Research Methods / Soc. 3111-070  
Monday 6:00pm – 8:45 pm  
Sandy Campus, Room 122  
University of Utah / Summer Semester / 2010

Instructor: Dr. Frank J. Page  
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Office Hours: Monday –Thursday Noon till 5:00 pm or by appointment.

Goals

The goal of this class is to familiarize students with the scientific method and the nature of research in social science and give them the opportunity to conduct their own research. This course will begin with a brief history of science, and the scientific method. It will then survey a variety of research methods that are used to accumulate and analyze evidence and data and develop hypotheses and conclusions regarding social phenomena and processes in the world. These methods will include survey research, participant-observation studies, ethnography, archival research, experimental studies, critical analysis, intervention analysis, meta-analysis, historical analysis, and other methods. During the course, students will study and apply these methods in a variety of exercises that are meant to improve their knowledge of research methods and their ability to write and communicate effectively.

Class Requirements

This class satisfies the requirements for a communication / writing class at the University of Utah. In this class the student will be expected to conduct research and utilize a variety of sources that include peer reviewed sociological journals and other published material that may include books, periodicals, magazines, and on-line media materials. The course will emphasize effective writing and speaking and use of available research materials and sources. It will entail writing five short papers and one longer final research paper that the student will summarize in a brief five-minute in-class presentation at the end of the semester. All papers will be double-spaced and in a readable size font. There will also be a midterm and a final exam. The questions on the exams will be true-false and multiple-choice questions.

The short papers will be turned in during the course of the semester, and the final paper will be turned in two weeks before the end of class. The short papers should be from two to three pages in length. For the first short paper, the student will select a research subject and review and summarize some of the existing literature and research on that subject. For the second paper the student will engage in a participant observation study or ethnography wherein the student
will study a particular group or engage in breaching experiment. In the breaching experiment, the student will challenge what he or she thinks is an existing norm. If a student chooses this option, the student may not engage in any behavior that is illegal or considered immoral. For the third research paper, the student will conduct a short survey on a topic of his or her choice and analyze the results. For the fourth paper, the student will develop a simple experiment. The fifth short paper will be an outline of the student's proposed final paper. The final paper should be six to eight pages in length and may be based on any of the earlier short research papers or a new topic. All papers will be assigned and turned in on Tuesdays of the appropriate weeks.

During the last two weeks of the semester, students will present brief five-minute summaries of their final papers in class, for which they will receive up to ten points. The students will present the research on panels organized in terms of the type and nature of their research topic. During the semester, the students will receive more information on the papers and throughout the semester they will receive feedback on the quality of their work.

**Grading**

The five short papers and paper presentation are worth 10 points each and a total of 60 points. The final research paper is worth 40 points. The midterm and final will be worth 50 points each, and each exam will contain five extra credit bonus point questions. The Final exam will include questions regarding the content of student papers presented in class. Not including the possible 10 bonus points, there are 200 points possible for the class.

Students are advised to stay a week ahead on the readings. Please ask questions, participate in class discussions, and consult the ASA style guide when needed. You may contact me by phone or email at any time, or you can stop by my office during office hours.

**Required Reading**

The Basics of Social Research, Fourth Edition, Earl Babbie,


**Students with Disabilities**

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you need academic accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. With prior notification to the Center for Disability Services, all written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format.
Course Outline


Chapter One: Human Inquiry and Science


Chapter Two: Paradigms, The Nature of Theory
Chapter Three: The Ethics and Politics of Social Research

Paper #1, Literature Review, Assigned.

Week Three (May 31): No Class. Memorial Day

Chapter Four: Research Design

Week Four (June 7): Types of Research, Validity and Reliability, Correlation and Causation, Qualitative and Quantitative Research.

Chapter Five: Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement

Paper #1 is due.

Paper #2, Participant Observation, Ethnography or Breaching assigned.

Week Five (June 14): The Role of Probability and Sampling in Research.

Chapter Six: Indexes, Scales, and Typologies

Paper #2 due.


Week Six (June 21): Midterm Review.

Chapter Seven, The Logic of Sampling

Paper #3 Survey, is due.

Paper #4 Experiment, Assigned.
Week Seven (June 28): Midterm #1 on Weeks One Through Six.

Chapter 15: Writing Social Research
Midterm.

Paper #4 is due.

Paper #5 Final paper Outline assigned

Week Eight (July 5): No Class, Independence Day

Chapter Eight: Experiments


Chapter Nine: Survey research.

Paper #5, Outline of Final Paper is due.

Week Ten (July 19): Qualitative Field Research, Unobtrusive and Evaluative Research.

Chapter Ten: Qualitative Field Research.
Chapter Eleven: Unobtrusive research.

Assignment #5, Final Paper Outlines Returned.

Week Eleven (July 26): Paper Presentations.

Final papers are due.
Paper Presentations.

Week Twelve (August 2nd): Paper Presentation.

Paper Presentations
Final Review

Week Thirteen (August 9th) Final Exam

Regular Class Time.