

Research Methods for Collecting Social Data

Sociology 3620-001 (Spring 2008)

Blair Hall 3103

Tuesday & Thursday 9:30-10:45 am

Sociology & Anthropology

Eastern Illinois University

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Office Hours: M 12:30- 2:30;

T & Th 1-2 and/or by appt.

Required Texts:

Babbie, Earl. 2008. *The Basics of Social Research*. 4th Edition, CA: Wadsworth.

Wysocki, Diane Kholos. 2008. *Readings in Social Research Methods*. 3rd Edition. CA: Wadsworth.

Schmidt, Judy H., Michael K. Hooper & Diane Kholos Wysocki. 2003. *6 Steps to Effective Writing in Sociology*. CA: Wadsworth.

Course Description and Objectives:

In this course, students are introduced to a variety of research methods in the social sciences including the use of the library, techniques of observation, elementary steps in quantitative/qualitative measurements and analyses, and must understand the utility of such methods.

Students will:

1. have an understanding of a variety of qualitative and quantitative social research methods and be able to demonstrate that they understand the strengths and weaknesses of each.
2. be able to explain the connection between theory and research and show evidence of this in their writing.
3. learn the techniques of collecting, analyzing, and presenting results of research.
4. be knowledgeable of the ethical concerns associated with scientific research and to practice within these guidelines.

Class Format:

The class will be based primarily on a guided discussion of the assigned readings and working through a variety of assignments on your own time. Students are expected to come to class prepared to participate in the discussion; therefore, it is very important that you keep up with your readings and complete all homework assignments in a timely manner. As your exams are based partly on your readings, it is to your disadvantage to consider the readings optional. Also, at times, students will be expected to participate in small group or class activities that focus on either completed homework assignments, readings, or other impromptu activities.

Class Policies:

As with any course, class discussion may, at times, concern controversial issues. Students are expected to respect the viewpoints expressed by others. If you disagree with what someone has said, you are encouraged to express your disagreement but are expected to do so in a civil, respectful, and polite manner. Failure to comply will result in a dismissal from the course.

Attendance/tardiness - You are expected to attend class regularly. Attendance is of critical importance as lectures will supplement textbook readings and provide additional information that

cannot be gathered by reading the text. Excessive absences from class will negatively affect your final course grade. Furthermore, you should come to class on time. Walking into class late is disrespectful to both your instructor and your fellow students and will not be tolerated. Also, turn off all electronic devices (i.e. cell phones) before entering the classroom!

Missed Work - Any deadlines regarding written work or student meetings will be announced well in advance of due dates and late work is generally not accepted in this course. Work can only be turned in late if you have a reasonable excuse for your absence and all **work that is turned in late will result in a 20% reduction** in the grade for the assignment.

It should not be assumed that you will be given make-up exams if you miss a test day. Exams missed because of serious illness, death in the family, or other serious emergencies (automobile breakdowns do not qualify), require informing the instructor **within 24 hours** of the class meeting missed. I expect that you are able to provide adequate documentation if you are to miss an exam...**this means a doctor's excuse or other official document.** At that time, appropriate measures will be discussed to complete the course requirements. Otherwise, failure to show up for an exam on the scheduled day will result in the score of a zero.

Assignments- Any assigned work to be turned in must be typed or word-processed. Handwritten work will not be accepted in this course unless otherwise instructed.

Plagiarism - You should be aware of plagiarism in every paper or assignment you write. Plagiarism is the use, without adequate attribution, of another person's words or thoughts as if they were ones' own. You will receive a zero for any work that shows evidence of plagiarism and documentation will be filed with the Judicial Affairs office as a violation of the student code of conduct (which could result in being expelled from EIU).

Readings - I will not discuss everything that your text covers. I see no point in simply telling you what your book has already told you. However, you are responsible for all of the information I ask you to read. This means that if you read something that you do not understand, it is up to you to ask me for clarification. We will use class time to discuss and build on the readings. I write each lecture with the assumption that you have read the assigned readings for the day. In order to follow the lecture and participate in the class discussions it will be necessary to do the readings before coming to class.

Office Hours - You should make use of my office hours. If you have any concerns about the class I will be quite happy to discuss them with you. I realize some people feel uncomfortable speaking out in a group. It is fine to come and talk to me during office hours about issues that interest you. I prefer you interact with the class but speaking to me also counts as participation.

Evaluation:

Course Exams (2)	200 pts.
Final Exam	100 pts.
Research Proposal	160 pts.
<u>Homework/Quizzes</u>	<u>100 pts.</u>
TOTAL	560 pts.

Grading Scale:

A=(100-90%)	560-504
B= (89-80%)	503-448
C= (79-70%)	447-392
D= (69-60%)	391-336
F= (0-59%)	335 or below

Assignments:

Exams: You will have two term exams and a final exam. The exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. You will be required to draw upon your readings, lectures, class discussions, and video's/guest lectures to answer the questions fully.

Quizzes/homework: Assignments will be given periodically throughout the semester. These may be announced in class or they may be unannounced, pop quizzes and may appear in either multiple choice or short answer form. Quiz grades will at times take the form of homework assignments as well. Therefore, keeping up with the readings and assignments is vitally important.

Research Proposal: The objectives for this assignment are for you to apply the sociological imagination to a topic of your choosing so as to produce a respected proposal for research not to exceed 15 pages in length. In this proposal you will apply a dominant theoretical approach suitable to your topic from which a set of research hypotheses may be derived. You will also develop a research design describing your plan to gather data, sample respondents or other units of analysis, and measure concepts central to your hypotheses.

Disabilities Statement

Students with documented disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) if they wish to discuss any necessary academic accommodations.

Medical Emergency Statement

For medical emergencies, go to the nearest phone and call 911. All faculty offices have telephones and during normal business hours (8-12 and 1-4:30), the Sociology Office (Blair 3170) is open. Be sure to state the floor and room number of the emergency to the 911 operator. If possible, someone should go to the central entrance of Blair Hall to direct EMS personnel to the medical emergency scene. If the medical emergency is on the second or third floor, someone else should hold the elevator on the first floor for EMS use.

Tornado Statement

In case of a tornado warning, proceed to the center of the hallway on the first floor, near the posted severe weather signs. Under no circumstances should you attempt to leave the building.

Building Fire Statement

In case of fire, activate the fire alarm and exit the building. When a fire alarm sounds, everyone must exit the building and cannot re-enter the building until allowed by the building coordinator or fire department official. Fire alarms are located at the north and south ends of the corridors just inside the fire doors. The closes exits for all classrooms in Blair are on the north and south ends of the building. Under no circumstance should the elevator be used. Group assembly areas for all classes in Blair are either on the patio area between Blair and Old Main or on the southeast corner of the North Quad. As you exit the building, continue moving well away from the exits so that you do not impede the egress of other students or the work of fire officials. Move a safe distance away from the building.

Lecture Schedule:

WEEK	TOPIC (ASSIGNMENTS)	READINGS	ASSN DUE DATE
1/8-10	PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO INQUIRY: Research In Sociology	Babbie Ch 1 Wysocki (pp 1-16)	
1/15-17	Theory	Babbie Ch 2 Wysocki (pp 17-32)	
1/22-24	Ethics	Babbie Ch 3 Wysocki 7 Schmidt (pp 1-38)	*Proposal Topics Due Tues 1/22
1/29-31	PART 2: STRUCTURING OF INQUIRY Research Design and Topics	Babbie Ch 4 Schmidt (pp 39-52)	Quiz/hmwk 1
2/5-7	Operationalization Measurement	Babbie Ch 5 Wysocki (pp 82-97)	*Proposal Lit Review Due 2/12
2/12-14			EXAM 1-Thursday 2/14
2/19-21	Indexes, Scales & Typologies	Babbie Ch 6 Wysocki (pp 98-116)	Quiz/hmwk 2
2/26-28	Sampling	Babbie Ch 7 Wysocki (pp 117-129)	Quiz/hmwk 3
3/4-6	PART 3: MODES OF OBSERVATION Survey Research	Babbie Ch 9 Wysocki (pp 138-143; 151-157)	*Proposal Methods Due 3/6
3/18-20	Qualitative Field Research	Babbie Ch 10 Schmidt (pp 53-76)	Quiz/hmwk 4
3/25-27		Wysocki (pp 163-168)	EXAM 2 3/25 No Class 3/27
4/1-3	Unobtrusive Research	Babbie Ch 11 Wysocki (pp 176-190)	Quiz/hmwk 5
4/8-10	Evaluation Research	Babbie Ch 12 Wysocki (pp 191-212)	Quiz/hmwk 6
4/15-17	PART 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA Qualitative Research	Babbie Ch 13	Final Proposals Due Tues 4/15
4/22-24	Quantitative Research & Final review	Babbie Ch 14	
Mon 4/28	8:00–10:00 am	Blair 3103	FINAL EXAM

** Spring Break---March 10-14

***This syllabus serves as a contract between the student and instructor and the student is responsible for all information contained within this syllabus. This syllabus may be amended and any changes that the instructor deems necessary will be announced in class.