

RESEARCH METHODS: SOCIAL SCIENCE & LAB

Soc 331, Section A, Fall 2006

Instructor: Melissa Barnett

Room: Wolfe 303

Class Meeting Time: 8:30 – 9:415, Mon. & Wed

Lab Meeting Time: 4:00 – 5:40, Mon. (Section A)

Wed. (SectionB)

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Office: Wass 30A

Office Hours: Mon. & Wed. 10 – 11am

(or by appointment)

Office Phone: 243-2063 (to contact me at

Wass 30A during scheduled office hours)

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Babbie, Earl. 2007. *The Practice of Social Research*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth
2. Babbie, Earl, Fred Halley and Jeanne Zaino. 2003. *Adventures in Social Research: Data Analysis Using SPSS 11.0.11.5 for Windows*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & GOALS:

You may be surprised to know that you conduct research daily through conversations with others, by observing your surroundings and trying to answer questions/come to conclusions you might have about how something works. This is called ‘everyday research.’ Similarly, social scientific researchers ask questions, make observations and answer questions; however, unlike ‘everyday research,’ social scientific researchers utilize clearly defined methods, whereby researchers adhere to rationale-based, agreed-upon techniques and approaches by which they conduct their research.

This course is designed to introduce you to the multiple approaches researchers use to conduct research (i.e., survey research, field research, experiments, etc.) and the foundations upon which social scientific methods and the core, theoretical principles are grounded. By the end of this course, you will be able to understand how to critically evaluate research reported in the media, be familiar with deductive and inductive reasoning, how to design a research project and the various ways in which to do so, how respondents are chosen and the basic analyses used—both quantitative and qualitative—to understand the findings you have collected. Additionally, through our lab, you will be able to analyze survey results using SPSS, a statistical computer package. As is the case with other foundational courses, research methods is a multi-layered subject. In other words, what you learn in this course will continue to grow beyond our time together. I will supply you with the tools you will need to critically understand and make sense of the world around us.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING:

1. Weekly Quizzes	20%
2. Weekly Exercise Assignments	20%
3. Weekly Lab Assignments	10%
4. Research Report	20%
5. Final Exam	30%

Final Letter Grades will be based on the following scale: 100-90 = A; 89-80 = B; 79-70 = C; 69-60 = D; anything below 60 = F

[NOTE: There will be no ‘rounding up’ or ‘curving’ in this class. However, if your final grade is, for example, an 89.999, it will be to my discretion to assign an ‘A,’ ‘B,’ etc. grade. Additionally, if there is an exam question that consistently causes problems for most students, I will consider throwing it out. Finally, if you are concerned about your grade, **it is your responsibility to come and see me as early in the term as possible.**]

1. **WEEKLY QUIZZES:** Each Monday, you will be given a quiz covering the material we have covered up to the prior class. **If you miss class and your absence is unexcused, you will receive a zero (0) for that week's quiz.** In order to prepare, you must read the relevant chapter, attend class and participate. Also, I highly suggest using your text's web site, http://sociology.wadsworth.com/babbie_practice11e, where you can test yourself using the Tutorial Quiz, Essay Quiz and/or Flashcards. It will prepare you for not only the quizzes but for the Final Exam, as well.
2. **WEEKLY EXERCISE ASSIGNMENTS:** Each Monday, I will pass out an assignment focused on the material we will cover that coming week in class. **ALL exercise assignments are due the following Monday at the beginning of class**, unless there is no class scheduled. If you need to be absent, you must contact me **prior** to the class when the exercise is due to make other arrangements so you might submit your assignment in a timely fashion. **ALL assignments not submitted on the due date or arrangements made with me prior to the deadline will receive a zero (0).**
3. **WEEKLY LAB ASSIGNMENTS:** In each lab session, we will work through the assigned chapter together. At the end of each chapter, there is a lab exercise for you to complete and **submit at the beginning of your next scheduled lab meeting.** **If you submit your lab late, 2 percentage points will be deducted from that assignment's final grade.** All data are on the CD at the end of your lab book; therefore, you do not need to remain in the lab to complete your assignment. If you have SPSS on your personal computer, you may complete your lab assignment wherever and whenever it is most convenient to you. If you do not have SPSS, you will need to bring your data CD and return to the lab at a time when it is available for student use and complete your assignment at that time. Since SPSS will likely be new to most of you, I will be available to assist you during lab and my office hours. Additionally, there will be a student assistant, Dayna Eason, available to assist you. Dayna will post her hours of availability and will be located in the Learning Center.
4. **RESEARCH REPORT:** A final research report will be **due for Lab A on Monday, December 11th and for Lab B on Wednesday, December 13th.** You must submit your report via e-mail by 10pm on your respective due date. **For each hour it is late, 2 percentage points will be deducted from your final research report.** Chapter 17 of our text and the text's web site, http://sociology.wadsworth.com/babbie_practice11e, provide details, articles and guides on how to best conduct and construct a research report. As the semester progresses, I will provide you with specific questions and topic areas you will need to address in your report. Main steps you will need to perform (and think about): select an area of interest, pose an answerable research question about the topic, review literature on the topic, select a reputable, secondary data source and identify which variables are best suited to answer your research question and perform the appropriate analyses. I will aid you in shaping your reports throughout the semester and will pass out questions/topics you will definitely want to address in your final report.
5. **FINAL EXAM:** The final exam will be cumulative and will be given during the Exam Period on Wednesday, December 20th from 8:00am to 10:00am.

CLASS CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR:

1. Attendance & Participation

Each week we will cover a chapter in our text and in our lab manual. It is your responsibility to read the assigned readings *prior* to coming to class. This course will introduce you to many new terms and ideas. I suggest you review your ability and knowledge of them frequently. While there is no participation grade, *per se*, your inability to actively participate will be interpreted as a lack of preparation/reading.

2. Missed Classes & Missed Exams

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to gather the information from another classmate. I will not 're-play' the class for you, but I will discuss questions you might have concerning specific topics covered.

- 1). Only students who can provide documentation for excused absences will be exempt from quizzes.

2). However, if you know you will need to miss class on quiz day, it is your responsibility to contact me at least 24 HOURS BEFORE the scheduled exam and discuss your situation with me to gain permission to be exempt from taking the quiz.

3). If you are unable to take the final exam at its scheduled day and time, you must make arrangements with me **prior** to the exam time to schedule a make-up time.

3. *Final Notes*

- Talking with or speaking to other classmates while others (the instructor or a classmate) is highly frowned upon.
- All e-mail correspondence will be sent to your Lasell e-mail account. If this is not your ‘main’ e-mail account, be sure to check it for course up-dates or communication. Additionally, when sending me e-mail, please indicate who you are so that I don’t have to ‘figure out’ who you are.
- Cell phones & other electronic devices: I understand the difficulty of always remembering to turn off your cell phone or pagers, etc. before class. However, to the best of your ability, please remember to turn it off before entering the classroom. Nothing is worse than a ringing / ‘singing’ phone while someone is speaking, taking an exam, etc.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

“Students have a responsibility to maintain the highest level of academic integrity. They are expected to perform educational tasks with the highest moral and ethical conduct. Academic dishonesty, depending on the severity of the infraction, may produce consequences, which range from a reduction in grade for the particular assignment involved to a failing grade for the course. The catalog contains a more completed description of academic dishonesty.”

ACCOMMODATION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS:

If you have special needs due to a learning disability or other condition(s) that requires special arrangements for testing or meeting assignment due dates, let me know as soon as possible (preferably during the first week of class).

YOU must approach me about your situation and not assume arrangements made with other professors or the Learning Center during the current semester or past semesters apply to this course. The Learning Center has technology that can help you with reading and writing needs, and we can also arrange special testing sessions. My goal is to make it possible for all students to have a successful experience in this class.

SCHEDULED CLASS READINGS & OTHER DUE DATES*

(NOTE: ALL READINGS ARE TO BE READ PRIOR TO CLASS FOR THE DATE INDICATED.)

Monday, Sept. 11 th -	Introduction to course and syllabus
Wednesday, Sept. 13 th -	CLASS: Read Chapter 1 LAB B: Read Chapters 1 – 3 prior to lab (We'll complete Chapter 5 in class)
Monday, Sept. 18 th	CLASS: Complete Chapter 1 LAB A: Read Chapters 1 – 3 prior to lab (We'll complete Chapter 5 in class)
Wednesday, Sept. 20 th	CLASS: Read Chapter 2 LAB B: Chapter 6
Monday, Sept. 25 th	CLASS: Complete Chapter 2 LAB A: Chapter 6
Wednesday, Sept. 27 th	CLASS: Read Chapter 3 LAB B: Chapter 7
Monday, Oct. 2 nd	CLASS: Complete Chapter 3 LAB A: Chapter 7
Wednesday, Oct. 4 th	CLASS: Read Chapter 4 LAB B: NO LAB
Monday, Oct. 9 th	<u>COLUMBUS DAY: NO CLASS OR LAB A</u>
Wednesday, Oct. 11 th -	CLASS: Complete Chapter 4 LAB B: Chapter 8
Monday, Oct. 16 th	CLASS: Read Chapter 5 LAB A: Chapter 8
Wednesday, Oct. 18 th	CLASS: Complete Chapter 5 LAB B: Chapter 9
Monday, Oct. 23 rd	CLASS: Read Chapter 6 LAB A: Chapter 9
Wednesday, Oct. 25 th	CLASS: Complete Chapter 6 LAB B: Chapter 11
Monday, Oct. 30 th	CLASS: Read Chapter 7 LAB A: Chapter 11
Wednesday, Nov. 1 st	CLASS: Complete Chapter 7 LAB B: Chapter 12
Monday, Nov. 6 th	CLASS: Read Chapter 8 LAB A: Chapter 12
Wednesday, Nov. 8 th	CLASS: Read Chapter 9 LAB B: Chapter 14

Monday, Nov. 13 th	CLASS: Complete Chapter 9 LAB A: Chapter 14
Wednesday, Nov. 15 th	CLASS: Read Chapter 10 LAB B: Chapter 15
Monday, Nov. 20 th	CLASS: Complete Chapter 10 LAB A: Chapter 15
Wednesday, Nov. 22 nd	<u>THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASS</u>
Monday, Nov. 27 th	CLASS: Read Chapter 11 LAB A: Chapter 17
Wednesday, Nov. 29 th	CLASS: Complete Chapter 11 LAB B: Chapter 17
Monday, Dec. 4 th	CLASS: Read Chapter 13 LAB A: Chapter 18
Wednesday, Dec. 6 th	CLASS: Complete Chapter 13 LAB B: Chapter 18
Monday, Dec. 11 th	CLASS: Read Chapter 14 LAB A: NO LAB--LAB REPORT DUE BY 10PM
Wednesday, Dec. 13 th	CLASS: Complete Chapter 14 LAB B: NO LAB--LAB REPORT DUE BY 10PM
Wednesday, Dec. 20 th	FINAL EXAM AT 8:00AM TO 10:00AM

***This schedule is tentative. Every effort will be made to adhere to the schedule. However, if changes are necessary, students will be given ample notice.**