

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

77:229

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODS

Regular Session 2001-2002

L02 312 Tier

Instructor: Valérie Michaud

Office: 334 Isbister Building

Office Hours: 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. Monday & Wednesday or by appointment

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Text

Babbie, E.R. The Practice of Social Research Ninth Edition (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2001)

Each student will require a 3.5 inch diskette (1.44 MB high density).

Course Description

The purpose of the course is to introduce you to the fundamentals of the scientific method with an emphasis on how social science research is undertaken in practice by sociologists. The course will examine all aspects of the scientific process including the logic of theory construction, data collection methods, sampling issues, quantitative and qualitative data analysis and report writing. The ethical and political contexts within which social research is conducted will also be considered.

The course is structured in such a way as to facilitate "learning by doing". You will have an opportunity to apply what you are learning by participating in literature searches, analysis of journal articles, preparation of a research proposal, recording of field notes, survey design, and the major aspects of data analysis and report writing. There will be a series of in-class exercises/tutorial sessions to help you "practice" some of these tasks prior to completing the assignments.

Course Evaluation

The final grade for the course will be based on the following:

A.) Term Tests Test#1: (December 5th) 20%

Test#2: (April 10th) 20%

B.) Assignments

Assign#1: Literature Search/Working Bibliography 5%

Assign#2: Analysis of a Journal Article: Theory &

Method 10%

Assign#3: Research Proposal 15%

Assign#4: Survey 10%

Assign#5: Field Notes Exercise 5%

Assign#6: Computer Assignment 15%

NOTE: While you are encouraged to help each other throughout the course, it is crucial that you understand that all students **MUST** hand in their **OWN** written work for all of the assignments indicated above. Acts of academic dishonesty or plagiarism are serious offenses and are subject to academic discipline (eg., suspension or expulsion from the faculty or University). Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on 'plagiarism and cheating' and 'examination impersonation' found in the University General Calendar.

NO late assignments will be accepted without a valid reason. Students who fail to submit assignments on the due dates will receive a grade of F for that part of the course grade unless an alternative date has been agreed to by the instructor. Rescheduled dates will only be approved for good reasons and such arrangements should be made in advance whenever possible. Missed tests or assignment dates must be rescheduled within 7 days of the due dates which follow.

Additional details on the assignments will be provided in separate handouts and discussed further in class.

Term Tests-There will be two tests, one on **December 5th** and the other on **April 10th**. The tests will be based on the readings and lecture material. The format will include both multiple choice and short answer questions. The April test is NOT cumulative.

Assignments-Assignments #1 to #6 are described below.

***Literature Search/Working Bibliography (#1)**

This assignment involves library research. Each student will identify two possible topic areas for their research proposal, and construct a "working bibliography" of the relevant social science literature in each topic area. Due on **September 19th**.

***Analysis of a Journal Article: Theory and Method (#2)**

This assignment involves the analysis of a journal article provided by the instructor. The analysis will identify the social theories and methods being used in the research. This includes the identification of the major concepts emanating from the theory, the indicators used to measure the concepts, the relationships that are proposed between independent variables (causes) and dependent variables (effects), the data collection methods used to gather relevant information and the sampling strategies utilized to select respondents. Due on **October 17th**.

***Research Proposal (#3)**

The research proposal will outline the specific research topic that you have chosen to examine, the sociological relevance of the topic, the relevant literature reviewed, the key concepts or theoretical issues that are central to the research, and the proposed indicators, data collection methods, sampling strategies and data analysis plan. The proposal should be between **12 to 15** pages, and is due on **November 28th**.

***Survey (#4)**

This assignment requires that you design a survey to address the research problem outlined in your research proposal. The survey should be between **5 to 8** pages, and include both open-ended and close-ended questions. Due on **February 8th**.

***Field Notes Exercise (#5)**

The assignment involves observation by each student in a naturalistic setting, and the preparation of a set of field notes, not to exceed **8** pages. Students should consult with the instructor in the selection of an "observation site". The field notes are due on **February 27th**.

***Computer Assignment (#6)**

This assignment will involve the analysis of data from the Winnipeg Area Study. The instructor will

provide each student with the data file and SPSS program necessary to conduct an analysis of the survey results. (Students are to provide their own diskettes.) The data will be analyzed using SPSS for Windows. You are not required to have any previous knowledge of computer programming. Instructions for the use of this statistical package will be provided in the SPSS tutorials at the UM Microcomputer Centre. Due on **March 27th**.

The following scale will be used to determine final grades:

A+ 90% and over C+ 65% - 69%

A 80% - 89% C 60% - 64%

B+ 75% - 79% D 50% - 59%

B 70% - 74% F Under 50%

Please note the following **Senate Policy #1307** which applies to multi-sectioned courses such as this one.

Senate Policy #1307 requires "a post-examination review of final grades in multi-sectioned courses that will ensure an equitable correspondence between grades and level of performance in all sections". Accordingly, the final grade distribution in this course may be raised or lowered to achieve this equity and, therefore, your final grade may be changed.

COURSE OUTLINE

TERM 1

Sept. 7th Review of course outline

Sept. 10th, 12th & Ch. 1 Human Inquiry and Science

& 14th Ch. 2 Paradigms, Theory and Social Research

Sept. 17th, 19th, & 21st Ch. 3 The Idea of Causation in Social Research

SEPT. 19TH: Assignment #1 due. Literature Search/Working Bibliography.

Sept. 24th, 26th, & 28th Ch. 18 The Ethics and Politics of Social

Research

Ch. 4 Research Design

Oct. 1st, 3rd & 5th Ch. 5 Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement

Oct. 10th, 12th & 15th Ch.5 Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement cont'd . . .

OCT. 12TH: Tutorial #1 (In class)

OCT. 15TH: Tutorial #1 cont'd.

Oct. 17th & 19th Ch. 5 Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement cont'd . . .

OCT. 17TH: Assignment #2 due. Analysis of a Journal Article: Theory and Method

Oct. 22nd, 24th & 26th Ch. 6 Indexes, Scales and Typologies

Oct. 29th, 31st & Nov. 2nd Ch. 6 Indexes, Scales and Typologies cont'd. . .

OCT. 31ST: Tutorial #2 (In class)

NOV. 2ND: Tutorial #2 cont'd.

Nov. 5th, 7th & 9th Ch. 7 The Logic of Sampling

Nov. 14th, 16th & 19th Ch. 7 The Logic of Sampling cont'd. . .

NOV. 16TH: Tutorial #3 (In class)

NOV. 19TH: Tutorial #3 cont'd.

Nov. 21st, 23rd & 26th SPSS Tutorials & Term 1 Review

Nov. 28th, 30th & Dec. 3rd SPSS Tutorials & Term 1 Review

NOV. 28TH: Assignment #3 due. Research Proposal.

DECEMBER 5th: Test #1.

December 5th End of Term 1.

TERM 2

Jan. 4th, 7th & 9th Ch. 9 Survey Research

Jan. 11th, 14th & 16th Ch. 9 Survey Research cont'd . . .

Jan. 18th, 21st & 23rd Ch. 10 Qualitative Field Research

Ch. 13 Qualitative Data Analysis

Jan. 25th, 28th & 30th Ch. 8 Experiments

Feb. 1st & 4th Ch. 11 Unobtrusive Measures

Feb. 6th & 8th Ch. 12 Evaluation Research

FEB. 8TH: Assignment #4 due. Survey.

Feb. 11th - 15th MID-TERM BREAK

Feb. 18th, 20th & 22nd Ch. 14 Quantifying Data

Feb. 25th, 27th & March 1st Ch. 15 Elementary Quantitative Analyses

FEB. 27TH: Assignment #5 due. Field Notes Exercise.

Mar. 4th, 6th & 8th Ch. 15 Elementary Quantitative Analyses cont'd . . .

Mar. 11th, 13th & 15th Ch. 16 The Elaboration Model

MAR. 15TH: Tutorial #4 (In class)

Mar. 18th, 20th & 22nd Ch. 17 Social Statistics

Mar. 25th, 27th & April 1st Ch. 17 Social Statistics cont'd...

MAR. 27TH: Assignment #6 due. Computer Assignment.

APR. 1ST: Tutorial #5 (In class)

April 3rd, 5th & 8th Term 2 Review.

APRIL 10TH: Test #2.

April 11th End of Term 2.