

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL
Spring, 2006

Measurement and Data Collection

(SOCI 51)

Lecture: MW 1:00–1:50; Section: F 1:00–1:50 Davie 112 and Manning 307

Andrew Perrin

TAs: Anne Hunter and Craig Owen

Office: Hamilton 269

Office hours: Monday, 10:00–11:30; Thursday, 1:30–3:00

Phone: 962-6876

E-mail: andrew_perrin@unc.edu • <http://www.unc.edu/~aperrin>

COURSE OVERVIEW

READINGS AND RESOURCES

Required Books

Earl Babbie. *Basics of Social Research*, 3rd ed. (Wadsworth, 2005).

Joel Best. *Damned Lies and Statistics* (University of California Press, 2001).

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. 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 You will be responsible for two pieces of original written work:

1. A methodological evaluation of one recent, published social science article. I will make the articles available for you to choose from no later than February 1, when the assignment will be handed out as well. **Due Monday, March 6**
2. A complete proposal for the data collection section of a research project. The full assignment will be handed out on February 15. **Due Monday, April 3**

Critical Evaluation You will be assigned to write a short (one page) evaluation of a classmate's research proposal. You will receive the assignment and proposal on Friday, April 7. **Due Friday, April 28**

Grading

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

Examinations	50%
Quizzes (3 × 5%)	15%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	20%
Written Work	45%
Methodological Evaluation	15%
Research Proposal	25%
Critical Evaluation	5%
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.

ADEQUATE COMPLETION OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CLASS WILL EARN YOU A B-. Work whose quality clearly exceeds these requirements will earn a B, B+, A-, or A.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Ordinarily, the entire class will meet in Davie 112 on Monday and Wednesday. On Fridays, Section A will meet in Davie 112 and section B will meet in Manning 307. Section assignments will be announced in class and by email on January 18.

January 11 Lecture: Why Worry about Method?

January 13 Lecture: The Logic of Inquiry in Social Science
All students in Davie 112

Readings:

- Babbie, chapter 1
- Best, "Introduction: The Worst Statistic Ever"

January 16 No class - MLK, Jr., Holiday

January 18 Lecture: The Politics and Ethics of Research

Readings: Babbie, Chapter 3

Exercise: Complete the online ethics training at <https://www.citiprogram.org/default.asp> and turn in your dated certificate.

January 20 Section: Ethics and Inquiry Tradeoffs

January 23 Video: *Obedience*

Reading: Best, chapter 1

January 25 Lecture: What's At Stake

Readings:

- Theodor W. Adorno, from *Introduction to Sociology*, Lectures 3 and 9 WWW
- Babbie, chapter 2

January 27 Section: What are Methods For?

January 30 Lecture: Description, Correlation, and Causality

Readings:

- Babbie, Chapter 4

February 1 Lecture: Causality in the Public Mind

Readings:

Required:

- "Breast Cancer Studies on Abortion's Influence." National Public Radio, January 23, 1996 WWW <http://perrin.socsci.unc.edu/readings/soc51/npr-breastcancer.pdf>
- Best, chapter 2

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://perrin.socsci.unc.edu/readings/soc51/jama-breastcancer.pdf>

Methodological evaluation assignment handed out in class

February 3 (Section) Quiz #1

February 6 Lecture: Measurement and Interpretation

Reading: Babbie, Chapter 5

February 8 Lecture: Cases and Comparisons

Reading:

- Doug McAdam, "The Biographical Consequences of Activism." *American Sociological Review* 54:5 (1989): 744–760. [www http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28198910%2954%3C744%3ATBCOA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-6](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28198910%2954%3C744%3ATBCOA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-6)
- Best, chapter 4

February 10 (Section) Return and Discuss Quiz #1

February 13 Lecture: Types of Measurement

Reading: Babbie, Chapter 6

February 15 Lecture: Measurement Traps

Readings:

- Fischer *et al.*, *Inequality By Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth* (Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 26–31. www
- Best, chapter 3

Research Proposal assignment handed out in class

February 17 Section: Workshop on preparing the research proposal

February 20 Lecture: Surveys and Questionnaires

Reading: Babbie, chapter 9

February 22 Lecture: Inside a Survey Instrument

Reading: Frequencies and codebook, Carolina Poll, Fall, 2005 [www http://perrin.socsci.unc.edu/readings/soc51/carolinapoll.pdf](http://perrin.socsci.unc.edu/readings/soc51/carolinapoll.pdf)

February 24 Section: Construct a Survey Instrument

February 27 Lecture: Ideas and Concepts of Sampling

Reading: Babbie, Chapter 7

February 29 Lecture: Probability and Nonprobability Sampling

March 1 Section: Analyze survey results

Exercise *before class*: take the survey on-line

March 6 Lecture: Wrap up on the theory of social inquiry

Reading: Best, chapter 6

Methodological evaluation paper due

March 8 Review session: in **Section Meeting Rooms**

March 10 Midterm Examination: in **Section Meeting Rooms**

March 11–19 Spring Break

March 20 Lecture: From Theory to Practice

Reading: David Harris, "In the Eye of the Beholder: Observed Race and Observer Characteristics." University of Michigan Population Studies Center Research Report 02-522 (August, 2002). [www http://perrin.socsci.unc.edu/readings/soc51/harris-observed-race.pdf](http://perrin.socsci.unc.edu/readings/soc51/harris-observed-race.pdf)

March 22 Lecture: Experiments as the “Gold Standard”

Reading: Babbie, Chapter 8

March 24 Entire Class in Davie 112

Lecture: 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. [www http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0033-362X%28199423%2958%3C335%3ARTWACO%3E2.O.CO%3B2-7](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0033-362X%28199423%2958%3C335%3ARTWACO%3E2.O.CO%3B2-7)

March 27 Section Rooms: Quiz #2

March 29 Lecture: Quantitative Data Analysis

Reading: Babbie, Chapter 14

March 31 Section: Return and discuss quiz #2

April 3 Lecture: Large-scale Surveys and Secondary Data Analysis

Reading: Babbie, 339–345

Research proposal assignment due

April 5 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). www

April 7 Section: Interpreting Quantitative Data

Critical evaluation assignment handed out

April 10 Lecture: Ethnography and Qualitative Observation

Reading:

- Charles Bosk, “Appendix: The Field-Worker and the Surgeon,” and “An Amended Appendix: An Ethnographer’s Apology, a Bioethicist’s Lament—The Surgeon and the Sociologist Revisited.” pp. 193–236 in *Forgive and Remember: Managing Medical Failure*, 2nd ed. University of Chicago Press, 2003. www
- “Calendars” and “Keys”, from Christena Nippert-Eng, *Home and Work* (University of Chicago Press, 1995) www

April 12 No class (Passover)

April 14 No class (Good Friday)

April 17 Lecture: Interviewing

April 19 Lecture: Unobtrusive Measures

Reading:

- Hadaway, Marler, and Chaves. “What the polls don’t show: A closer look at U.S. church attendance.” *American Sociological Review* Dec 1993; 58, 6. [www http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1528733&Fmt=1&clientId=15094&RQT=309&VName=PQD](http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1528733&Fmt=1&clientId=15094&RQT=309&VName=PQD)

April 21 Section: Quiz #3

April 24 Lecture: Discourse and Content Analysis

Reading: Shyon Baumann, “Intellectualization and Art World Development: Film in the United States.” *American Sociological Review* 66:3 (Jun., 2001), pp. 404–426. [www http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28200106%2966%3A3%3C404%3AIAAWDF%3E2.O.CO%3B2-V](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1224%28200106%2966%3A3%3C404%3AIAAWDF%3E2.O.CO%3B2-V)

April 26 Lecture: Producing and Consuming Good Social Science

April 28 Section: Review and discussion
Critical evaluation assignment due

May 1 Final examination - 12:00 NOON