This is a basic course in how to do social science research and how to evaluate the research of others. It assumes no background in research methods or statistics. It provides a general overview of the ways sociologists collect information about social phenomena with a special emphasis on what can be done to yield information that is trustworthy and useful for our theoretical understanding of social life. If you have had any other research methods courses you will probably find this course to be too elementary and should discuss alternatives with me.

There are several basic goals I hope to achieve in this course: (1) to introduce you to the elements of research design so that you will have 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 trustworthy its information is, (3) to convince you that research is not an esoteric or arcane activity that can be performed only by slightly eccentric professors, but rather a relatively straightforward, systematic set of procedures by which you can get answers to questions you have, (4) to teach you the limitations and problems of doing research into human behavior and therefore the caution that is necessary in drawing broad conclusions on the basis of any one study, and (5) to show you that doing research can, indeed, even be fun, in the same way that learning about the world was fun for you before they spoiled it by making you do it in school.

There are two required texts for the course:


G Golden, M.P. *The Research Experience*. Itasca, Ill: F.E. Peacock, 1976. (paper) A collection of sociological research reports coupled with behind-the-scenes discussions of what really happened in the research. The articles are antiques; you will learn some 60's history as well. The book is no longer in print (some used copies may be available), so the assigned chapters are on electronic reserve in the social science reading room, each one under the name of the chapter author.
Requirements and Grading

Your grade is based principally on three data collection exercises: a field observation (15%), a small questionnaire, and an experiment (20% each), plus an article analysis (25%). Details on these four assignments are given on the website. (I will demonstrate how to find them in class.) The last 20% of your grade is based on how much of the assigned homework you do (15%) and on your comments on the lectures and readings (5%). Please purchase a package of 3 X 5 index cards for the purpose of writing the comments. The homework assignments are given in the syllabus. Homework will be skimmed and counted but not graded. The goal of assigning homework is that you will have done the assigned reading and thought about it before you come to class. Thus, it must be clear from what you write that you actually read the assigned material: vague comments that make no specific reference to the reading are not acceptable. To receive credit, the homework must be submitted at the beginning of class on the day it is due. If you omit no more than two of the 14 assignments, you will receive an A for the homework portion of your grade. If you do fewer than half of the assignments, you will receive an F. Between these extremes, you will receive a pro-rated grade. Late homework will be accepted for half credit only when there is clear justification, and even then, only at the next class meeting after the original due date. (Exceptions may be made for catastrophes.) Absence from class is not a sufficient justification for late homework; you may submit homework early or by e-mail in anticipation of an absence.

At the end of each Tuesday and Thursday class, I will collect "comment cards", on which you may ask general questions, make comments, and ask for clarifications regarding lectures and readings. I will read these and may use them to structure later classes. I will not accept other sizes of cards or strips of paper. Again, you will receive a grade based on how many cards with comments you turn in; just a card with your name on it will not suffice. This is not just a sneaky way of taking attendance in lecture (although it does give me some information about that). I strongly suggest that you keep a journal of questions and comments as they occur to you as you read and as you sit in class (perhaps in a small notebook or pad). This can help you decide what to put on your comment cards; it can also serve as a record for you of what you have and haven't figured out, if you go back over it now and then. I would like to stress that you can get an A for 20% of your grade simply by doing mechanical things having to do with comments and homework. This can make a big difference in your final grade.

There is a great deal of work to do in this course. The subject matter requires an active rather than a passive stance toward learning. The way to learn research methods is to read real research reports and get your hands dirty doing real data collection. The homework is an integral part of the class, for it is the vehicle for learning to read a research report. All these activities take time and effort, but there are no shortcuts. I hope you will find at least some of what you do to be fun; at least you should not be able to complain that all you were asked to do was to spit back what the professor said.

Procedural Matters

Class sessions will involve a mixture of lectures and discussion. Some classes will include discussion and workshop-type experiences. You are responsible for obtaining information you miss if you are absent. I believe it is inappropriate to use office hours (or telephone calls) to compensate for instruction you missed more or less by choice, but if you are attending regularly and making the effort to learn (or if your absence is for reasons beyond your control), I will do all that I can to help you. Past students have suggested that I stress that the absence of formal examinations on the assigned
**reading does not mean that you don't need to do it.** Some report learning too late in the term that the assigned readings and our discussions of them help you do a better job on the graded exercises and article analysis.

**PLEASE ALWAYS BRING TO CLASS COPIES OF THE ASSIGNED WORK SUCH AS ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS OR READINGS FROM THE WEBSITE THAT WE ARE TO DISCUSS.** Many students find that it works well to have a looseleaf binder for this class, in which the assignment instructions, readings, and other notes may be kept. Or get one of those spirals with big pockets for other materials I sometimes get behind, so if I haven't covered a Golden reading, please continue to bring the material to class until I do.

I have given you my cell phone number, because I want you to feel free to call me when you have questions. BUT PLEASE TRY TO REMEMBER THAT WHEN YOU HAVE QUESTIONS IS WHEN OTHERS DO TOO -- WHEN PROJECTS ARE DUE. Try to realize that I have a life and be considerate. For example, when writing up an exercise, please work all the way through the exercise, noting questions you have as you go. Then make ONE phone call to try to get the answers, rather than making a new call every time you get stumped! If you are calling during the day, please use my office phone first. I pay for incoming calls on the cell!

**SCHEDULE**

The exact pacing of topics from day to day will depend upon the flow of the class. Please obtain the telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of several class members so you can call or e-mail them if you miss class. HOMEWORK AND PROJECT DUE DATES GIVEN IN THE SYLLABUS ARE CORRECT, even if I do not remind you in class, unless a WRITTEN note on the blackboard or an e-mail message alters them. You are expected to check your e-mail; if you have not activated your account, please do so. S refers to readings in the Schutt methods book. For example, S 7 refers to all of chapter 7. S, pp 100-105 means pages 100-105 only. G refers to readings in the Golden reader, which will be referred to by the name of the author, e.g. G: Humphreys. In Golden, always read both the research report and the personal journal that follows it. There is a lot of material in the personal journals that will help you with your exercises; do not neglect them. Some of them are even entertaining.

**NOTE: A * BEFORE A DATE MEANS THERE IS SOMETHING DUE THAT DAY.**

The readings are given class by class. You should have read the material indicated or done the homework **by the date shown.** Deadlines for all assignments are indicated on the schedule.

**Week 1:**

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<tr>
<td>June 13 M</td>
<td>First Class. The usual introductory remarks. Introduction of Article Analysis as the overall framework for the course. It is strongly recommended that you have an approved article by July 1.</td>
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<td>14 T</td>
<td>Begin Systematic Observation and Field Research. Read S 9. Read excerpt on website on crack research and the selections from Bosk, <em>Forgive and Remember</em>, and Duneier, <em>Sidewalk</em>, on doing field work. Also read the instructions for the OBSERVATION EXERCISE (15% of your grade, on website) and think about what you might want to observe. Today you will form two-person groups for the observation exercise. Decide</td>
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with your partner on the setting you will use for your observation. **Between now and Monday, June 20, do your unstructured observations.**

15 W How to think like a social scientist; overview of research design. READ S 1; G 1. Discussion of propositions, concepts, variables, and operational definitions.

* 16 R Read S 2 (all), 4 (pages 85-94 only). **HOMEWORK #1:** Pick up a newspaper (any one will do). Develop one or more propositions about some topic discussed in the paper. State the concepts involved and try to operationalize them. Attach the clipping of the article that is your "inspiration" to your homework. This will form the basis for discussion in class. I will also lecture on some "classic" studies and their methodology.

**Week 2:**

* 20 M **HOMEWORK #2:** Turn in xerox copy of rough notes from unstructured observation. Bring the original to class. You will need it for the **WORKSHOP** today on interpreting unstructured observations and developing a hypothesis and structured observation design. You should now be ready to do your structured observation.

* 21 T Applying the basic concepts. Read G: Doob and Gross, "Status of Frustrator as an Inhibitor of Horn-honking Responses," and "How I Did It." **HOMEWORK #3:** 1) Give the major independent variable and dependent variable in the Doob and Gross article; tell how each was measured (operationalized). 2) State the major theoretical hypothesis of the research and the operational hypothesis that flows from it. 3) See if you can construct the logical framework leading from the theory to the specific prediction. (Hint: This involves the "frustration-aggression hypothesis," the theoretical hypothesis, and the measurement assumptions, and it is **not** obvious.) 4) Be prepared to discuss the results of this research, in terms of what it demonstrates (I never say "proves").

* 22 W Ethics of Research. Matters of ethics come up in all research but are especially acute in participant observation. Read Chapter 3 from Schutt 6th edition, pp. 67-88 (on website). Also, read the Belmont Report from the Department of HHS, 1979 (also on website). Read G: Humphreys "Tearoom Trade" and "Methods." **HOMEWORK #4:** 1) Discuss the methods of observation used by Humphreys. Would you call this participant or non-participant observation? Overt or covert? (2) What methods in addition to observation did he use in this article? (3) Briefly give your opinion of the ethics of the research reported in Humphreys' article. We will hold a debate in class.

23 R Analyzing Observational Data. Read S 14, reporting research (pp. 464-471); S 12, (pp. 367-399, skimming section on variance). Discussion of observation exercise with emphasis on how you write up a research report and how you prepare a statistical table to summarize your results. **WORKSHOP** on data analysis and writeup of observation exercise.

**Week 3:**

* 27 M Lab sessions for hands-on work with SPSS. In Microlab, 3218 Social Science Building.) By today your observation report should be written up to the section on results. **You should have your data collection completed and your data with you.**

28 T Begin surveys and index construction. Read S 3 (pp. 85-112). Chapter 8, Surveys (all). Start thinking about a topic for the questionnaire. I will lecture on particular types of question format. QUESTIONNAIRE EXERCISE DISCUSSED. (See web.)

29 W Read Newman questionnaire (see website) as a NEGATIVE example: how NOT to write questions. This fake questionnaire was devised as a teaching tool to illustrate common mistakes made in writing questions. Pick out your two favorite lousy questions; I will
discuss what makes a bad question. I will also give hints on writing good questions. Also read excerpt from Form groups for questionnaire exercise; begin to write questions to be completed over the weekend and turned in on Tuesday, July 5 at class time.

* 30 R  
Read G: Schuman, "Two sources of antiwar sentiment in America", and the personal journal. **HOMEWORK #5**: What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of open-ended questions? When would they be better than structured questions? Would there be some groups of people you wouldn't want to use them with? Identify the major variables; summarize the sampling procedures.

Observation Exercise Report is due Friday, July 1.

Week 4:

* July 5, T  
Sampling. Read S, Chapter 5, Sampling. I will lecture on sampling. **HOMEWORK #6**: Drafts of questions due at class time. **Make sure all questions from your group are handed in together.**

* 6, W  
Read G: Ransford, "Isolation, Powerlessness, and Violence," and the personal journal. **HOMEWORK #7**: Identify the major variables and how they were operationalized -- that is, what questions were used to get at the ideas he was interested in; add any comments you have about the subject matter or process of his research. I will discuss this article in class.

* 7 R  
Read "External Validity" section of Article Analysis in preparation for homework described below. **HOMEWORK #8**: Apply article analysis section B: External Validity to the Ransford, the Humphreys, the Doob and Gross article, or your own approved article. **If you choose to do an analysis of your own article, you will receive feedback on it from the reader, which should help you to do a better job on your final article analysis.** (I will need a copy of your article to do this). See example article analysis on website for help.

Clarifications of what is wanted in the Questionnaire Exercise. **Your question drafts returned with comments.** Some time at end of class will be left for groups to consult on these corrections. **After you correct them, your questionnaire should be ready for the field, and you should begin collecting data**

Week 5:

11 M  
**WORKSHOP** on open-end coding and rostering of data. **BRING ALL DATA YOU HAVE TO CLASS.**

12 T  
Lab sessions for data entry and initial analysis of questionnaire data. You should have all data collected by now.

* 13 W  
Read S 4, (pp.112-122). The idea of construct validity. Read Rubin "Measurement of Romantic Love" and journal, G495. **HOMEWORK #9**: (1) Explain in your own words the relation between what Rubin is doing and the ideas of validity explained in your text. (2) List three findings in his article that support the claim that his measure of "love" is valid. (3) Comment very briefly on your feelings about this approach to measuring love.

* 14 R  
Read Section C: Construct Validity of Measures of Variables in Article Analysis. I will discuss this section in class. **HOMEWORK #10**: Apply Section C of the Article Analysis to either the Doob and Gross, the Ransford or your own article. **Again, if you use your article, you will receive comments on it.** Discussion of this section of the article analysis as it relates not only to these articles but also to the questionnaire exercise. Meet with your groups on last minute work and with me on questions about your data
HOMEWORK #11>>> SUBMIT COPIES OF YOUR DATA SHEETS AND CODE BOOKS AND A DISK or flash drive CONTAINING YOUR SPSS data file, syntax file, and output file with your frequency distributions before 4:30 P.M. Friday in my office or mailbox.

Week 6:
18 M  Reread S 12 (pp. 367-399) Carefully read the example of a student project in the Questionnaire Exercise writeup on the website. I will hand out computer output that corresponds to the example, and I will discuss it.
19 T  Read S, Chapter 5, Causation. Computer analysis of questionnaire data returned. Discussion of interpreting results. I will be available Tuesday afternoon, in addition to regular office hours, for consultation. If you want re-analyses, you must request them by Thursday afternoon. By now, you should have written a draft of the questionnaire exercise up to where the data analysis section begins, to save yourself time later.
* 20 W  Read Experiment Exercise (website). Begin discussing experimental design. Read S 7, Experiments (pp. 194-203); G: Darley and Batson, "From Jerusalem to Jericho" and the personal journal. Ignore the material on measures of religiosity (pp. 200-202). HOMEWORK #12: 1) Identify the independent and dependent variables and tell how each was measured; 2) Summarize the key findings. Focus on finding the relevant numbers, not just the words. 3) What procedures were used to ensure internal validity of the findings, in terms of the logic of experiments? (Note: Although it does not say so explicitly, this is a randomized experiment.) Be prepared to discuss anything else that seems relevant. Start thinking about an experiment.
21 R  Continue discussion of experiments, causation. Bring your ideas for experiments to class. There will be an experimental design workshop. You should then begin collecting data.

Week 7:
*  25 M QUESTIONNAIRE EXERCISE DUE today, at CLASS TIME. Lecture and discussion on internal validity: How can you support a judgment that A is a cause of B? (As contrasted with B causing A, or other possibilities.) Read S 7 (pp.203-217); W: Stern, Chapter 3, also on electronic reserve, Soc. Sci. Reading Room.
26 T  Read Article Exercise Section D: Internal Validity; S, Appendix D, How to read a research article.. Read article “Divorce among sociologists married to sociologists” and the student analysis of it on the website. (The analysis precedes the article.)
*  27 W  Read G: Goldberg, "Misogyny and the College Girl," and the personal journal. HOMEWORK #13: 1) Identify the independent and dependent variables and tell how each was measured, 2) Summarize the key findings, again focusing on finding the relevant numbers. 3) What procedures were used to ensure internal validity in this research? How is the design of this experiment different from that of the Darley and Batson study? You should have a draft of the entire experiment exercise report written up to the data analysis by now, and have half or more of your data collected. Data analysis and report write-up WORKSHOP today.
28 R  Labs on analyzing experimental data. You know how to roster data by now. But we can go over appropriate statistical techniques for your data.

Week 8:
* Aug 1 M  EXPERIMENT EXERCISE DUE today, in class. Field experiments have more external
validity but more complex internal validity problems. Read both the article and the personal journal for G: Goldstein and Arms, "Effects of Observing Athletic Contests on Hostility." **HOMEWORK #14:** Identify the independent and dependent variables and tell what procedures were used to insure internal validity.

2 T  Read S 12, 399-407; read Babbie chapter,"The Elaboration model" on website. Discussion of internal validity in connection with elaboration model. Questions about anything. Discussion of the elaboration model, third-variable analysis, and internal-external validity issues as they relate to your article analysis.

3 W  Further discussion of elaboration model and regression. Questions about article analysis. 

4 R  **END OF SEMESTER PARTY AND MINI-CONVENTION.** Experiments returned. Reports on what you found in your experiments. Discussion of final grade based on computer projections. I will bring refreshments and I urge you to do the same.

I will have extended office hours in the week of August 1 for questions concerning your article analyses.

**** ARTICLE ANALYSIS DUE  Friday, August 5****

If you need an extension on this time, I will be happy to negotiate it, but it will mean a temporary incomplete.