

# SOCIOLOGY 355WR: SOCIAL RESEARCH I

Spring Semester 2013

Tarbutton 120A

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## **COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course is a practical introduction to research methods commonly used by social scientists. It will focus on four central questions: How do I translate a theoretical issue into a concrete research question? Which research method is most appropriate to investigate this research question? How do I make sense of data collected? How do I best communicate my findings? Taking a hands-on approach, the class will conduct a survey with Emory undergraduates and you will collect and analyze these data as the basis for your final empirical research paper. This course will give you the competence and skills necessary to not only understand and critically evaluate arguments and data presented to you at work or in the media every day, but also to engage in social inquiry yourself.

**Blackboard site:** <https://classes.emory.edu>,

Log in, and then click on **Soc355WR: Social Research I-000 (Kronberg)**. This site will include all materials that are handed out in class (the syllabus, instructions for written assignments, etc.), as well as outlines of the lectures. Any important announcements will also be posted on this site.

## **READINGS**

The book listed below is the required text for this course. It is available in the Emory Bookstore and on reserve in the Woodruff Library (Note: You can use earlier editions of the book (e.g. 12<sup>th</sup> edition), but you are responsible for finding the appropriate chapters/ readings as the page numbers have shifted between editions.)

**Babbie, Earl. 2012. *The Practice of Social Research* (13<sup>th</sup> Edition). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth. ISBN-13: 978-1-133-04979-1**

## **Reserve Readings**

There are a few additional readings to help you understand the research process. Some are already part of the syllabus, and are marked with an asterisk (\*) in the Class Schedule below (pp. 4-7 of this syllabus). Others will be announced as we go through the semester.

These readings will be on reserve in electronic format.

- ⇒ Go to BLACKBOARD site and look for the button marked "Readings." Click on the button and download the according article or click the link for Blogs.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

The goal of this class is to teach you to DO social research, thus, we focus on activities that involve doing different aspects of research. Because there are no exams, you are expected to put a lot of energy and effort into the assignments and the final paper!

### **A. Class Participation (10%)**

**Participation in class discussions and in-class exercises is very important. Attendance is strongly encouraged.** Missing more than 2 required classes will lead to deductions in points, as will little or no participation. (Note: if you are shy and have difficulty speaking in class, please see me; there will be other options for this requirement – e.g., writing memos about the readings.)

Many classes will involve **in-class exercises**. Some are already noted on the syllabus; other exercises will be determined as we go through the semester. These exercises will not be graded beyond: participation or no participation.

### **B. 8 written assignments (50% total)**

These 8 assignments are integral to the course and your final research paper. Together they account for 50% of your final grade.

- Assignments 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, & 8 are worth 5% each (30% total)
- Assignments 2 & 5 are 10% each (20% total)
- The first 4 assignments constitute the beginning of your research project. The 1<sup>st</sup> assignment has you choose a research topic and formulate research questions based on that topic. The 2<sup>nd</sup> assignment is an annotated bibliography on your topic which will be the basis of your literature review in the final paper. The 3<sup>rd</sup> assignment focuses on clarifying your hypotheses and your research design. The 4<sup>th</sup> assignment is data collection for the class survey.
- Assignments 5 & 6 are exercises on using other (non-survey) research methods such as in-depth interviews and content analysis.
- Assignments 7 & 8 involve analyses of the survey data collected for your research project using SPSS.

### **C. Extra-Credit Reading Memos**

For 8 of the readings (marked by \*\* on class schedule below) I will post discussion questions on Blackboard (under ‘extra-credit’). Each extra-credit assignment is worth .5 points towards your final grade. Memos must be typed and given to me in class.

### **D. Final Research Paper (40%)**

- The Final Research Paper will be 15-20 pages in length.
- It is due Monday, May 6th by 5pm.

**All written assignments must be typed and given to me during class. I do not accept assignments through email.**

The overall goal of this class is to teach you how to develop your own sociological research project, implement it, and write it up. Thus, the major assignment for this class is completion of a research paper, based on your own sociological research topic. For practical reasons, everyone’s research project will involve the method of a) **survey** research and b) **in-depth interviews**. We will develop and implement the survey as a class and you will develop the in-depth interviews individually. The survey will be broad enough to allow many different research questions. Many of the short assignments will

be preliminary sections of the paper. More specific instructions for the paper will be handed out separately.

### **Overview of Assignments and Due Dates**

Assignment #	Assignment	Due Date
1	Developing a research question	Jan-28
2	Annotated Bibliography	Feb-13
3	Conceptualization, Operationalization and Hypotheses	Feb-25
4	Survey Project which consists of several parts	
	Pilot test Online Survey	Feb-04
	1st EMAIL for Online Survey	Feb-10
	2nd EMAIL for Online Survey	Feb-19
	3rd EMAIL for Online Survey	Mar-17
5	Interview study	Apr-12
6	Content Analysis (in class)	Apr-05
7	Univariate Data Analysis	Apr-17
8	Bivariate Data Analysis	Apr-24
Final Paper	Final Paper	May-06

### **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

#### **Accommodating Disabilities:**

If you have or acquire any sort of condition that may require special accommodation(s), please inform me AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (e.g., not the day of an exam) so that we may make the appropriate arrangements. Proper documentation from the Office of Disabilities Services will be required. Please contact their office to get more information on available services and accommodations, as well as documentation requirements. They can be reached at 404-727-9877 or via the web at <http://www.ods.emory.edu>.

#### **Academic Conduct:**

All students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the policies of Emory College with respect to conduct and academic honesty. Anyone engaging in acts that violate these policies, such as plagiarism or cheating, will be referred to the Honors Council. For more information on the Emory Honor Code, see [http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor\\_code.html](http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html).

#### **Late Assignments:**

I will accept late assignments, but your grade on the assignment will be lowered by 10% per day (e.g. if the assignment is worth 5 (or 10) points, I will deduct 0.5 (or 1) point) for each day the assignment is late. Assignments turned in to my office, to my box, under my door, via stork, or via email are considered late, so give yourself plenty of time to complete assignments. ONLY assignments handed DIRECTLY TO ME IN CLASS on the DAY THE ASSIGNMENT IS DUE are considered on time. Most reasons to turn in a late assignment are not valid. I will be the judge of what constitutes a valid excuse and what does not. Personal illness and family emergencies are valid excuses, but they still will require documentation. Oversleeping, trips out of town, interviews, car trouble, and work-related absences are not valid excuses for missing an assignment

*The use of cell phones, pagers or other electronic devices is not permitted in this class. Please turn OFF your phones and pagers before entering the classroom. Receiving phone calls or texting during class will lower your participation grade.*

**TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE** (subject to change)

**WEEK 1 Why Research Methods?**

*Jan 16:* Introductions

*Jan 18:* Journalistic reporting vs. social research  
Babbie: Chapter 1 - Human Inquiry and Science (p. 3-29)  
\*\* Tanenbaum, D. Introduction. Slut! Growing up female with a bad reputation  
**Assignment #1 handed out**

**WEEK 2 Theory and Research: How do they relate?**

*Jan 21:* MLK Holiday – no class -

*Jan 23* Babbie: Chapter 2 - Paradigms, Theory and Social Research (p. 30-59)  
\* Read Blog: “What the heck is research anyway?” (Link on BB)  
\*\* Budros, A. (1997). The new capitalism and organizational rationality: the adoption of downsizing programs, 1979-1994. *Social Forces*, 76 (1), 229-250  
READ: Intro and “Causes of Downsizing” section (pp. 229-235), SKIM the rest

*Jan 25:* Babbie: Chapter 17 - Reading and Writing Social Research (p. 498-521)  
**Assignment #2 handed out**

**WEEK 3 Research Design: Decisions, Decisions**

*Jan 28:* Babbie: Chapter 4 - Research Designs (p. 88-118)  
Discuss Questions for Surveys & Pilot Testing Surveys  
**Assignment #4 handed out**

*Jan 30:* Session w/ Liz McBride: how to find scholarly articles.  
**Assignment #1 due**

*Feb 1:* \*\*Stack, S., Gundlach, J. (1992). The effect of country music on suicide. *Social Forces* 70 (5): 211-218.  
**PILOT TEST SURVEY sometime over weekend (part of Assignment# 4)**

**WEEK 4 Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement**

*Feb 4:* Babbie: Chapter 5 - Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement (p. 124-147)  
\*\* Rubin, Z. (1970). Measurement of romantic love. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 16(2), 265-273  
**Assignments #3 handed out**

*Feb 6:* Babbie: Chapter 5 - Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement (p. 148-156)

*Feb 8:* Babbie: Chapter 6 - Indexes, Scales and Typologies, p.158-166 (read until end of "Examination of Empirical Relationships"), 177-178 (Likert-Scaling)  
**SEND FIRST SURVEY EMAIL on SUNDAY, FEB.10 (part of Assignment #4)**

**WEEK 5 Surveys and Survey Design**

*Feb 11:* Babbie: Chapter 9 - Survey Research (p. 252-274)

*Feb 13:* \*Laumann, E., J. Gagnon, R. Michael, and S. Michaels (1994). Survey of sexual behavior of Americans. (Methods section) in *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.  
**Assignment #2 due**

*Feb 15:* Babbie: Chapter 9 - Survey Research (p. 274-291)

**WEEK 6 Sampling: How to decide who will be in the study?**

*Feb 18:* Babbie: Chapter 7 - The Logic of Sampling (p. 187-205)

\* S. Begley (2008). The Slippery Art of Polling. *Newsweek*; Oct. 6, 2008.

**SEND 2nd SURVEY EMAIL on TUESDAY , FEB. 19 (Assignment #4)**

*Feb20:* \*\* Joe, K and Chesneylind, M. (1995). Just every mothers angel - an analysis of gender and ethnic variations in youth gang membership, *Gender & Society*, 9 (4), 408-431

*Feb 22:* Babbie: Chapter 7 - The Logic of Sampling (p. 206-224)

**WEEK 8 Ethics in Research**

*Feb 25:* Babbie: Chapter 3 - Ethics and Politics of Social Research (p. 60-83)

\* Haney, C., Banks, C. and P. Zimbardo (1973). Interpersonal Dynamics in a Simulated Prison. *International Journal of Criminology and Penology*, 1, p 69-97, READ: "methods" section, pp. 72-80. SKIM the rest

**Assignment #3 due**

*Feb 27:* In-class discussion

*Mar 1:* \*\* Read Blog: 'What makes "Why Are Black Women Less Physically Attractive Than Other Women?" unscientific?' (Link see BB)

**WEEK 7 Writing a literature review**

*Mar 4:* Babbie: Chapter 17 - Reading and Writing Social Research (p. 498-521)

*Mar 6:* Work on literature review – post to BB by THURSDAY NIGHT

*Mar 8:* In-class editing of the literature review  
**Bring 1 hard-copy of literature review to class.**

**Mar 11-15: Spring Break!**

**WEEK 9 Experiments**

*Mar 18:* Babbie: Chapter 8 – Experiments (p. 228 – 251)

\* Bertrand, M., and S. Mullainathan (2004). Are Greg and Emily More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination. *American Economic Review*, 94(4): 991-1013. READ: “Experimental Design” section pp.994-997

**Assignment #5 handed out**

**SEND 3rd SURVEY EMAIL on TUESDAY, MAR. 17 (Assignment #4)**

*Mar 20:* \*Dittmar, H. et al. (2006). Does Barbie Make Girls Want to Be Thin? *Developmental Psychology*, 42 (2), 283-292

*Mar 22:* In-class exercise: Design an experiment

**WEEK 10 Qualitative Methods: Data - Collection**

*Mar 25:* Babbie: Chapter 10 - Qualitative Field Research (p. 294-314)

*Mar 27:* \*\* Leslie P. (1998). Boundary Control: The Social Ordering of Work and Family Time in High-Tech Corporation. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 43:328-357. READ: “Methods” section, pp. 332-337. SKIM the rest of the article.

*Mar 29:* Babbie: Chapter 10 - Qualitative Field Research (p. 314-328)

**WEEK 11 Qualitative Methods: Data - Analysis**

*Apr 1:* Babbie: Chapter 13 - Qualitative data analysis (p. 389-403 until end of “Concept memoing”, p. 410 “Ethics and Qualitative Data Analysis”)

*Apr 3:* Babbie: Chapter 11 - Unobtrusive Research, (p. 329-342 until end of “strength and weaknesses of content analysis)

\*\* Glasser, C., B. Robnett, and C. Feliciano (2009). Internet Daters’ Body Type Preferences: Race-Ethnic and Gender Differences. *Sex Roles*, April 14th, Published Online. READ: “Methods” section, SKIM the rest

*Apr 5:* **Assignment #6 in class**

- WEEK 12 Quantitative Data Analysis I: Data Entry and Univariate Analysis in SPSS**
- Apr 8:* Babbie: Chapter 14 - Quantitative Data Analysis (p. 414-429, up to “Bivariate Analyses”, p. 437-438 “Ethics and Quantitative Data Analysis”)  
**Assignment #7 handed out**
- Apr 10:* Babbie: Chapter 16 - Statistical Analyses (p. 459-465, up to “Regression Analysis”)
- Apr 12:* Work on Assignment #7 in class  
**Assignment #5 due**
- WEEK 13 Quantitative Data Analysis II: Bivariate Analysis and Creating Tables in SPSS**
- Apr 15:* Babbie: Chapter 14 - Quantitative Data Analysis (p. 430-434 “Bivariate Analysis”)  
Babbie: Chapter 16 - Statistical Analyses (p. 469-480 “Inferential Statistics”)  
**Assignment #8 handed out**
- Apr 17:* Work on Assignment #8 in class  
**Assignment #7 due**
- Apr 19:* Work on Assignment #8 in class
- WEEK 14 Putting It All Together: Writing Up Your Research Study**
- Apr 22:* Work on Assignment #8 in class
- Apr 24:* **Assignment #8 due**
- Apr 26:* **Final paper instructions handed out**
- Apr 29:* \*Review resources and examples under “Guidelines & Resources” on Blackboard
- May 6 (Monday): Final Paper due by 5pm***