

Research Methods for Collecting Social Data

Sociology 3620-002 (Spring 2009)

Blair Hall 3103

Tuesday & Thursday 11:00-12:15 am

Sociology & Anthropology

Eastern Illinois University

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Office: Blair Hall 3140

Office Hours: T & Th 1-3;

W 11-12 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 you understand the strengths and weaknesses of each.
2. be able to explain the connection between theory and research and show evidence of this in your 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. You 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, you 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. You 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 grades assigned for late work will be reduced by 20%**.

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 your professor **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 your own. You will receive a zero for any work that shows evidence of plagiarism and documentation will be filed with the Office of Student Standards (a.k.a. Judicial Affairs) 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. It is necessary to do the readings before coming to class to follow the lecture and participate in the class discussions.

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 during my office hours or after class is also encouraged.

Evaluation:

Course Exams (2)	200 pts.
Final Exam	100 pts.
Field Assignments	140 pts.
<u>Grant Application</u>	<u>120 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:

Field Assignments: You will complete 10 field assignments throughout the semester. Six of these are either response paper assignments from the articles in the Wysocki reader or assignments where you will practice the skills you have learned in class or conduct research ‘in the field’ and demonstrate that you have mastered the various research methods we discuss. Four field assignments are specifically structured around the completion of a grant application where you must apply the sociological imagination to a topic of your choosing, create an appropriate research question and empirically testable hypothesis, include a research design describing your plan to gather data, sample respondents or other units of analysis, and measure concepts central to your hypothesis. **(Failing to complete the grant application will result in failing the course).** Keeping up with the readings and assignments is vitally important. If I suspect that you are not keeping up with the readings, unannounced, pop quizzes will replace the field assignments.

Exams: You will have two term exams and a final exam that 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.

WebCT:

You are required to use WebCT for this course. Your User ID is your E-mail User ID. Once you successfully log in, our class will be listed as one of the following:

SOC3620WELA -- Research Methods (This is section 1 that meets 9:30-10:45 TR)

SOC3620WELB -- Research Methods (This is section 2 that meets 11:00-12:15 TR)

Click the link to our course. There you will find links to the syllabus, field assignments, grades, gradebook, ASA style guide, additional handouts and websites of interest.

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 closest 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.

3620-002 Lecture & Assignment Schedule:

WEEK	TOPIC (ASSIGNMENTS)	READINGS	ASSN DUE DATE
1/13,15	Research In Sociology	Babbie Ch 1 Wysocki #1 (p1-16)	
1/20,22	Theory	Babbie Ch 2 Wysocki #3 (p17-32)	FA 1 -Wysocki #1(1,2,3) #3(1,2,3) Due 1/20(20pts)
1/27,29	Research Design & Topics	Babbie Ch 4 Wysocki #8,9 (p61-81)	FA 2 -grant question, hypothesis, literature Due 1/29(20pts)
2/3,5	Operationalization/Measurement	Babbie Ch 5 Wysocki #10 (p82-90)	FA 3 -Wysocki #8(1,2,3) #9(1,2,3) #10 (1,2,3) Due 2/5(20pts)
2/10,12			EXAM 1- 2/12
2/17,19	Survey Research	Babbie Ch 9 Wysocki #17 (p138-143; 151-157)	
2/24,26	Indexes, Scales & Typologies	Babbie Ch 6 Wysocki #13(p98-102; 111-116)	FA 4 -grant conc/op & revised literature Due 2/24(20pts)
3/3,5			
3/10,12	Sampling	Babbie Ch 7 Wysocki #14(p117-129)	FA 5 -scales Due 3/10 (20pts)
3/24,26	Finish Sampling		FA 6 – Grant Application Draft Due 3/26 (30pts)
3/31,4/2		NO CLASS 4/2	EXAM 2 – 3/31
4/7,9	Qualitative Field Research	Babbie Ch 10 Wysocki (p163-168)	FA 7 -qual anal Due 4/14 (30pts)
4/14,16	Unobtrusive Research	Babbie Ch 11 Wysocki #20(p176-184)	FA8 -Wysocki #20 (1,2,3) Due 4/16 (20 pts)
4/21,23	Evaluation Research	Babbie Ch 12 Wysocki #22(p191-202)	FA 9 -content anal Due 4/21(30pts)
4/28,30	Course wrap-up		FA 10 - Final Grant Application Due 4/28(50pts)
5/6	Wednesday 10:15–12:15	Blair 3103	FINAL EXAM

**Spring Break---March 16-20

***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.