

SOCI 202

Research Principles and Practice

Winter 2013
Monday 9:45 am
Wednesday 8:15 am

Instructor: Dr. Lynda Harling Stalker

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-2pm; Thursday 1-2 pm; Friday 9-11am; or by appointment

Course description

This course addresses how various theoretical assumptions shape the aims and practices of research in sociology. It provides students with empirical research design principles and an introduction to methods of collecting and recording data, assessing reliability and validity, and conducting data analysis. Different research strategies are introduced. The ethical implications of research will be discussed.

Course objective

Sociology 202 aims to:

- give the student a theoretical and practical overview of the work of a sociologist
- introduce the student to the basic concepts of sociological methods as preparation for more specialised courses in the field
- help the student acquire basic literacy of sociological methodologies

In order to attain the objectives, the student should be able to do the following:

- reflect critically upon the social, political and economic context of the research process;
- display a critical awareness of the main theoretical and methodological perspectives surrounding the practice of research in the social sciences;
- identify how these perspectives have actively shaped our approaches to researching the social world;
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a range of methodological techniques across the quantitative and qualitative spectrum;
- display a reflexive understanding of the ethical frameworks and competing ethical claims which surround social sciences research.

Textbooks



Social Research: Issues Methods and Practices, 4th ed. Tim May.

This is available at the Campus Bookstore

Evaluation

In-class tests (2 x 35% of final grade)

These in-class tests will test the material from readings and lectures up to time of the test.

Final test (30%)

This will be scheduled by the registrar's office. You will have to read and critically evaluate a piece of sociological research. More details will be provided closer to the time.

Plagiarism and cheating

Copy of direct quotes or ideas without acknowledging the original author is considered plagiarism. Handing in a paper that you did not write, or a paper that you handed in for another class without permission of the instructor is also considered an infraction. These are serious academic offences. Cheating is producing any work that is not your own, either by copying off a fellow classmate or extra aids. Any such offences will result in a ZERO in this course and referred onto university officials. For more information on plagiarism see the university calendar.

Special Needs

If a student requires special accommodations, please see the instructor as soon as possible.

Electronic guidelines for this course

- Mobile communication devices are not permitted during class time. This includes cell phone and laptops. If you are noticed using one, you will be asked to leave the classroom. If you require a laptop for notetaking, please speak with the instructor. In such cases, you will be asked to sit in the first couple of rows of seats.

Class schedule

- January 7: Introduction to Course
Introduction
- January 9: What is / is not Social Science Research?
- January 14: Social Science Theories – Part one
Chapter one
- January 16: Social Science Theories – Part two
- January 21: Linking theory and research
Chapter two
- January 23: Values
Chapter three
- January 28: Ethics
- January 30: TEST
- February 4: Quantitative methods
- February 6: Official Statistics
Chapter four
- February 11: Survey research
Chapter five
- February 13: Interviewing
Chapter six
- February 18: Qualitative methods
- February 20: Interviewing
- BREAK
- March 4: Participant Observation
Chapter seven
- March 6: Documentary research
Chapter eight
- March 11: Comparative
Chapter ten
- March 13: TEST

March 18: Summarising the research report

March 20: Quantitative research report

March 25: Quantitative research report

March 27: Qualitative research report

April 1: Qualitative research report

April 3: Review and further practice