Course Overview

Readings and Resources

Required Books


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:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examinations</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes (3 × 5%)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written Work</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodological Evaluation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Proposal</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Evaluation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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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
• 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:

  http://perrin.socsci.unc.edu/readings/soc51/npr-breastcancer.pdf
• Best, chapter 2

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:
- 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:
- Best, chapter 4

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)

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
March 22  Lecture: Experiments as the “Gold Standard”
Reading: Babbie, Chapter 8

March 24  Entire Class in Davie 112
Lecture: Experiments in Social Science

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

April 7  Section: Interpreting Quantitative Data
Critical evaluation assignment handed out

April 10  Lecture: Ethnography and Qualitative Observation
Reading:
• “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:

April 21  Section: Quiz #3

April 24  Lecture: Discourse and Content Analysis

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