- Wed 10/24 DATA ANALYSIS
 READ: Sweet and Grace-Martin, *Data Analysis with SPSS*
 Chapter 5. Continued
- Fri 10/26 Controlling for a 3rd variable
 READ: Schutt, *Investigating the Social World*
 Chapter 14, pages 474-479
- Mon 10/29 Controlling for a 3rd variable
- Wed 10/31 DATA ANALYSIS
 READ: Sweet and Grace-Martin, *Data Analysis with SPSS*
 Chapter 6. Comparing Group Means through Bivariate analyses
 In class we will work through exercises, pages 113-118, 121-123.

- Fri 11/2 DATA ANALYSIS
 READ: Sweet and Grace-Martin, *Data Analysis with SPSS*
 Chapter 6. Continued
- Mon 11/5 Writing a research report
 READ: Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*
 Chapter 10. Writing About Research
 Sweet and Grace-Martin, *Data Analysis with SPSS*
 Chapter 9. Writing a Research Report
- Wed 11/7 Steps in analysis; work on Data Analysis Project
- Fri 11/9 Work on Data Analysis Project
- Mon 11/12 Making scales and indexes
 READ: Schutt, *Investigating the Social World*
 Chapter 8, pages 245-249
Data Analysis Project DUE
- Wed 11/14 Evaluation Research
 READ: Schutt, *Investigating the Social World*
 Chapter 11, pages 357-382
- Fri 11/16 Work on projects
- 11/19 - 11/23 **THANKSGIVING BREAK - NO CLASSES**
- Mon 11/26 Evaluation Research
- Wed 11/28 Action Research
 READ: Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*
 Chapter 7. Action Research
Preliminary analysis for original research project due (GRADED)
- Fri 11/30 Action Research
- Mon 12/3 Work on projects
- Wed 12/4 Writing an abstract; Work on projects
- Fri 12/7 Work on projects
- Mon 12/10 Work on projects
- Research Methods Symposium – Student presents of research findings**
- Wed 12/12 Presentations
Final Original Research Project Report Due (GRADED)
- Fri 12/14 Presentations

RECOMMENDED FOR PURCHASE

Investigating the Social World, 5th Edition, by Russell Schutt, Pine Forge Press, 2006.

Data Analysis with SPSS, 2nd Edition, by Stephen Sweet and Karen Grace-Martin, Allyn and Bacon, 2002.

Qualitative Methods in Social Research by Kristin G. Esterberg, McGraw Hill, 2002.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Original Research Project

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------|--|
| Revised Literature Review | 8% | Due Friday, September 14 |
| Full Research Proposal | 9% | Due Wednesday, October 3 |
| Preliminary Analysis | 8% | Due Wednesday, November 28 |
| Final Report | 30% | Due Wednesday, December 12 |
| Presentation | <u>5%</u> | In class, Wed, Dec. 14 & Friday, Dec. 16 |
| Percent of final grade | 60% | |

Content Analysis Research Project **20%** Due Wednesday, October 17

Data Analysis Project **20%** Due Monday, November 11

Additional short assignments Satisfactory work will receive a √. Unsatisfactory work will receive a √-. A student who fails to do an assignment will receive a √- for that assignment. Unsatisfactory work or failure to turn in assignments will result in lower grades.

Computer data analysis Students will become proficient in SPSS 15.0, the leading computer package for statistical analysis in the social sciences. We will use SPSS in two ways: to illustrate various aspects of methods of research and data analysis, and to facilitate analysis of your own data from your individual projects. SPSS is installed in Friends 110, CHS 104, and Williams 203.

Student Nova accounts All students have accounts on the Nova server. You should save anything you do on any lab or ResNet machines (SPSS, papers, any other work for any course) to your account on the server. These servers are backed up every night. You can download the QuickGuide on the Novell system at http://www.ithaca.edu/computing/quickguides/pdfs/nvll_network.pdf.

Academic Honesty:

You must not plagiarize, which means using another's words or ideas without proper citation. (SEE BELOW.) You must also adhere to the campus rules for using computers, software, and electronic communication. In addition, your data must be authentic. I may ask to see your original questionnaires or observation and interview notes. SAVE EVERYTHING. Violations of academic honesty must be reported to the Ithaca College Conduct Review Board and can result in failing grades, suspension, or expulsion. See the 2007-2008 Ithaca College Student Handbook for details. http://www.ithaca.edu/attorney/policies/vol7/Volume_7-70104.htm

PLEASE NOTE:

- When you use someone else's words you must put them in quotations (or present them in a separate, single spaced, indented paragraph if they are more than three lines) and clearly indicate the source and page number of the quote. For example: "Blah, blah blah," (Schutt, p. 33).
- When you use someone else's idea you must clearly indicate the source of the idea. For example, you might write: Esterberg (p. 62) argues that... Or you might simply state an idea and then note the source at the end of the sentence or paragraph.
- Do not paraphrase. Either use your own words and indicate the original source or use quotation marks. However, a paper should not be a set of quotes linked together. Most of it should be your own words.
- For books and articles assigned in this course, the last name of the author and page numbers are sufficient (e.g. Schutt, p. 116). You do not need to include these references in a bibliography.
- For a source other than those assigned, indicate the source by author's last name in the text and then include a full reference in an attached bibliography (author's name, title, publisher, and date of publication).
- For ideas presented in class, give lecturer's name (or that of a fellow student or guest lecturer or simply "class") and the date of the class (e.g. Rothenberg, 9/3/07 or class discussion, 10/5/07).

Ithaca College Policy on Plagiarism in Collaborative Projects: In a collaborative project, all students in a group may be held responsible for academic misconduct if they engage in plagiarism or are aware of plagiarism by others in their group and fail to report it. Students who participate in a collaborative project in which plagiarism has occurred will not be held accountable if they were not knowledgeable of the plagiarism.