

Sociology 6600: Research Methods Spring 2009

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Instructor: Linda Renzulli

Class Schedule: Tuesday, Thursday

Classroom and Time: Baldwin 114A @ 9:30-10:45

Office hours: By Appointment

Phone: 542-3213 **E-mail:** renzulli@uga.edu

Class Web Page: webct

Course Objectives

The title of this course is Research Methods, thus, the overall framework emphasizes the process of doing sociology and being a sociologist. It is the most exciting part of our work because it is in the methods that we can use our creativity to execute a plan that will help us understand the social world. Much of this course focuses on extended examples of “cases” drawn from articles published in the top tier sociology journals. These cases show the application of general methodological principles. We will evaluate research done by top scholars in our discipline. You will soon learn that no research project is perfect and yet all methods have particular advantages and disadvantages. As a group, we will explore the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of different studies. Through discussion, class exercises, and written assignments, the class will demonstrate how to evaluate conclusions and claims in relation to the strengths and weaknesses of the research design, data, measurement and analytic approach in hopes that you will be able to then apply what you have learned to your own research methodologies. Though there is a lot of information to learn, I will conduct this as a seminar class.

I have three main objectives for this course:

1. To provide an advanced understanding of the current sociological research practices.
2. To help you evaluate and critically read sociological research.
3. To challenge you to develop and apply your own research design to a topic.

Required Reading

Singleton Jr., Royce A. and Bruce C. Straits. 2004. *Approaches to Social Research*. 4th Edition. Oxford University Press, New York. (referred to as SS)

Firebaugh, Glenn. 2008. *Seven Rules for Social Research*. Princeton University Press. (referred to as 7-rules)

Readings on webct “readings” page.

Requirements

Professional socialization is an explicit part of this course. The use of recently published articles as examples shows exactly what the standards of the field are. The written assignments and the final examination are modeled on the kinds of reviews that sociologists are asked to do routinely as discussants at professional meetings and as referees for journals.

You will have to review 3 articles of different sociological methods which are currently published in leading journals. The focus of the critiques is methodological, not substantive. Each one features an already published article in a top sociology journal and emphasizes a specific methodological concern. **I assume no specific knowledge of the topic area represented in the chosen article nor do I assume knowledge in the statistical method employed.** I can't accept late assignments for the three reviews.

As you will see in the syllabus, we discuss the article that your assignment is based on the day it is due. If you do not have the article completed, you cannot participate in the discussion on that day.

I will expect that you will be thinking about your own research proposals as we go. We will have research “checkpoints” throughout the semester. In the end, I hope you will have all the pieces of your research proposal that you can put together to make a proposal for your master’s thesis or other work you are doing. If you already have your MA in sociology and it has been accepted by our department, you are still required to bring in pieces of what would be a proposal for another piece of research- a proposal for a grant, an article, a piece of your dissertation etc.

You are also required to attend 2 of the department colloquium or other approved presentation and write a short one page discussion/critique of the method used by the speaker. Please be sure to address the issues we have discussed in class when relevant. Dates will vary; I have made a link to the departmental colloquium page on webct for you to access information about departmental colloquium.

Students are required to take a final examination or to submit a research proposal. Those opting for the final examination will evaluate a recently published article using a standard set of instructions sent to reviewers by journal editors. Students considering the research proposal are **required** to discuss their ideas with me and their major professor. The final or proposal is due a week after classes are over. More explanation of the assignments will be made clear as we progress through the class.

Grading

If you are consistently getting grades of a B or lower on assignments and research “checkpoints”, you should make an appointment to discuss your progress. The three assignments will be worth 15% each of your grade (total 45%), the final/proposal is worth 35%, the colloquium papers will be worth 2.5% each (total 5%), the remaining 15% will be for the research “checkpoints” and participation.

Check Points and participation	.....	15%
Assignment One	.....	15 %
Assignment Two	.....	15%
Assignment Three	.....	15%
Final or RP	.....	35%
Colloquium papers	.....	5%
Total	.....	100.0%

Important Dates:

Check Points

Research Question	Jan 27
Hypotheses	Feb 3
Causal Model	Feb 17
Population	March 17
Which Method	April 9
Rationale	

Assignments

Assignment 1	Feb 19
Assignment 2	March 5
Assignment 2	April 7
Final or RP	March 17

I do not grade on a curve. I use 10 point intervals (rounding up is at the discretion of the instructor and is only done for numerical values of .5 or greater. For example 89.5 may be rounded to 90 but 89.3 will not be). Final grades for the course are based on the following scale:

Letter Grade	Number Grade
A	93 to 100
A-	90 to 92
B+	88 to 89
B	83 to 87
B-	80 to 82
C+	78 to 79
C	73 to 77
C-	70 to 72
D+	68 to 69
D	63 to 67
D-	60 to 62
F	59 and below

Academic Honesty

The University of Georgia seeks to promote and ensure academic honesty and personal integrity among students and other members of the University Community. A policy on academic honesty has been developed to serve these goals. All members of the academic community are responsible for knowing the policy and procedures on academic honesty.

The link to more detailed information about academic honesty can be found at:

<http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>

Grievances

Human Rights Statement

All students should know that the department of Sociology has a Human Rights Committee for the resolution of student grievances. Any student registered for a sociology course at the University of Georgia who feels that he or she has not been treated in a fair or professional manner by an instructor is advised to follow these procedures:

- 1) The student should discuss his or her problems with the instructor of the course, unless extenuating circumstances prohibit this.
- 2) If that discussion does not resolve the grievance, the student should then discuss the problem with the Head of the Department of Sociology.
- 3) If that discussion does not resolve the grievance to the satisfaction of the student, the student may request the activation of the Human Rights Committee by submitting a letter to the Chair of the Human Rights Committee, Department of Sociology, University of Georgia.

The Human Rights Committee will have the responsibility of investigating all charges in accordance with the procedures on file in the Sociology office, copies of which are available to students. The Committee will also have the responsibility of making recommendations in writing to the Head, copies of which will be made available to the student complainant and the instructor involved. The Department Head will review the recommendations and make a decision in writing, with copies to the student complainant and the instructor of staff member involved. Any appeal of that decision must be to the Dean of the college of Arts and Sciences.

Methods Spring 09
Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Dates and readings subject to change.
 Readings are due the date they appear.

<p>Thursday, January 8th</p>	<p>Introduction: What are research methods? Why study this? What are professional products?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS- Chapter 1: Introduction pp. 1-13 • SS- Chapter 17: Writing Research Reports pp. 540-556
<p>Tuesday, January 13th</p>	<p>Overview: The Nature of Knowing</p> <p>Feminist Ideas about the Nature of Knowing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft of Inquiry pp. 2-4 • Heckman, Susan. 1heckman signs.pdf997. Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited. Signs 22(2). 341-365 • Comment by Harding pp. 382-402. • Stanley Lieberson and Freda Lynn. 2002. "Barking Up the Wrong Branch: Scientific Alternatives to the Current Model of Sociological Science." Annual Review of Sociology 28: 1-19. <p><i>Recommended</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guetzkow, Josua and Michele Lamont. 2004 "What is originality in the Humanities and the Social Sciences?" American Sociological Review. 69. 190-212.
<p>Thursday, January 15th</p>	<p>Stages of Social Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS- Chapter 3: Elements of Research Design pp. 64-73 • SS- Field Research pp. 321-343 • Craft of inquiry chapter 2 • 7-rules pp 1-18.
<p>Tuesday, January 20th</p>	<p>Logic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS- Chapter 2: The Nature of Science pp. 14-40 • Craft of Inquiry chapter 3
<p>Thursday , January 24th</p>	<p>Logic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example of inductive and deductive research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inductive: Yancy- Martin, Patricia. 2003. "Said and Done" Versus "Saying and Doing" Gendered Practices, Practicing Gender at Work. Gender and Society. 17. 342-366. ○ Deductive: Andrew Guest and Barbara Schneider titled "Adolescents' Extracurricular Participation in Context: The Mediating Effects of Schools, Communities, and Identity" in Sociology of Education. 76(2): 89-109.

Tuesday, January 27 th	Bring proposed topic/research question to class
Thursday, January 29 th	Theory and Hypothesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS- Chapter 3 pp. 64-68 • SS- Chapter 2 review • Merton: On Sociological Theories of the Middle Range pp.39-72 Get paper with formal hyps to discuss
February	
Tuesday, February 3 rd	Bring your Hypotheses to class
Thursday, February 5 th	Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS- Chapter 4: Measurement pp. 76-90 • Andrew Guest and Barbara Schneider titled “Adolescents’ Extracurricular Participation in Context: The Mediating Effects of Schools, Communities, and Identity” in <i>Sociology of Education</i>. 76(2): 89-109. • 7-rules chapter 3 pp. 64-83
Tuesday, February 10 th	More on Reliability and Validity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS- Chapter 5: Measurement pp. 90-97 • Review measurement SS- Chapter 4: Measurement pp. 76-90
Thursday, February 12 th	Causal Models <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS- Chapter 3: Elements of Research Design pp. 43-64 • Kaufman Jeanne G. and Cathy Spatz Widom. 1999. “Childhood Victimization, Running Away, and Delinquency.” <i>Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency</i>. 36:347-370. • Andrew Guest and Barbara Schneider titled “Adolescents’ Extracurricular Participation in Context: The Mediating Effects of Schools, Communities, and Identity” in <i>Sociology of Education</i>. 76(2): 89-109. • 7-rules chapter 5
Tuesday, February 17 th	Bring your own causal models to class
Thursday, February 19 th	Assignment 1: concepts and measurement: how do we know what we know?
Tuesday, February 24 th	External Validity Defining your population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS- Chapter 5: Sampling pp. 111-152 • SS- Chapter 11: Field Research pp. 312-314.

<p>Thursday, Feb 26th</p>	<p>Choosing cases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dellinger, Kirsten and Christine Williams. 2002. "The Locker Room and the Dorm Room: Workplace Norms and the Boundaries of Sexual Harassment in Magazine Editing." <i>Social Problems</i>. 49(2): 242-257. • Downey, Douglas and Shana Pribesh. 2004. "When Race Matters: Teachers' Evaluations of Students' Classroom Behavior." <i>Sociology of Education</i>. 77: 267-282. • 7-rules pp. 19-31 and Chapter 4 pp. 90-110 <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample size guidelines. • Sampling bias
<p>March</p>	
<p>Tuesday, March 3rd</p>	<p>Experiments and Quasi-experiments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS- Chapter 6 and 7: Experimentation and Experimental Design. • Lucas, Jeffrey. 2003. "Status Processes and the Institutionalization of Women as Leaders." <i>American Sociological Review</i>. 68: 464-480. • Pager, Devah. 2003. "The Mark of Criminal Record." <i>AJS</i>. 108(5): 937-975. • <p><i>Recommended</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas D. Cook and Donald T. Campbell. 1979. "Validity." Pp. 37-94 in <i>Quasi-Experimentation: Design and Analysis Issues for Field Settings</i>. Chicago: Rand McNally. • CC- Chapter 3: Nonequivalent Control Group Designs p. 95-146
<p>Thursday, March 5th</p>	<p>Assignment 2 due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA
<p style="text-align: center;">SPRING BREAK March 9-13 no class</p>	
<p>Tuesday, March 17th</p>	<p>Bring rationale for: What is your population, how will choose cases or data?</p>
<p>Thursday, March 19th</p>	<p>Qualitative Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft of Inquiry: Chapter 5 • SS: Chapter 10 – Field Research pp. 306-344 • Dellinger, Kirsten and Christine Williams. 2002. "The Locker Room and the Dorm Room: Workplace Norms and the Boundaries of Sexual Harassment in Magazine Editing." <i>Social Problems</i>. 49(2): 242-257. <p><i>Recommended</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burawoy, Michael. 2003. "Revisits: An Outline of a Theory of Reflexive Ethnography" <i>American Sociological Review</i> 68:645-679

<p>Tuesday, March 24th</p> <p>Last day to withdraw</p>	<p>Comparative Historical Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS: pp. 364-369 • Craft of Inquiry Chapter 6. • Beck, E.M and Steard E. Tolnay. 1990. "The Killing Fields of the Deep South: The Market for Cotton and the Lynching of Blacks, 1882-1930. <i>American Sociological Review</i>, Vol. 55, No. 4 pp. 526-539. <p><i>Recommended:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adams, Julia. 1996. Principles and Agents, Colonialists, and Company Men: The Decay of Colonial Control and the Dutch East Indies." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 61: 12-28.
<p>Thursday, March 26th</p>	<p>Surveys and Social Desirability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS- chapter 8: Survey Research pp. 219-262 • 7-rules chapter 4 pp 100-106
<p>Tuesday, March 31st</p>	<p>Using existing data- Quantitative Methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS- Chapter 11: Research using available data pp. 345-380 • Andrew Guest and Barbara Schneider titled "Adolescents' Extracurricular Participation in Context: The Mediating Effects of Schools, Communities, and Identity" in <i>Sociology of Education</i>. 76(2): 89-109. • 7-rules chapter 6 pp. 172-202
<p>April</p>	
<p>Thursday, April 2nd</p>	<p>no class- Southern Meetings in New Orleans</p>
<p>Tuesday, April 7th</p>	<p>Assignment 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA
<p>Thursday, April 9th</p>	<p>Multiple Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SS- Chapter 12: Multiple Methods pp. 381-408 • Pearce, Lisa. 2002. Integrating Survey and Ethnographic Methods for Systematic Anomalous Case Analysis." <i>Sociological Methodology</i>, 32(1): 103-132. • Craft of Inquiry chapter 7
<p>Tuesday, April 14th</p>	<p>Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moody, James. 2004. "The Structure of a Social Science Collaboration Network" <i>American Sociological Review</i>. 69: 213-238.
<p>Thursday, April 16th</p>	<p>Ethics in Research: IRB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.ovpr.uga.edu/compliance/hso/guidelines/ Please complete the Web-based human subjects training course at this Web site. • Unethical --- Tea Room Trade • Ethical—

Tuesday, April 21st	What makes a good presentation? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readings to be announced
Thursday, April 23rd	Workshop Day- discussion of your projects
Tuesday, April 28th	Workshop Day- discussion of your projects