

Sociological Research Methods
Sociology 303
Fall 2009

Gary T. Deimling, Ph.D.
Mather Memorial-231A

Voice Mail: 368-5173

E-Mail: gtd@case.edu

Class T-TH 10:00-11:15
Office Hours: T 11:15-11:45
M W 1:30-2:30
and by appt

The **purpose** of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the logic and basic research strategies and methodologies utilized by social scientists. The course will prepare the student to better **critically evaluate and conduct basic social science research**. The course will focus on both the logic of scientific inquiry as well as specific aspects of methodology and research design. These include development of conceptual models, operationalization of constructs, data collection methods, research designs, sampling and basic data analysis techniques.

The course will also provide a **review of the basic elements of statistics** but it is **assumed that the student has already completed one or more basic statistics courses**. The focus of the material on statistics will be on the basic assumptions underlying their use, the logic for selecting specific techniques and a review of the correct application of the procedures most commonly used in experimental and survey designs.

The course will also provide an introduction and extensive hands-on **use of SPSS for data-base construction and statistical analysis**.

The above will be the foundation upon which the **class project** will be developed. During the latter part of the semester the class will **design and implement a simple research study** on a social science topic of class interest. The design and findings of that project will provide the substance of **the project paper** that students will individually write. This project/paper represents a major portion of the course evaluation.

Classwork: The classroom portion of this course will consist of lecture presentations, class discussion, software demonstrations and research team activities related to the course project. Discussion and questions are encouraged as class participation/team involvement is part of the overall evaluation of the student. To be prepared to participate, the text assignments need to be **READ PRIOR** to the week that the material is scheduled.

Evaluation: Students will be evaluated on the basis of two exams, the project paper and class participation as follows:

Exam 1 (week 7)	30%
Exam 2 (week 13)	30%
Project Paper	35%
Participation/ Team work	5%

General Policy: In order to be fair to all students, exams and papers must be taken/turned in on the due date. A **full letter grade per day penalty** will be charged **for late materials** and exceptions will only be made with written request and for reasons of serious medical or family emergency that is verified by the Dean's office. Make up exams will be given at the convenience of the instructor (probably during break or reading days) and in all likelihood, WILL NOT be the same in content or format as the original exam. Grades of incomplete will following the same policy, and a written plan for completion must be provided before a grade will be turned in (I turn in grades 48 hours after the final exam date. An "F" for the course will otherwise be assigned.

Exams: The exams will be primarily short essay items with some definition items. Each exam will primarily cover the material since the previous exam. . However, since the course material is somewhat cumulative in nature, an understanding of the material covered during the first half of the course will be essential to success on the second exam. The mid-term exam will be an in- class exam and a review will be conducted in class prior to that exam. . Any student receiving a grade of C- or lower on the mid-term should schedule an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible. The exam will be retaken until the student received a grade of 75% or better. The second exam will be a take-home exam given during week 13 and due during the final exam period The grading scale used for this course is as follows:

A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; F < 60

Project/Research Paper: Every students will be involved in the class research project and will write an individual paper describing the research conducted by the class research team, including his/her personal analysis of a selected portion of the data. . **STUDENTS NEED TO PLAN EXTENSIVE TIME (5 HOURS PER WEEK) FOR DATA ENTRY AND ANALYSIS DURING THE LAST 2-3 WEEKS OF THE SEMESTER.**

The research paper (about 10 pages in length) will be due on the first day of finals week. Details regarding the project and paper will be provided after the first exam

MOST IMPORTANTLY, I HOPE THAT EACH OF YOU WILL COME TO ENJOY THE PROCESS OF SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY AND CRITICAL THINKING AND COME TO SHARE MY ENTHUSIASM FOR RESEARCH.

Books: "The Practice of Social Research" by Babbie (any recent edition)

" Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance" by Robt. Pirsig (any paperback edition available)

Class Schedule

Weeks 1-2 Introduction to Social Science Inquiry
Babbie Ch. 1-2

Week 3 Causation and Research Design
Babbie Ch. 4; Pirsig Ch 1-10

Week 4-6 Research Designs: Experimental, Survey and other Non-experimental
Designs /Qualitative Research
Babbie Ch. 8,9,10; Pirsig Ch. 11-16

Week 7 Sampling and Class Project Design
Babbie Ch. 7

Exam 1 in Class

Week 8-9 Measurement and Operationalization/Project Instrument
Construction
Babbie Ch. 5,6; Pirsig Ch. 17-end.

Week 10 Ethics and Human Subjects Protection
Babbie Ch. 3

Week 11-13 Statistics, Quantitative Analysis, Qualitative Analysis
Babbie Ch. 16, 14,13

Exam 2 Take Home

Week 14-15 Data Analysis Practicum/Class Project Finalization

Babbie Ch. 17

1st Day of Final Exam Week

PROJECT PAPER DUE

Final Exam Day

EXAM 2 DUE