

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL
Spring, 2002

Measurement and Data Collection

(SOCI 51)

MW 9:00–9:50 (Section F 9:00–9:50) Wilson Library 304

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COURSE OVERVIEW

READINGS AND RESOURCES

Required Books

Earl Babbie. *Basics of Social Research*, 2nd ed. (Wadsworth, 2002).

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton University Press, 1994).

Supplementary Readings

All other readings are available either on the web or on the course website. Readings available on the course website are marked with the WWW symbol. Those available on the web are linked from the course website. A few readings are on reserve in the library, and should also be available by electronic reserve; these are marked with the LIB symbol. The course website is available through <http://blackboard.unc.edu>.

Other Resources

Have a dictionary close at hand to look up words you don't know. You can find an adequate one at <http://www.dictionary.com> if you prefer using an online version.

The UNC Writing Center (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb>) can help you with writing clearly and correctly.

There is an astonishing amount of information available on the World Wide Web. A significant proportion of that information—though by no means all—is true and relevant. By all means, use the Web to supplement your reading and knowledge, but use it critically and make sure you know the source of the information.

FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

The requirements of this course are as follows:

Reading You must complete all the course readings. *You are responsible for understanding the readings*—make use of your fellow students, your dictionary, the Internet, your TA, and me to make sure you understand the readings. Course time is to be used for substantive discussion and further exploration of the implications of course readings, *not* for grasping the basic contents.

Participation You must attend, and participate in, all class discussions, including Friday sections. You are also responsible for the information contained in course lectures.

Quizzes There will be three in-class quizzes.

Exams There will be two examinations. You must take the examinations at the date, time, and place assigned.

Original Written Work During the semester, you will develop a research proposal on the topic of your choice. You will turn this in in four parts:

1. A discussion of the topic and specific research question, due February 1
2. A critical review of existing research on your topic, due March 4
3. An oral presentation of your research plan, to be presented in class between April 15 and April 29
4. A complete proposal, due May 3

Presentation Response You will write a short (one paragraph each) critical response to three other students' in-class presentations. These must have been presented on three different days.

Grading

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

Examinations	50%
Quizzes (3 × 5%)	15%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	20%
Original Written Work	45%
Research Question	5%
Literature Review	10%
Research Proposal	10%
Class Presentation	10%
Response to Presentations	10%
Class Participation	5%

COURSE POLICIES

YOU ARE AN ADULT. As a student in this class, you are provided with a set of resources for learning the class's contents, and you are expected to fulfill a series of requirements designed to evaluate the depth and breadth of your knowledge of those contents. Your grade, therefore, is a reflection of your success in utilizing the resources you have at your disposal. There will be no extra credit or make-up assignments.

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INFORMATION IN THE READINGS AND GIVEN DURING LECTURES. If you do not understand something I say in a lecture, ask me during the lecture, during a later class, or privately via e-mail or office hours.

ON DAYS WHEN DISCUSSIONS ARE SCHEDULED, participation is mandatory. Some discussions will be full-class; others will be broken into two sections, and still others will be in small groups. Your participation will be useless—and graded as such—if you have not done the reading.

ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE ON THE DATES LISTED. Make sure you give yourself sufficient time to finish assignments by their due dates. You will lose roughly one letter grade per day between the due date and the date the paper is received. You may make the calculation yourself as to whether your work will improve sufficiently in the extra time to make up for the grade reduction. In exceptional cases, I may grant an extension; you *must* discuss this with me in advance.

YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS COURSE IS COVERED BY THE UNC HONOR CODE (see <http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/studinfo.html>). I take academic dishonesty—including, but not limited to, plagiarism—very seriously. There will be no excuses or second chances; if you have plagiarized the *ideas* or *words* of someone else without giving credit, you will be referred to the Student Attorney General. If you have questions as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, check <http://www.unc.edu/depts/honor/plagiarism.html> or consult your TA or me.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Part I: Theory and Issues of Investigation

1/9–3/1

January 9 Lecture: Course Introduction

January 11 Section does not meet

January 14 Lecture: The Logic of Inquiry in Social Science

Readings:

- Babbie, pp. 10–36
- King et al., Chapter 1

January 16 Lecture: The Politics and Ethics of Research

Readings: Babbie, Chapter 3

Exercise: Complete the online ethics training at <http://cme.nci.nih.gov/> and turn in your dated certificate.

January 18 Section (Video: *Obedience*)

January 21 No Class—Martin Luther King, Jr., Day

January 23 Lecture: What's At Stake

Readings:

- Theodor W. Adorno, from *Introduction to Sociology*, Lectures 3 and 9 LIB
- King *et al.*, Chapter 2

January 25 Section (Develop topics of interest)

January 28 Lecture: Description, Correlation, and Causality

Readings:

- Babbie, Chapter 4
- King *et al.*, pp. 99–114

January 30 Discussion: Causality in the Public Mind

Readings:

Required “Breast Cancer Studies on Abortion’s Influence.” National Public Radio, January 23, 1996
WWW <http://www.unc.edu/~aperrin/classes/readings/npr-breastcancer.pdf>

If Interested Newcomb *et al.* “Pregnancy Termination in Relation to Risk of Breast Cancer.” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 275:4 (January 24/31, 1996): 283–87. WWW
<http://www.unc.edu/~aperrin/classes/readings/jama-breastcancer.pdf>

February 1 (Section) Quiz #1
Research Question due

February 4 Lecture: Measurement and Interpretation
Reading: Babbie, Chapter 5

February 6 Lecture: Cases and Comparisons
Reading: Doug McAdam, "The Biographical Consequences of Activism." *American Sociological Review* 54:5 (1989): 744–760. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28198910%2954%3C744%3ATBCOA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-6>

February 8 (Section) Return and Discuss Quiz #1

February 11 Lecture: Types of Measurement
Reading: Babbie, Chapter 6

February 13 Discussion: Measurement Traps
Readings:

- Fischer *et al.*, *Inequality By Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth* (Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 26–31. [LIB](#)
- King *et al.*, pp. 150–166

February 15 (Section) Develop a survey topic

February 18 Lecture: Surveys and Questionnaires

February 20 Workshop: Constructing a Survey Instrument
Reading: "Codebook, ABC News/Washington Post Afghanistan Attack Poll #2, October 2001" (ICPSR). <http://www.unc.edu/~aperrin/classes/readings/cb3299.pdf>

February 22 (Section) Analyze survey results
Exercise *before class*: take the survey on-line

February 25 Lecture: Ideas and Concepts of Sampling
Reading: King *et al.*, 115–128

February 27 Lecture: Probability and Nonprobability Sampling
Reading: Babbie, Chapter 7

March 1 (Section)

Part II: **Practices of Social Research**

3/4–4/12

March 4 Lecture: From Theory to Practice
Literature Review/Critique Due

March 6 Lecture: Experiments as the "Gold Standard"
Reading: Babbie, Chapter 8

March 8 Midterm Examination

March 11–15 No Class–Spring Break

March 18 Discussion: Experiments in Social Science
Reading: Stephen Ansolabehere and Shanto Iyengar, "Riding the Wave and Claiming Ownership Over Issues: The Joint Effects of Advertising and News Coverage in Campaigns," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 58:3 (1994): 335–357. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0033-362X%28199423%2958%3C335%3ARTWAC0%3E2.0.CO%3B2-7>

March 20 Quiz #2

March 22 (Section) Return and discuss quiz #2

March 25 Lecture: Surveys and Secondary Data Analysis

Reading: Babbie, Chapter 9

March 27 Lecture: Issues in Survey Analysis

Reading: Nina Eliasoph, "Beliefs and the missing public sphere," p. 231 in *Avoiding Politics: How Americans Produce Apathy in Everyday Life* (Cambridge University Press, 1998). LIB

March 29 No Class—Passover/Good Friday

April 1 Lecture: Quantitative Data Analysis

Reading: Babbie, Chapter 14

April 3 Discussion: Interpreting Quantitative Data

April 5 (Section)

April 8 Lecture: Ethnography and Qualitative Observation

Readings:

- Babbie, pp. 368–380, 390–391
- “Calendars” and “Keys”, from Christena Nippert-Eng, *Home and Work* (University of Chicago Press, 1995)

April 10 Lecture: Unobtrusive Measures

Readings:

- Babbie, pp. 310–323, 329–338
- King *et al.*, Chapter 6

April 12 (Section)

Part III: **Presentation of Student Work**

3/4–4/12

April 15 Student Presentations

April 17 Student Presentations

April 19 (Section) Quiz #3

April 22 Student Presentations

April 24 Student Presentations

April 26 Student Presentations (full class - not a section)

April 29 Student Presentations

May 1 Exam Review and Wrap-Up

Student Presentation Critiques due

May 3 Final examination - 12:00 NOON

Final papers due 5:00 PM