Instructor: Rebecca Utz, PhD  
rebecca.utz@utah.edu  
585-5496

Class Time: Tuesday, Thursday  
9:10-10:30  
BEH S 115

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday  
10:30-12:00  
BEH S 334  
Additional office hours can be made by appointment.  
Questions received via e-mail will be answered within 48 hours.

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

This course is an introduction to the theory and practice of social science research. The primary objectives of the course are:

a.) to familiarize students with the different types of methods that are used to accumulate evidence in the social sciences (e.g., survey research, intensive interviewing, participant-observation, and archival research)

b.) to expose students to the logic of data collection and analysis, and

c.) to give students an opportunity to conduct their own research and to critique existing social science research.

Group discussions, in-class exercises, and traditional lectures will be used to achieve these learning objectives. The course will culminate in a student-organized conference in which every student will present and discuss the results of his/her own research project.

This class fulfills the upper-division writing requirement (CW) for the University of Utah.
**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Web-CT:**
All course materials, including lecture notes and assignment sheets, will be posted on Web-CT. All students are expected to check the course website frequently.

**Readings**
There are two recommended textbooks. Additional reading assignments may be made available through web-CT. All readings should be completed prior to the class they are assigned.


**Attendance & Participation:**
Given the “hands-on” nature of this course, regular attendance and active participation is strongly encouraged. Active participation consists of asking and answering questions during lectures, participating in in-class activities, and coming to class prepared.

**Assignments**
There will be many assignments throughout the term. All assignments will be done individually. Refer to the assignment sheet for objectives, instructions, and grading criteria for each.

**Research Project:**
Students will complete their own research project throughout the semester. The project includes choosing a unique research topic, designing an appropriate study, collecting and analyzing data, and presenting the research findings in both a written and oral format.
Final grades will be calculated as a weighted average of nine assignments and one final paper/presentation.

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<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>60%</th>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>40%</td>
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- A (100-93 points)
- A - (90-92 points)
- B + (89-87 points)
- B (86-83 points)
- B - (80-82 points)
- C + (79-77 points)
- C (76-73 points)
- C - (70-72 points)
- D + (69-67 points)
- D (66-63 points)
- D - (60-62 points)
- E (< 60 points)

All grades will be posted on Web-CT.

It is the student’s responsibility to report and discuss grade discrepancies with the instructor as soon as they are noticed.

Assignments may be accepted late for partial (half) credit.

Extra credit will **not** be available.

Final grades will **not** be curved.
**Special Accommodations**

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

Please discuss any concerns with the professor before they become problems.

**Academic Misconduct**

It is assumed that all work submitted to professor is your own work. When you have used ideas of others, you must properly indicate that you have done so. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on an individual assignment, failure in the course, and/or expulsion from the university.

All students should be familiar with the University of Utah Student Code [http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html](http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html). A copy will be distributed during the first week of the course.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug 25, 27</td>
<td>Introductions Syllabus</td>
<td>What is “Science”? Chapter 1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Sep 1, 3</td>
<td>Research Ethics</td>
<td>The Research Process Chapter 3, Appendix C</td>
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<td>#1: IRB Ethics Certification</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sep 8, 10</td>
<td>Questions, Theories, Hypotheses Chapter 2</td>
<td>Causality Chapter 6</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sep 15, 17</td>
<td>Literature Reviews</td>
<td>The Research Report Extra Readings Chapter 8</td>
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<td>#2: Topic Approval</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Sep 22, 24</td>
<td>Measurement Chapter 4</td>
<td>Measurement Chapter 4</td>
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<td>#3: Lit Review Assignment</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Sep 29, Oct 1</td>
<td>Sampling Chapter 5</td>
<td>Sampling Chapter 5</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 6, 8</td>
<td>Survey Research Chapter 8</td>
<td>Survey Research Chapter 8</td>
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<td>#4: Draft of “Intro”</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Oct 13, 15</td>
<td>Fall Break No Class</td>
<td>Fall Break No Class</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Oct 20, 22</td>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>Qualitative Methods Chapter 9</td>
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<td>#5: Survey Assignment</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Oct 27, 29</td>
<td>Qualitative Methods Chapter 9</td>
<td>Data Collection</td>
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<td>#6: Qualitative Assignment</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Nov 3, 5</td>
<td>Writing &amp; Presenting Chapter 15</td>
<td>Quantitative Data Analyses Chapter 14; Appendix F</td>
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<td>#7: Draft of “Methods”</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 10, 12</td>
<td>Data Analyses</td>
<td>Qualitative Data Analysis Chapter 10; Appendix G</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Nov 17, 19</td>
<td>Data Analyses</td>
<td>Discussing Research Findings</td>
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<td>#8: Draft of “Results”</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Nov 24, 26</td>
<td>Presenting, Writing, Revising</td>
<td>Thanksgiving No Class</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Dec 1, 3</td>
<td>Student Research Forum</td>
<td>Student Research Forum</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Dec 8, 10</td>
<td>Student Research Forum</td>
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<td>#9: Self-Evaluation Essay</td>
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<td>EXAM</td>
<td>Mon, Dec 14</td>
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<td>Final Research Report (due by 5pm, deliver to 334 BEHS)</td>
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<td>Assignments</td>
<td>Due Date</td>
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<td>1. Conducting Ethical Research</td>
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<td>2. Topic Approval</td>
<td>Sep 17</td>
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<td>3. Conducting Literature Reviews</td>
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<td>4. Draft of “Intro”</td>
<td>Oct 8</td>
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<td>5. Writing a Good Survey</td>
<td>Oct 27</td>
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<td>6. Collecting Qualitative Data</td>
<td>Oct 29</td>
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<td>7. Draft of “Methods”</td>
<td>Nov 5</td>
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<td>8. Draft of “Results”</td>
<td>Nov 19</td>
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<td>9. Self-Evaluation &amp; Self-Reflection</td>
<td>Dec 10</td>
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**Grading**

Each assignment will be graded on a ten-point scale, with the following guidelines:

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>EXCELLENT</strong> The student exhibits a critical understanding of the concepts, can articulate concepts in his/her own words, and shows an active mastery over the concepts. The work shows creativity and innovative thinking. Written work is complete, on-time, and is free from errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The assignment adheres to all instructions. The assignment is perfect or near perfect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>VERY GOOD</strong> The student’s work shows a good mastery of the subject. Some innovation, creativity, and critical thought, but may show some very minor lapses in reasoning or understanding. Written work is complete, on-time, and is free from errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The assignment adheres to all instructions.</td>
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<td>7-8</td>
<td><strong>GOOD</strong> The student’s work shows a basic mastery of the subject. The work is solid, but is not necessarily innovative or creative. The otherwise ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’ work is marred by sloppy editing or poor presentation.</td>
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<td>5-6</td>
<td><strong>LESS THAN SATISFACTORY</strong> The work shows incomplete mastery of the subject. The work exhibits major spelling and grammar errors or is very sloppy. The assignment is incomplete or fails to follow the instructions. The assignment is turned in outside of class-time.</td>
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<td>1-4</td>
<td><strong>POOR</strong> The student’s work shows gaps in understanding, is very sloppy, or is incomplete.</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td><strong>NOT ACCEPTABLE</strong> The student’s work does not satisfy the learning requirements of this exercise. The student failed to turn in an assignment altogether.</td>
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Assignments are due IN CLASS on the date listed. Late assignments will be accepted, but penalized.
Assignment #1
Conducting Ethical Research

Grading: 10 points

Objective: To learn about research ethics and the IRB
To become a certified social and behavioral science researcher

Assignment: Complete the on-line training program provided.

1. Go to the following website: www.citiprogram.org

2. Follow the links and directions to establish a “new user” account. This should be pretty self-explanatory, but here are a few hints …. Your participating organization is “University of Utah.” Your research role is “Student Researcher-Undergraduate.” A home or cell number can be used for your “office phone number.”

3. On the “Select Groups” page, choose the following two options:
   - Group 2.: Social / Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel.
   - I have not previously completed an approved Basic Course.
   It will then ask you if you need to take the training for more than one institution, say “No”

4. You will now be taken to your personal homepage. Look for the link under “My Courses – Human Research.” Enter the module and begin the lessons. There are 16 modules. You will need to read through each module and then answer the quiz at the end of each module. You can re-take the quizzes as many times as you need to. The software program only records your latest quiz grade. Note: the average learner spends approximately 4.5 hrs in the Basic Course site and uses approximately 5 logins to complete the course.

5. After you finished all modules, download and print your “completion certificate” showing the date you completed and passed each of the modules. That print-out is all you need to turn in. If you did not finish the whole training, turn in a print-out of the “gradebook” showing which modules you completed and which ones you did not complete. (partial credit will be available).
Assignment #2

Topic Approval

Grading: 10 points

Objective: To think about what types of topics are suitable for your final project
To identify the difference between a research topic, question, and hypothesis

Assignment: You do not need to do any additional research for this assignment. You simply need to think through the various steps of narrowing a broad topic into a manageable research project.

Note: Each group member must do this assignment individually.

1. What is a possible topic for your final project? A topic can be just about anything. It will likely be a single word or concept.

2. Next, write a specific research question or questions related to that topic. Is your question descriptive, exploratory, explanatory, or evaluative? You may need to write several questions to help you narrow the topic.

3. Now state a specific hypothesis or hypotheses related to what you think is the best research question? A hypothesis identifies a clear independent and dependent variable. It states a direction of association (positive, negative, neutral). It can usually be written into an “if, then” statement. Even a research question that is sufficiently narrow (especially those that are more descriptive) may have multiple hypotheses.

4. Describe why you think the hypotheses are in the direction that you stated. This explanation or discussion would be the start of your “theoretical framework”
Assignment #3

Conducting Literature Reviews

Grading: 10 points

Objective:
- To practice using the library catalogues and databases
- To begin collecting journal articles for your research project
- To learn how to read/summarize published journal articles

Assignment:
Conduct a literature review to find at least FIVE journal articles that may be relevant to your approved topic and research question. You should use the databases provided by the library. Print/copy a full-text version of each article, summarize the article in your own words, and then think about how each article may be relevant to your particular research project.

Note: Each group member must do this assignment individually.

1. Turn in the full-text printout of all 5 articles you selected.

2. Write a short essay (1 page or less) describing how you conducted your literature review: which databases did you use, how did you access those databases, and what types of search terms did you use to find the articles, etc.

3. Write a formal citation for each selected article. A formal citation includes the authors’ names, the publication year, the title of the article, the title of the journal in which it was published, as well as the volume and page numbers of the article. You can use any bibliographic style you want (MLA, Chicago, APA); just be consistent. An example of a formal citation is below.


4. Write a short abstract summarizing each article – its purpose, method, and results. Each abstract must be written in your own words and be approximately ½ page long. Note: plagiarism of published abstracts will be grounds for a “0” on this assignment.

5. For each article, write a few notes about how or why the article is relevant to your particular study. You should have at least two or three “notes” for each article. These notes can be written somewhat informally, in bullet-point style.
Assignment #4
Writing a Draft “Intro”

Grading: 10 points

Objectives: To integrate your research topic/question with your literature review
To produce a draft of an “introduction” section for your final report

Assignment: Write a draft of the introduction section to your final research project.

An introduction section presents the research topic/question and hypothesis. It should set up a “theoretical framework” from which the research question can be conceptually thought about. It also reviews previous literature and discusses how your research project is new or different and how it complements or contradicts the existing knowledge on the topic. In general, this section needs to discuss the importance of the topic and the rationale underlying the hypothesis.

The draft will probably be 2-4 pages of double spaced text.

You must formally cite relevant literature, including the 5 articles you identified in the previous assignment. A citation within the text should be placed in parentheses, immediately following the text you want to reference. The citation has the authors name and publication year, plus page number if you are using a direct quote.
Assignment #5
Writing a Good Survey

**Grading:** 10 points

**Objective:** To practice writing survey questions
To think about the layout and design of a survey

**Assignment:** Write a draft survey related to your approved research topic and question. The survey document should have at least 10 questions. The survey document should be formatted, according to the principles of good questionnaire design. The survey must ask questions related to both your independent and dependent variables. If you are writing a series of survey questions that address a single concept that will later be combined into a scale/index, describe how that scale/index will be calculated in your “notes” sheet.

Include with your survey a “notes” page that lists your specific research question and hypothesis. The “notes” page should also describe any additional notes or logic you were using when you designed the survey – for example, who would fill out this survey? Where might you distribute it? Would it be better administered via the phone or email or in person? Why did you format it the way you did? Why did you write questions in the way you did?

*Note:* Each group member must do this assignment individually.
Assignment #6
Collecting Qualitative Data

Grading: 10 points

Objective: To try collecting qualitative types of data
To think about how to design a qualitative study
To reflect on the differences between quantitative and qualitative research methods

Assignment: Conduct a mini observational study or in-depth interview related to your research question. Choose between option A or B.

A. OBSERVATIONAL METHOD: Pick a location to observe. Your location and observations should be chosen because you think they will help answer your particular research question. Observe it for 90 minutes (all at once or in three 30-minute blocks). Prior to observing the location, you need to think specifically about what aspect of the setting or interaction you will observe. What types of observations will most answer your particular research question. While observing, take field notes describing exactly what you observed. Refer to the lecture notes and textbooks for the principles of good field notes. Turn in a copy of ALL field notes (no matter how messy they are), plus a response paper summarizing the results of your data collection effort, as well as your experience and reactions to this type of data collection. In your essay, you should reflect on the following types of questions:
  1. Was it easy or hard to collect data in this way?
  2. How accurate (or inaccurate) do you think your field notes are?
  3. What do you think your results may be?
  4. What research question(s) could you have answered using your observations?
  5. Is your particular research question more suited to quantitative (survey) or qualitative types of data? Why?

B. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWING METHOD: Conduct an in-depth interview(s) related to your particular research question. The total interview time should be approximately 60 minutes, so it is likely that you will need to conduct two 30-minute interviews. Prior to the interview, you need to develop a list of interview prompts and grand-tour questions. During the interview, you need to take notes to help you remember the respondents’ answers and discussions. You may choose to record the interview and devise your transcript notes later. Turn in a copy of ALL interview prompts and notes/transcripts, plus a response paper summarizing the results of your data collection effort, as well as your reactions to this type of data collection. In your essay, you should reflect on the following types of questions:
  1. Was it easy or hard to collect data in this way?
  2. How accurate (or inaccurate) do you think your interview notes are?
  3. What do you think your results may be? Are there particular quotes or stories or examples that were revealed during the interview that could be used to illustrate your findings?
  4. What research question(s) could you have answered using your observations?
  5. Is your particular research question more suited to quantitative (survey) or qualitative types of data? Why?
Assignment #7
Draft of the “Method” Section

Grading: 10 points

Objective: To practice writing technical research methods
To describe the data collection strategies you used in your final project

Assignment: Write a draft “method” section of your final project.

A method section typically contains the following three elements: a description of the sample and sampling strategy, a description of the methods you will use to collect data from the sampled persons, and a description of how exactly you will measure the concepts and variables of interest. It should detail all the information that someone would need to know if they were to replicate your project. Include as many details as possible, while still being concise.

Your writing should be technical, concise, and detailed. The draft will probably be 1 ½ to 3 pages double-spaced.
Assignment #8

Draft of the “Results” Section

**Grading:** 10 points

**Objective:**
To practice writing research results
To learn how to present data in a visual way (tables, charts)
To conduct an analysis of your data

**Assignment:**
Write a draft “results” section of your final project.

A results section describes your data. It “tells the story” found within your data. Before writing this section, you need to spend time thinking through how you can best summarize the massive amounts of data you collected and the many analyses you conducted. Remember that you will likely conduct a lot more analyses than you will ultimately present in your final report. Pick and choose the best way to describe your results.

The presentation of results must try to answer your original research question or be used to support/refute the hypothesis. The results section does not have any interpretation or discussion of the findings; it simply reports the findings without editorializing them.

You need to summarize your research findings in both a graphical/tabular format, as well as in the text. *Your draft must contain at least one table or figure.* All tables/figures need to be appropriately labeled, titled, and referred to and described in the text.

Your writing style should be technical, concise, and detailed. The draft will probably be 1 1/2 to 3 pages double-spaced.
**Assignment #9**

**Self-Evaluation & Self-Reflection**

**Grading:** 10 points

**Objective:** To reflect on what you learned this semester  
To honestly assess what type of grade you think you deserve in this course

**Assignment:** Write a short essay reflecting on what you learned throughout the semester (*no longer than 1 single-spaced page or 2 double-spaced pages*). Think about whether you gained any skills or knowledge that you will be able to use in the future. Did you participate fully in the activities and lectures?

At the end of the essay, you should clearly state how many points (out of 5) you think you deserve as a grade for this course: “Based on my effort, participation, and learning this semester, I believe I deserve ___ out of 10 points.” Be honest, be fair, and do not hesitate to give yourself full points if you believe you deserve them. You should refer back to the 10-point grading criteria before assigning yourself a grade.

Your essay must include specific examples and/or reasons justifying the grade you gave yourself.
The goals of this assignment are to 1) participate in all steps of the research process 2) write a formal research report describing each phase of the research process, and 3) present and discuss research findings during the “Student Conference” at the end of the semester.

**Due Date:**
The written report is due by 5pm on **Monday December 14** to Professor Utz’s office (334 BEHS). Late papers will be accepted (minus a 10-point penalty for each day it is late), if received by 5pm on December 18.

The presentations will occur during the last four class periods of the semester: December 1, 3, 8, 10. Presentations will be scheduled according to student preference.

**Groups:**
Students are encouraged to work in groups throughout the semester to complete this project, but each student must write his/her own final project.
- Ideal group size is 4 and 8 students.
- Groups will choose a single topic and method for their research project, but each individual will write his/her own paper and complete his/her own assignments.
- Presentations will be done as groups.
- Each student will have the opportunity to evaluate the effort of his/her group members.

**Length of Report:**
The text of your research report should be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font, and use one-inch margins. The report will probably be about 10 pages in length. It is unlikely that you will be able to do the project in less than 8 pages or that it would exceed 15 pages. Field notes, appendices, and/or interview transcriptions will not count toward page length.

**Format of Report:**
The final report will follow the standard format of a published research articles. It must include an abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, and references section. *Use these subheadings when writing your final report.*
Abstract
Summarize entire project: from theory to method to results to implications. Be concise (< 200 words).

Intro
In this section, you should explicitly tell the reader what your research questions and hypotheses are. You should also describe any previous research that has been done on the topic. Think about how your project is new or different than previous research. Discuss why your chosen method is an appropriate way to try to answer the question.

Methods
In this section, you will tell the reader how you collected your data, how you drew your sample, how you measured the concepts of interest. You must be detailed enough so that someone could replicate your study, if they needed to. In terms of how much data you should collect, follow the guidelines below:

- **Survey Research:** approx ten surveys per group member (≥50)
- **In-Depth Interviewing:** at least one interview per group member (≥5)
- **Focus Groups:** one group/session per group member (≥4)
- **Participant Observation:** ask instructor
- **Archival Research:** ask instructor

Results
Summarize all the data you collected. Highlight the trends, patterns, tendencies, and/or themes found within your collected data. As the analysts, you need to think about how to most accurately and succinctly “tell the story” that is found in your data. Although it is not required, you are encouraged to analyze your data using software programs such as SPSS or Excel (both available on campus) or HyperResearch (included with book). If you use statistical analyses, I do not expect you to do more than descriptive analyses (e.g., means, medians, crosstabs, etc). If you do qualitative or archival research, you should use original quotations to support your findings. Be creative – and use whatever analytic skills you and your group members have.

Discussion
This is the section where you will discuss the results of your project. Did the data support hypotheses – why or why not? What are the strengths and limitations of your project? How could future research address those limitations? What are the implications/importance/relevance of your research findings?

References
This final section of the paper lists the sources you consulted while writing this report. You must include at least 5 academic sources, which must also be appropriately cited/referenced in the text. Use a formal bibliographic style to write this section.

NOTE: If you are unfamiliar with writing a formal reference list, please ask the instructor during office hours or consult one of the many available handbooks such as the APA Publications Manual, the MLA handbook, or the Chicago Style Book.

NOTE: Internet sites are NOT considered “academic” sources. While encyclopedias may have been fine for high school research papers, they are NOT acceptable forms of research for this project. As a scientist, you should NEVER conduct your research by “Google-ing” your topic. Focus your literature review on academic journals, such as the American Journal of Sociology or the American Sociological Review. Books are also acceptable sources.

Please ask the instructor for additional explanation or consult with the reference desk at the Marriott library.
CONTENT OF WRITTEN REPORT

________ out of 5 pts  **Abstract**
Concise overview of project that includes a statement summarizing each section of the paper

________ out of 10 pts  **Intro**
Includes a statement of the objectives, research question, and hypotheses. Uses the literature review to describe previous research on the topic and to explain the theory behind the hypotheses. Discusses how this research project is new or different from previous research.

________ out of 10 pts  **Methods**
Describes how the data were collected, how the concepts were measured, and how the sample was selected. Also discusses why this particular set of methods is appropriate.

________ out of 10 pts  **Results**
What are the trends/patterns/themes that emerged from the data? Were tables/charts/statistics/quotations used effectively to describe the results? Use the analytic skills you have to “tell the story” found in your data.

________ out of 10 pts  **Discussion**
Was the hypothesis supported? Why or Why not? What are the strengths/limitations of this project? Discusses future research areas, as well as the relevance/importance of these research findings.

________ out of 10 pts  **References**
Did you use 5 academic sources and cited them in a formal style (both in text and in the reference list). Do NOT use internet cites for this project!

QUALITY OF WRITING

*How well-written is the report?*

________ out of 15 pts  I will consider the quality of your logic and explanations. For example, how critical is the discussion; how accurate the explanation?

________ out of 10 pts  Are there typos? I will consider the appropriate use of punctuation, grammar, spelling.

ORAL PRESENTATION OF PROJECT

*Did you present the project effectively and creatively? Did you use visual displays, if appropriate, to help communicate your findings? How well did you answer questions from the audience? Did you stay within the allotted time limit? NOTE: All group members will receive the same grade, regardless of who actually presents the results. If a group member is not present for the presentation, he/she will receive 0.

________ out of 10 pts

INDIVIDUAL EFFORT

*Each student will rank the other students in his/her group on a ten-point scale. Consider each others’ level of effort and participation throughout the semester. Each student will receive a different score, depending on the average of the peer evaluations he/she receives. If you worked individually, your final project grade will be calculated based on 90 points, rather than 100 points.*

________ out of 10 pts