

## **Introduction to Social Research Methods**

920:311:05 & 06

Tuesday and Thursday 2:15-3:35pm

Bartlett Hall (BT) 123

### **Recitation**

Section 5: Tuesday 4:10-5:05 pm (RAB-207)

Section 6: Thursday 4:10-5:05 pm (HCK-202)

Instructor: Yu-Sheng Lin

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:00 PM (Davison Hall 019) or by appointment

TA: Kristen Younghee Song

Email: TBD

Office Hours: TBD

### **Course Overview**

Introduction to social research methods is a course of how we understand the social world. This course helps you to acquire the skills necessary to conduct social research. The arrangement of this course can be divided into two stages. In the first stage, you will learn basic tools to conduct research. These tools include vocabulary, concepts, and paradigms behind the research process. After you are familiar with these tools, the course will turn to different methods that researchers use to investigate the world. You will learn the logics and practices of these methods. Since the goal of this course is to train you as a researcher, there is no exam in this course. Instead, you will practice the methods that you learn and show that you are capable to conduct a research by yourself or with a team. In the end of this semester, you are expected to be a skilled researcher who can use multiple research methods to analyze the social world.

### **Required Readings**

Textbook: Russell K. Schutt. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*

This textbook will serve as the backbone for our course. It will be available at the campus bookstore, although it's a bit pricey, so I encourage you all to look for a used copy of the most recent edition.

Other readings: These readings will include journal articles, news articles, book selections, and anything else that I believe will be useful to you. The readings will flesh out the concepts that are presented in Schutt, and provide valuable examples of how methods are actually used.

## **Course Requirements**

### Individual Assignments (50%)

1. What is Your Research Question (1-2 pages; 10 points)
2. What is Your Contribution: Summarize and Critiques Existing Academic Answers (3-5 pages; 10 points)
3. Conducting Interviews (3-5 pages; 10 points)
4. Making Field Notes (3-5 pages; 10 points)
5. Drawing a Social Network (3-4 pages; 10 points)

\*The points of late assignment will be 20% off. Assignment that is late over 24 hours will not be accepted.

### Group Projects (40%)

1. Making a Questionnaire (10 points)
2. Quantitative Analysis (10 points)
3. Designing an Experiment (10 points)
4. Visual analysis (10 points)

\*Everyone is expected to participate in group projects actively. Free rider will be punished.

### Presentation: (10%)

Each of you will provide a brief presentation of their final project in the last week of class. You will explain your topic, why it is important, a brief synopsis of past work on your topic, and then you will discuss what you plan to do with your topic. This is meant to be a very relaxed atmosphere where you will be able to share what you have been working on all semester.

### Attendance

Attendance, in lecture and recitation is required. TA and I will check attendance every lecture and recitation. No more than 4 absences from lecture and 2 absences from recitation will be permitted. If you violate the rule above, your final grade will not be higher than C. If you are at a borderline grade, exceptional participation in class and/or in groups may be the deciding factor between the two grades. Participation is welcome in both lecture and recitation.

## **Grading**

Individual Assignments (50 points)

Group Projects (40 points)

Presentation (10 point)

Attendance

**A: 103-90, B+:89-87, B: 86-80, C+:77-79, C: 76-70, D: 69-60, F :< 60**

## **Class Schedule**

### *Week 1 Introduction*

1/22 Readings: "Introduction" Sakai

"What's soft about social science" Sakai

In class: course introduction, hard and soft science, being a professional researcher

In recitation: no recitation

1/24 Readings: Ch.1 textbook

"The Craft of Inquiry" Sakai

In class: goals and types of research, qualitative and quantitative orientations

In recitation: no recitation

### *Week 2 Basic Concepts (I)*

1/29 Readings: Ch.2 textbook

"Designing a Research Project" Sakai

"Lucifer Effect" Sakai

"Research and Privacy" Sakai

In class: theory, research questions, hypotheses, research cycles, ethic concerns

1/31 Reading: Ch3. textbook

"The Construction of Arguments" Sakai

"Matching research methods to research questions" Sakai

In class: research paradigms, positivism/post-positivism, constructionism

### *Week 3 Basic Concepts (II)*

2/5 Reading: Ch. 4 textbook

"Causation" Sakai

"What's a Spurious Correlation?" Sakai

"Correlation vs. Causation" Sakai

In class: conceptualization, operationalization, causality, levels of measurement, assignment review

2/7 Reading: Ch. 4 textbook

“Ecological Fallacies” Sakai

“Criteria of Measurement” Sakai

In class: validity, reliability, ecological fallacy

The First Assignment due at 2:00 PM on Sakai

*Week 4 Sampling*

2/12 Reading: Ch. 5 textbook

“The Logic of Sampling” Sakai

In class: population, sampling, probability sampling, generalizability

2/14 Reading: Ch. 5 textbook

“Sampling Bias and Twitter” Sakai

In class: practicing probability sampling, non-probability sampling, assignment review

*Week 5 Method: Survey*

2/19 Reading: Ch.8 textbook

In class: questionnaires, creating tools, administering surveys, incentives, analyzing the data, strengths and weaknesses

In recitation: Group Project 1

2/21 Reading: Ch.8 textbook

In recitation: Group Project 1

The Second Assignment Due at 2:00 PM on Sakai

*Week 6 Method: Survey (quantitative analysis)*

2/26 Reading: Ch.12 textbook

In class: description statistics

2/28 Reading: Ch.12

In class: inferential statistics, strengths and weaknesses of quantitative analysis

*Week 7 Method: Experiments and Longitudinal Design*

3/5 Ch.6 textbook

In class: true experiments, quasi-experiments, strengths and weaknesses

In Recitation: Group Project 2

3/7 “The Mark of a Criminal Record” Sakai

In class: matching, classical experiments, longitudinal design

In Recitation: Group Project 2

### *Week 8 Interview*

3/12 Ch.9 textbook

In class: differences between questionnaires and intensive interviews, creating interview schedules, administering interviews, analyzing the data, strengths and weaknesses

In recitation: Group Project 3

3/14 Videos: “Surviving Maximum Security” and “China’s lost Girls”

In class: discussion of the videos; assignment review

In recitation: Group Project 3

### *Week 9 Spring Break*

### *Week 10 Method: Participant Observation*

3/26 Ch.9 textbook

“Sidewalk” Sakai

In class: Defining Participant Observation, the Participant-Observer Spectrum, Entering the Field, Building a Rapport, Field Notes, Strengths and Weaknesses, watching “Sidewalk”

3/28 “Studying Subcultures using Participant Observation” Sakai

In class: watching and discussing “Method: Sidewalk and Ethnography” and “Commentary”

The Third Assignment Due at 2:00 PM on Sakai

### *Week 11 Method: Historical and Comparative Research*

4/2 Ch.11 textbook

4/4 Video: The Ku Klux Klan: A Secret History

In class: Discussing the video, assignment review

*Week 12 Method: Visual Analysis*

4/9 TBD

4/11 TBD

The Fourth Assignment Due at 2:00 PM on Sakai

*Week 13 Method: Network Analysis*

4/16 TBD

In Recitation: Group Project 4 (Part I)

4/18 TBD

In class: assignment review

In Recitation: Group Project 4 (Part I)

*Week 14 Conversation Analysis/Ethnomethodology*

4/23 "Seizing the Moment" Sakai

    "Participation shifts" Sakai

    "Avoiding Catastrophe" Sakai

In class: structures of conversation, ways to conduct conversational analysis

In recitation: Group Project 4 (Part II)

4/25 "Studies of the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities" Sakai

In class: taken-for-granted, breaching experiments

In recitation: Group Project 4 (Part II)

The Fifth Assignment Due at 2PM on Sakai

*Week 15 Presentation*

4/30 Student Presentation

In recitation: no recitation

5/2 Student Presentation

In recitation: no recitation