RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Department of Sociology
Fall, 2016
(DRAFT: 8/23/16)

Soc. 920:311:04-05, Introduction to Social Research

(MTh1 MTh2*)
Tillett 204: Mon & Thurs 8:40-10 a.m (Lecture)
Tillett 246: Monday, 10:15-11:10 (section 4 recitation)
LSH B269: Thursday, 10:15-11:10 (section 5 recitation)

Prof. Patricia Roos; TA: Laura Callejas

Offices: Roos: Rm. 115, Davison Hall (Douglass campus)
Callejas: Rm. 013, Davison Hall (Douglass campus)

Office hours: Roos: Mondays and Thursdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. (or by appointment)
Callejas: Wednesdays,1:30-2:30 p.m.; Thursdays,12-1 p.m. (or by appointment)

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Note: The best way to contact us is through email. Make sure you include "Soc. 311" in the subject line, to ensure your email doesn't get lost.

I. *Course Objectives*

This course will present an overview of social scientific methods--that is, the process whereby researchers in the behavioral and social sciences investigate theoretically-informed hypotheses about the behavior of individuals and the organization of social institutions. We will address the major components of the research process, including the development of theoretically informed hypotheses, the operationalization of theoretical concepts, the collection of data, the testing of hypotheses through data analysis, and the presentation of research results. Through class discussions, readings, and assignments, you will gain expertise in the *practice* of social science research. You will develop the skills necessary to read and evaluate social science research in an intelligent and

critical manner, learn statistical data analysis, and discuss the ethics of social research. You will use the web to do research, and test hypotheses on a representative sample of the U.S. population in 2014 (General Social Survey).

Please note: Tillett 204 is an "Active Learning Classroom," the first of its kind at Rutgers. Being in this classroom means that we will expect more daily participation from you than in a standard lecture format classroom. We will be learning together to take advantage of the resources this classroom offers. I'm excited to participate in this pilot, and I hope you are too. Here is an animation that describes the classroom's features:

https://dcs.rutgers.edu/about-dcs/spotlight/preview-the-new-active-learning-room

We will randomly assign you to one of the six 9-person tables. These will constitute your "discussion groups," and will be your assigned seats for the entire semester.

II. *Readings/Data Access*

There is one required book for this course, available at the Rutgers bookstore (make sure you get the fifth edition):

Daniel F. Chambliss and Russell K. Schutt
2016. Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation. Fifth Edition. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Link for Companion Website:
https://edge.sagepub.com/chamblissmssw5e

Additional readings will be available online through Sakai (sakai.rutgers.edu) and through the above link.

You will use the General Social Survey to conduct analyses. Access through the web:

http://sda.berkeley.edu/sdaweb/analysis/?dataset=gss14

III. *Expectations*

The grade for the course will be based on:

a. ***attendance at lecture*** twice each week (MTh1); we will take attendance through your discussion groups (i.e., your assigned tables);

b. ***attendance at one scheduled recitation section*** per week (you are assigned either M2* or Th2*); this is a 4-credit course, and you **must** attend recitations to pass the course; **Note: recitations will start directly after lecture (approx. 10:15 a.m., not at the time specified in the schedule of classes)**;

c. ***first examination*** (20 percent; tentatively scheduled for **Thursday, October 13th**); I will conduct a review session the class before the exam, and post a study guide on Sakai.

d. ***second examination*** (20 percent; tentatively scheduled for **Thursday, November 10th**); I will conduct a review session the class before the exam, and post a study guide on Sakai.

e. ***five assignments*** that require application of the techniques learned in class; these assignments will be available on Sakai on a regular basis, **and will be submitted in hard copy in class on the day they are due**. One of the assignments will involve class presentations; late assignments will be penalized (1/2 point each day they are late) and those not turned in within one week of due date are still required but will not receive points (40 percent, 8 points each);

Tentative assignment due dates (submit hard copy in class):
Ass. 1, due Monday September 19th
Ass. 2, due Monday October 3rd
Ass. 3, due Monday October 10th (**no late assignments permitted for this assignment**; I'll be going over results in class in preparation for Test 1)
Ass. 4, due Monday October 31st
Ass. 5, due Thursday November 17th (panels 1&2); Monday November 21st (panels 3&4); Tuesday November 22nd (panel 5)

f. a ***final project*** involving hypothesis construction, data analysis, and presentation of research results that builds on the written assignments; selection of topics will be based on data available from a representative sample of the U.S. population in 2014 (20 percent; approximately 8 pages, due **Thursday, December 15th @ 12 noon, Rm. 115 Davison Hall (Roos office, in hardcopy).**

g. ***class participation*** will be taken into account for those who are on the borderline between grades (e.g., B to a B+; C+ to B).

The two examinations will be open book and notes and will consist of both short essays and problems. You will need a calculator that allows for scientific notation for the second exam and for some of the assignments. There are NO makeups for the two examinations without a WRITTEN excuse from your physician.

Attendance policy: We will take attendance, both in lectures and recitations. Given the nature of this 4-credit course, **missing class reduces your course grade**! If you have to miss class for any reason, please use the university absence reporting website: https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/. An email will be sent to me automatically. **You must attend recitation (as well as lectures) to pass this course.**

Because unforeseen circumstances may require changes in the assigned readings, the course outline, or examination dates, you are responsible not only for due dates specified in the syllabus, but also for any handouts or announcements made in class or through email from Sakai. Please let me or the TA know if you must miss class for a religious holiday or major medical issue, and we will ensure that you can make up the material.

You are encouraged to consult with me and/or the teaching assistant about any problems you may encounter with lectures, reading material, or class assignments. Do not wait until the class is almost over before coming in for assistance.

Note: ALL course requirements must be completed to get a C grade or higher in the course. **If you are a Sociology major or minor (or a Criminal Justice major) you must get at least a C in this course to have it count toward your degree.**

IV. *SAS Learning Goals*



SAS Core Curriculum Learning Goals Met by this Course: QQ (Cognitive Skills and Processes: Quantitative and Formal Reasoning). This course meets this goal: formulate, evaluate, and communicate conclusions and inferences from quantitative information.

V. *Academic Integrity*

This course will be conducted in full accordance with the university's Academic Integrity Policy:

"The principles of academic integrity require that a student:

- properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others.
- properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work.
- make sure that all work submitted as his or her own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of unsanctioned materials or unsanctioned collaboration.
- obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with his or her interpretation or conclusions.
- treat all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress.
- uphold the canons of the ethical or professional code of the profession for which he or she is preparing." (Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy, 2011, p. 1)

Note: it is very easy to cut and paste from the internet, and/or copy verbatim selections from articles or books. If you do this without attribution, **it's called plagiarism**. It's also pretty easy to find plagiarism nowadays. You can use internet sources (preferably academic sources you find online through Rutgers libraries), as well as print sources, but paraphrase the work you use and properly cite it. Avoid over-quoting, but if you do use an author's exact words you must put them in quotes and cite, including page numbers.

I will not accept any assignments or papers from students involved in dishonest behavior, and I am required to report such students. Students engaging in dishonest behavior hurt all students.

VI. *Classroom Atmosphere*

The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by individual instructors. Courteous and lawful expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted (and indeed encouraged).

VII. Course Outline (and approximate dates)

I. Introduction to Social Science Inquiry (September 8-12)

A. The scientific method
B. Theory and method
C. Deduction and induction

Readings: Chs. 1-2

II. The Research Process (September 15-19)

A. Research design
B. Variables and variation
C. Units of analysis
D. Ecological fallacy
E. Conceptualization, operationalization
F. Measurement: nominal, original, interval, ratio
G. Reliability and validity

Readings: Ch. 4

III. Association and the Logic of Causation (September 22-29)

A. Association vs. causality
B. Cause and effect
C. Determinism
D. The elaboration paradigm

Readings: Ch. 6 (pp. 111-115)
Earl Babbie, The Practice of Social Research, 10th ed. (Ch. 15) (Sakai)

IV. Testing Causal Hypotheses: Qualitative Research (October 3-10)

A. Field research
B. Roles of observers
C. Sampling and data collection

Readings: Chs. 9-10 (skim Ch. 11)

Qualitative Research Examples (read at least one):

Low, Taplin, & Lamb, 2005, in "Sage Journal Articles" in Ch. 9 on the Companion Website link

Or, Leverentz, 2006 in "Sage Journal Articles" in Ch. 9 on the Companion Website link

EXAM ONE: Thursday, October 13th

V. Testing Causal Hypotheses: The Classic Experiment (October 17th-27th)

A. Independent and dependent variables
B. Experimental and control groups
C. Quasi-experimental designs

Readings: Ch. 6 (pp. 116-137)

Experimental Design Examples (read at least one):

Shelley J. Correll, Stephen Bernard, and In Paik, "Getting a Job: Is there a Motherhood Penalty?" (Sakai)

Laurie A. Rudman, Richard D. Ashmore, and Melvin L. Gary, "'Unlearning" Automatic Biases: The Malleability of Implicit Prejudice and Stereotypes." (Sakai)

Roden and Grube, 2014 in "Sage Journal Articles" in Ch. 6 on the Companion Website link

VI. Testing Causal Hypotheses: Survey Research (October 31st-November 7th)

A. The logic of sampling
1. Concepts and terminology

2. Sampling theory and sampling distribution
3. Sampling design

Readings: Ch. 5

B. Survey research
1. Questionnaires
2. Survey designs
3. Evaluation research

Readings: Ch. 7 (skim Ch. 12)

Survey Research Examples (read at least one):

Deborah Carr, "'My Daughter Has a Career; I Just Raised Babies': The Psychological Consequences of Women's Intergenerational Social Comparisons." (Sakai)

Or, Glavin, Schieman, & Reid, 2011 in "Sage Journal Articles" in Ch. 7 on the Companion Website link.

EXAM TWO: Thursday, November 10th

VII. Ethics in Social Science Research (November 14th-22nd)

A. Ethics in the research process
B. The politics and use of social research

Readings: Ch. 3 (review ethics sections of other chapters)
(additional readings online for class presentations; see Assignment 5, when available)

VIII. Data Analysis: The Empirical Testing of Research Hypotheses (November 28th–December 12th).

A. Descriptive statistics: univariate analysis; measures of central tendency and dispersion
B. Descriptive statistics: bivariate analysis, chi square

Readings: Ch. 8, 13
Agresti, "Descriptive Techniques" (Sakai)
Agresti, "Chi Square Test of Significance" (Sakai)

Final Paper due: Thursday, December 15th, @ 12 noon to Rm. 115 Davison Hall (Roos office, in hard copy)