Figure 2.1

STEPS IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS
FORMULATE A HYPOTHESIS
What do you intend to test? What is the relationship among the variables?
CARRY OUT THE RESEARCH
Collect your data; record information.
INTERPRET YOUR RESULTS
Work out the implications of the data you collect.
REPORT THE RESEARCH FINDINGS
What is their significance? How do they relate to previous findings?
REPEAT
Your findings are registered and discussed in the wider academic community, leading perhaps to the initation of further research.
START
DEFINE THE PROBLEM
Select a topic for research.
REVIEW THE LITERATURE
Familiarize yourself with existing research on the topic.
SELECT A RESEARCH DESIGN
Choose one or more research methods: experiment, survey, observation, use of existing sources.

Research Methods

Sociology 3111-090

ONLINE **Fall 2014**

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E-mail:	Use the course messaging feature in CANVAS feature for all mail including those with attachments.
Office Hours:	Wednesday 4-6:30PM with Advanced Notice. Other times by appointment

System Requirements: This is an online class that can be "attended" from anywhere there is an internet connection. Assignments and discussions will be submitted through the course CANVAS webpage. However, in order to take part in the course, you must have access to a computer that meets the system requirements. If you do not have your own system, you may use computers available to students located throughout the U of U campus. However, some of the material has an audio component, so you should have headphones or an earpiece if you are using a computer in a public place. If you are using a private system, you will need to ensure that it is compatible. You must also be able to view PowerPoint presentations, as well as have a Media Browser on your system. Students must be able to use an internet browser, send attached files via CANVAS.

The **focus of this course** will be learning about the systematic ways in which sociologists are able to learn about, describe and explain social life. You will learn about the logic of scientific explanations of social relations and social institutions. You will explore the techniques and methods which sociologists use to gather the information they use in attempting to explain, and verify their explanations, of various social relations. The course will also cover some of the assumptions underlying these methods, as well as ethical issues involved in social science research. The class uses online lectures which have been archived, reading, exercises/assignments, and applications to teach about how sociologists go about collecting data that they use to learn about social life.

Objectives of the course include:

- To become familiar with various methods used in sociological research.
- To understand the reasons for choosing particular data collection methods and techniques, and learn how to organize the data to address particular questions and problems.
- To learn to make informed, critical judgments about research in sociology courses, as well as about social research you encounter as a citizen, for example in political presentations and in the mass media.

The course will employ online presentations of "lectures" in the form of PowerPoint presentations, sometimes with voice/webcam accompaniment made available at the CANVAS virtual location for the course. You will need to log on to CANVAS each time

you want to go into the class environment. (You can do this easily by clicking on the course in your Campus Information System list of courses.) In addition to the electronic lectures, this environment will also provide you with access to some of the other materials required for the course, including assignments and supplemental material. Students should check for course material and **Announcements** on CANVAS on a ***regular basis***.

There are several assignments which require you to do some of the work that would go into developing a research proposal even though writing a research proposal is not something you will do for this course. These include identifying a social science topic to explore, finding library resources on the topic, and reading a scientific journal article and writing briefly about it. You will also be asked to develop a hypothesis related to your topic and choose a method to explore your topic and test your hypothesis. These assignments are made available on CANVAS and are to be submitted through the Assignment feature there. This an is an easy-to-use feature found on the menu for the course.

Evaluation of students will be based on several assignments, class participation, and three examinations. Together, the assignments count for 20% of the final grade, and class participation counts for another 5%. (Participation is available in the form of using the Discussion board, under Course Tools, to pose questions, answer questions, make points, etc. to the whole class.) Each examination will count for 25% of the final grade, and there are three of them. The assignments are made available under the Assignments tab on the left-hand side of the screen. There will be *no extra credit work* available, and except in exceptional circumstances, arranged in advance with justification carefully documented, there will be no make-up work. A missed exam receives a zero for 25% of the course grade, a difficult deficit to overcome. However, late assignments will be accepted for partial credit.

Since the reading and online material (i.e., lecture, discussion, videos, etc.) will not always overlap, it is important that you both complete the reading as scheduled (below) ***and*** use the online class material. You cannot be successful in the course by only doing one of these. You must do both.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the 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.

All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Academic Misconduct

You must understand that all work submitted to a professor is your own work. When you have used the 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.**

Required Reading.
There is one textbook. Additional reading assignments may be made available through CANVAS. All readings should be completed prior to the class they are assigned.

Russel Schutt's *Investigating the Social World* (7th edition, Pine Forge Press).

Other: Assignments from news media may be made from time to time.

Attendance & Participation:
Learning through practice as well as through lecture requires regular, consistent and active participation in the class. Active participation means making use of the materials related to the course online as well as in your books, asking and answering questions, and being prepared. The CANVAS classroom lets me know how many times you have visited and for how long. You can use the mail feature to ask and answer questions. Finally, the virtual classroom will have a "discussion board" which will allow you to comment on anything as well as ask questions of each other.

Assignments
There will be a few assignments throughout the term. These assignments are to be done individually. Refer to the Assignment tab for objectives and instructions. The grading criteria used in evaluating work are provided at the end of the syllabus. Assignments are due around midnight on the date given on the syllabus. They are to be submitted using the Assignment function found under Course Tools on the course homepage.

Examinations
There will be three examinations, each covering about one third of the course material. The examinations require choosing True/False or multiple choice answers or, possibly, writing in short answers. You will take the exams online. You will have one hour to take each examination, but you may start the exam any time over a four or five day period. The period of time for which the exam is available is indicated on the syllabus, below. End times are all at 11:59PM. Examination dates are shown below.

GRADING
Final grades will be calculated on the basis of the each exam contributing 25% to the total grade, the assignments 20%, and participation 5%.

Assignments 20%
Participation 5%
Exams 75%

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 CANVAS. 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 (e.g., half) credit. Extra credit will not be available. Final grades will not be curved. In the past the CANVAS grades have included the system's on calculation of a cumulative score in the class for all work submitted. If this is visible to you, please ignore it. It is not accurate and does not conform to the calculation of grades explained above.

Reading/Topic/Assignment Schedule (but please see weekly Modules for other materials you must experience in order to do well on the exams and assignments).

Week 1 August Introductions, the Syllabus, and The Goals of Social Science Research
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Reading: Chapter 1

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Week 2 September The Logic of Scientific Discovery & The Role of Theory in Social Research.

Reading: Chapter 2

_____

Week 3 September Ethics in Social Research

Reading: Chapter 3.

Assignment #1: IRB Ethics Certification (Due Thursday, _____)

_____

Week 4 September Conceptualization and Operationalization

Reading: Chapter 4

_____

Week 5 September Choosing a Research Topic and Developing a Literature Review, Research Design, & The Research Report

Reading: Appendix A

Assignment #2: Topic & Research Question Due (Thus, _____ 7)

_____

Week 6 October Sampling

Reading: Chapter 5

EXAM 1 [Available Thus _____Midnight Monday _____. One hour, 50 questions.]

_____

Week 7 October Research Design and Correlation & Causation

Reading: Chapter 6, Appendix B

_____

Week 8 October Experimental and Quasi-experimental Designs

Reading: Chapter 7

Assignment #3: Short Bibliography (Due _____)

_____

Week 9 October Survey Research

Reading: Chapter 8

Assignment #4 Hypothesis & Questionnaire Item (develop a hypothesis, design one question— Thursday, March 7)

_____

Week 10

_____

Week 11 November Qualitative Research/Qualitative Data Analysis

Reading: Chapter 9, 10

EXAM 2 (AVAILBLE Thus., March 21- MIDNIGHT _____)

_____

Week 12 November Evaluation and Policy Research

Reading: Chapter 11

_____

Week 13 November Historical and Comparative Research

Reading: Chapter 12

Week 14 November Secondary Data Analysis and Content Analysis

Reading: Chapter 13

Assignment #5: Quantitative Data Analysis (**Begin now!! DUE _____**)

Week 15 November Quantitative Data Analysis

Reading: Chapter 14

Week 23 April 23 Wrap up/Work on Assignment 5

Reading: Chapter 15

Assignment #5 Due Thursday April 25

EXAM 3 (AVAILABLE Friday, April 26- MIDNIGHT Thus, May 2)

Due Dates

What is Due	**Due Date (always Thursday)**
1. Assign. #1: Conducting Ethical Research	January 24
2. Assign. #2: Topic & Research Question	February 7
3. Exam 1	February 14-18
4. Assign. #3: Short Bibliography	February 28
5. Assign. #4: Hypothesis & Survey Question	March 7
6. Exam 2	March 21-25
7. Assign. #5: Quantitative Data Analysis	April 29
8. Exam 3	April 26- May 2

Grading Assignments (not Exams, which are graded on 100-point scale)
The instructor will grade each Assignment on a ten-point scale according to the following guidelines:

10 EXCELLENT 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.

9 VERY GOOD 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.

7-8 GOOD 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 careless editing or poor presentation.

5-6 LESS THAN SATISFACTORY 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.

1-4 POOR The student's work shows gaps in understanding, is very sloppy, or is incomplete.

0 NOT ACCEPTABLE The student's work does not satisfy the learning requirements of this exercise. The student failed to turn in an assignment altogether.

Assignments are due on the date indicated by midnight, to be submitted via the Assignment function on the CANVAS homepage for the course. Assignments are accepted late but points will be deducted.