Introduction
Sociology 357 is a basic course on how to do social science research and how to evaluate the research of others. This is a training course where you will learn by doing. After an introduction to the elements of research, you will spend most of the semester working on a variety of projects, applying the concepts we cover early on as you conduct your own research, and as we evaluate the research of others. Many heads are better than one when it comes to designing and evaluating social research, so the course will involve group work and a lot of discussion. Coming prepared and being willing to participate are key prerequisites for joining the class.

My goals in teaching this course are (1) to introduce you to the language and logic of research design in order to provide you with a good foundation for future learning; (2) to teach you how to read a research report with a critical eye, so that you can know how to tell how trustworthy its information is; (3) to expose you to a variety of research methods that you may encounter in the future; (4) to convince you that social scientific research is not a highly esoteric activity, but rather a relatively straightforward, systematic set of procedures that will allow you to answer your questions about the world; (5) to have you learn first hand about the successes and problems of research by trying out several data collection methods on a small scale; (6) to show you that research is both an intellectual and emotional activity that can both frustrating and highly rewarding.

Soc 357 is not a statistics course and assumes no background in methods. If you have already taken any other research methods course, please talk to me, as this course will probably cover what you already know.

Course Materials
There is one required textbook for the course: The Basics of Social Research by Earl Babbie, 4th edition. This book is also on reserve at College Library. Other readings assigned throughout the semester will be posted on Learn@UW. Additional readings that are not listed here may be assigned throughout the semester. They will be announced in class and posted online.
Course Requirements
In addition to keeping up with daily readings and assignments, you should plan NOW to set aside substantial blocks of time outside of class to work on projects during the semester. There will also be multiple days throughout the semester for you to spend time on your projects. A schedule of due dates is included below.

The largest share of your grade is based on six projects: a field observation assignment, an interview assignment, a questionnaire assignment, an experiment assignment, a sample IRB protocol, and an article analysis. Instructions for the assignments will be given in class; assignments will be turned in BOTH hard copy and on Learn@UW. The exercises in class are not “real” research. As you will learn, real research is much too time consuming to fit into a course. You will be doing scaled-down projects that teach you important lessons about research without taking so much time. Everything you do in this class is solely for your education. You are not part of anybody’s research project. If you identify the inconsistency below and point it out to me, you will get 5 points of extra credit.

In addition to 6 projects throughout the semester, I will be administering 5 pop quizzes randomly throughout the semester that will be exclusively over your book readings. This is an attempt to reward you for actually reading the book.

You will be expected to attend every class period and participate. You may miss 3 class periods throughout the semester without it affecting your grade, but there will be NO “excused” absences. There is NO need to email me if you’re missing class, but please keep in mind that regular attendance is necessary to do well in the course, and will provide valuable time for working on your projects.

You will be evaluated in the class based on:
6 projects worth 30 points each (see below), 150 points
5 pop quizzes worth 5 points each, 25 points
Attendance and participation, 25 points
= 200 points

Classroom etiquette
It is important that you come to class on time so as not to be disruptive. In addition, a significant portion of class time will be devoted to group work, and group members need to be able to count on one another in order to make the projects a success. Late arrivals and early departures will be noted and count against your attendance grade.

While in class, NO CELLPHONES OR LAPTOPS. Laptops may be used during days we work on the projects, of course, so pay attention to class announcements about when it may be useful to bring a laptop.
Course Schedule

January 19: NO CLASS

January 21: Introductions
Part 1: The Logic and Ethics of Social Research

January 24: Human inquiry and scientific knowledge
Read: Babbie Chapter 1

January 26: The Ethics and Politics of Social Research
Read: Babbie Chapter 3; Lisa McIntyre’s “Doing The Right Thing”

January 28: The Ethics and Politics of Social Research

January 31: Research Design
Read: Babbie Chapter 4

February 2: Research Design

February 4: Conceptualization, Operation, and Measurement
Read: Babbie Chapter 5

February 7: Conceptualization, Operation, and Measurement

February 9: Sampling

February 11: Introduction to Research Methods and Class Projects

Part 2: Field Observation Assignment

February 14: Field Observation Assignment
Read: Babbie Chapter 10

February 16: Field Observation Assignment

February 18: Field Observation Assignment

February 21: Field Observation Assignment
Additional reading posted online

February 23: Field Observation Assignment Discussion
DUE: Field Observation Assignment
Part 3: Interview Assignment

February 25: Workshop on Writing Interview Questions  
Additional reading posted online

February 28: Interview Assignment

March 2: Interview Assignment

March 4: Working with your Data  
Read: Babbie Chapter 13

March 7: Interview Assignment

March 9: Interview Assignment Discussion  
DUE: Interview Assignment

March 11: Mid-semester Discussion and Evaluation

March 14-18: SPRING BREAK!!!

Part 4: Survey Research, Questionnaire Assignment

March 21: Introduction to Surveys and Questionnaires  
Read: Babbie Chapter 9

March 23: Workshop on Writing Survey Questions

March 25: Questionnaire Assignment

March 28: Working with your Data: Coding and Data Analysis  
Read: Babbie Chapter 14

March 30: Questionnaire Assignment

April 1: Questionnaire Assignment

April 4: Questionnaire Assignment Discussions  
DUE: Questionnaire Assignment

Part 5: Experiment Assignment

April 6: Experiment Assignment  
Read: Babbie Chapter 8; Additional reading posted online

April 8: Experiment Assignment
April 11: Experiment Assignment

April 13: Experiment Assignment

April 15: Experiment Assignment

April 18: Experiment Assignment Discussions
DUE: Experiment Assignment

Part 6: IRB Protocol

April 20: Sample IRB Protocol
Additional reading posted online

April 22: Sample IRB Protocol
Additional reading posted online

Part 7: Evaluating Research

April 25: Evaluating Research
Read: Babbie Chapter 15
DUE: Sample IRB Protocol

April 27: Evaluating Research

April 29: Evaluating Research

May 2: Evaluating Research

May 4: Evaluating Research

May 6: LAST DAY OF CLASS!
DUE: Article Analysis