

Sociology S3010
METHODS FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH
Summer 2012

315 Hamilton Hall
TR 9:00am-12:10pm

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Office hours: By appointment

Purpose of the Course

This is an introductory course in social research methods and methodology. It introduces data-collection methods used by social scientists to study the social world, with an emphasis on what can be done to yield trustworthy information for our understanding of social life. You will learn how to construct a testable hypothesis, design a small-scale research project that tests it, and write up the findings. Throughout the course, you will develop a critical eye to the structure of social science research: identifying the object of inquiry, noting what the independent and dependent variables are, analyzing how the variables are being operationalized, learning how to present and analyze the data, and evaluating the quality of a research project. The course assumes no background in research methods or statistics.

My goals are: (1) to introduce you to the elements of research design, (2) to teach you how to read a research report with a critical eye, (3) to inform you about the limitations and problems of doing research into human behavior, and (4) to show you that doing and reading social research is not only rewarding, but also fun.

Rules of the Road

1. Class participation and active learning are vital to the success in this course!
2. I do not take attendance. However, if you miss more than two classes, you may have much greater difficulty in understanding the course materials, as well as in the assignments and quizzes. It is your own responsibility to obtain the information from missed classes.
3. Check your CU email account regularly. All communication about the course (including schedule and syllabus changes) will be made via e-mail (and be reiterated in class if possible).
4. Always bring the reading materials to class.
5. Late assignments will NOT be accepted.
6. You are responsible for completely understanding the rules associated with the Columbia Honor Code before you hand in your first assignment.
7. For the reading, you do not need to study it intensively before class, just read through it once so you can be ready to learn from class.
8. The quizzes and assignments will be drawn from the reading materials and class lectures.
9. I will distribute a study guide before each quiz, and guidelines before each team project.

Text

W. Lawrence Neuman. 2011. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 7th ed. Allyn & Bacon. (6th edition is acceptable.)

Additional readings are available on Courseworks.

Components of Your Grade

1. Two team projects (total of 60%): a field experiment and a field observation

2. Three non-cumulative quizzes (total of 30%): matching or/and multiple choice
3. Three homework assignments (total of 10%): see daily assignments

Grading Scale

| | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| A = 94–100 | A- = 90–93 | |
| B+ = 87–89 | B = 84–86 | B- = 80–83 |
| C+ = 77–79 | C = 74–76 | C- = 70–73 |
| D+ = 67–69 | D = 64–66 | D- = 60–63 |
| F = Below 60 | | |

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS

July 3 (Tuesday): Introduction

Film: "People like Us: Social Class in America" (2001; 124 minutes).

Assignment 1: Does class matter at Columbia University? How would you study it? (1 page, single spaced)

July 5 (Thursday): Getting started with social research

Neuman, Chapters 1 and 2 (Pp. 1–54).

C. Wright Mills. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. Chapter 1.

<http://www.sjsu.edu/people/natalie.boero/courses/80sec1/s3/Mills,%20The%20Promise.pdf>.

New York Times: "Shadowy Lines that Still Divide," "Up from the Holler," "The College Dropout Boom," and "When the Joneses Wear Jeans."

Cathleen Burnett. 2003. "Passion through the Profession: Being Both Activist and Academic." *Social Justice* 30(4):135–150 (skim).

July 10 (Tuesday): Theory and Methodology

Neuman, Chapters 3–4 (Pp. 55–122).

Elizabeth Aries and Maynard Seider. 2005. "The Interactive Relationship between Class Identity and the College Experience: The Case of Lower Income Students." *Qualitative Sociology* 28(4):419–443.

Lawrence W. Sherman and Richard A. Berk. 1984. "The Specific Deterrent Effects of Arrest for Domestic Assault." *American Sociological Review* 49(2):261–272.

July 12 (Thursday): Ethics of social research

Neuman, Chapter 5 (Pp. 143–160, skip "The Literature Review" section).

Laud Humphreys. 1976. "Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places" and "Methods: The Sociologist as Voyeur." Pp. 85–114 in *The Research Experience*, edited by M. Patricia Golden. F. E. Peacock.

James C. Hamilton. 1999. "The Ethics of Conducting Social-Science Research on the Internet." *Chronicle of Higher Education*. December 3.

<http://chronicle.com/article/The-Ethics-of-Conducting/19432/>.

Films: "Laud Humphreys' Tearoom Trade—'Once Upon A Time'" (5 minutes); "How Evil are You?" (2011; 43 minutes)

July 17 (Tuesday): Research design, measurement, and sampling

Neuman, Chapters 6–8 (Pp. 163–274).

Ifeyinwa Flossy Obuekwe, et al. 2004. "An Epidemiological Survey on the Presence of Toxic Chemicals in Soaps and Cosmetics Used by Adolescent Female Students from a Nigerian University." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 5(5):85–90.

(<http://www.bridgew.edu/soas/jiws/Jun04/toxic.pdf>).

Jack P. Gibbs. 1989. "Conceptualization of Terrorism." *American Sociological Review* 54(3):329–340.

Robert T. Michael, et al. 1994. *Sex in America*. Little, Brown. Pp. 15–32.

Pew Research Center. 2008. "Calling Cell Phones in '08 Pre-Election Polls."

<http://people-press.org/http://people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/cell-phone-commentary.pdf> (skim).

Quiz 1.

Assignment 2: Revisit assignment 1, and answer the following questions: (1) Make one normative statement based on the subject of the article. (2) Develop one research question about the topic. (3) State two (counter) hypotheses coming from the research question that you could test. (4) State the unit of analysis that you would study. (5) What is your dependent variable and how would you operationalize it? (6) What is the independent variable and how would you operationalize it? (1 page, single spaced)

July 19 (Thursday): Experimental Research, I

Neuman, Chapter 9 (Pp. 175–307).

Barbara Ehrenreich. 1999. "Nickel-and-Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America." *Harper's*, January, pp. 37–52.

Barbara Ehrenreich. 2001. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. Metropolitan. Chapter 1 (Pp. 1–10).

Elizabeth Levy Paluck. 2009. "Reducing Intergroup Prejudice and Conflict Using the Media: A Field Experiment in Rwanda." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 96(3):574–587.

Films: "Eye of the Storm" (1970; 26 minutes); "True Colors" (1992; 18 minutes)

Team project 1 (experiment) pretest due.

July 24 (Tuesday): Experimental Research, II

Anthony N. Doob and Alan E. Gross. 1976. "Status of Frustrator as an Inhibitor of Horn-Honking Responses" and "How We Did it." Pp. 481–494 in *The Research Experience*, edited by M. Patricia Golden. F. E. Peacock.

Devah Pager. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108(5):937–975.

Film: "Quiet Rage" (1992; 50 minutes)

July 26 (Thursday): Survey research

Neuman, Chapter 10 (Pp. 308–357).

Neil Gross and Solon Simmons. 2009. "The Religiosity of American College and University Professors." *Sociology of Religion* 70(2):101–129.

Nadine S. Koch and Jolly A. Emrey. 2001. "The Internet and Opinion Measurement: Surveying Marginalized Populations." *Social Science Quarterly* 82(1):131–138.

U.S. Census Bureau. "What is the Census?" (<http://2010.census.gov/2010census/about>) (skim).

Angela Brittingham and G. Patricia de la Cruz. 2005. "We the People of Arab Ancestry in the United States." <http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/censr-21.pdf> (skim).

Assignment 3: To be announced in class.

Team project 1 (experiment) report due.

July 31 (Tuesday): Nonreactive research and secondary analysis

Neuman, Chapter 11 (Pp. 358–382).

Charis E. Kubrin. 2005. "Gangstas, Thugs, and Hustlas: Identity and the Code of the Street in Rap Music." *Social Problems* 52(3):360–378.

Minjeong Kim and Angie Y. Chung. 2005. "Consuming Orientalism: Images of Asian/American Women in Multicultural Advertising." *Qualitative Sociology* 28(1):67–91.

Quiz 2.

August 2 (Thursday): Field research and focus group research, I

Neuman, Chapter 13 (Pp. 420–463).

Peter Bearman. 2005. *Doormen*. University of Chicago Press. Preface and Chapter 1 (Pp. ix–37).

David A. Snow, Cherylon Robinson, and Patricia L. McCall. 1991. "'Cooling Out' Men in Singles Bars and Nightclubs: Observations on the Interpersonal Survival Strategies of Women in Public Places." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 19(4):423–449.

Team project 2 (observation) pretest due.

August 7 (Tuesday): Field research and focus group research, II

Julie Ann Harms Cannon, Thomas C. Calhoun, and Rhonda Fisher. 1998. "Amateur Stripping and Gaming Encounters: Fun in Games or Gaming as Fun?" *Deviant Behavior* 19(4):317–337.

Ashley Mears and William Finlay. 2005. "Not Just a Paper Doll: How Models Manage Bodily Capital and Why They Perform Emotional Labor." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 34(3):317–343.

Shelley Correll. 1995. "The Ethnography of an Electronic Bar: The Lesbian Café." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 24(3):270–298.

August 9 (Thursday): Historical-comparative research, writing the research report, and the politics of social research

Neuman, Chapter 14 and Chapter 16 (Pp. 464–506, 542–574).

Danielle Kane and Jung Mee Park. 2009. "The Puzzle of Korean Christianity: Geopolitical Networks and Religious Conversion in Early Twentieth-Century East Asia." *American Journal of Sociology* 115(2):365–404.

Cheris Shun-ching Chan. 2012. "Culture, State and Varieties of Capitalism: A Comparative Study of Life Insurance Markets in Hong Kong and Taiwan." *British Journal of Sociology* 63(1):97–122.

Quiz 3.

Team project 2 (observation) report due.