

Introduction to Social Research

920:311:80 (09518)

Instructor: **Anna Harewood**

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Office Hours: By appointment after class.

Time: 6:00 – 9:45 pm

Dates: Tuesday September 1 – Tuesday December 15, 2015

Location: WMHEC (Freehold)

This course is approved as satisfying the Cognitive Skills and Processes: Quantitative and Formal Reasoning element of the **SAS Core Curriculum**.

Course Description

This course deals with the logic of the research process in social science. We will cover key concepts in social research, various types of research design, different ways of gathering data, causality, analysis and interpretation, basic quantitative analysis, sampling, measurement, and ethical concerns. We will focus on evaluating different research methods and their scholarly applications.

Books and Readings

There is one required book:

Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage (2005/6), by Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas. ISBN 0-520-24113-4.

It is *not* available from the University bookstore. You must order it yourself from Amazon.com, or another online bookseller. Any version or edition (soft back, hardcover, original, revised) is fine. We won't be using this book until November, so you have plenty of time to get it. It's also available from the Rutgers libraries.

All other required readings for this class are available on the course Sakai site.

Sakai Site

You can find all required readings for the course that do not come from *Promises I Can Keep* under the "Resources" tab on the course Sakai site. In addition, the assignments are available under the "Assignments" tab so that if you miss class, you can print the assignment, do it, and bring it to the next class to get credit for it. I will hand out hard copies of all assignments in class, so don't print them unless you're going to miss class.

Make sure that you check your Rutgers email frequently for announcements about the class.

Course Requirements

Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	30%
Assignments	30%
Participation	10%

Exams

Exams consist of short answer questions and problems. Both exams will cover material from readings and lectures. Exams are not cumulative, although key ideas and concepts will carry over. All students must take the exams when they are scheduled. Make-up exams are only available with a Dean's Note verifying your reason for missing the exam, and my advance approval; make-up exams may be in long essay format. Traffic is *not* an excuse for missing or coming late to an exam. There's always traffic in New Jersey, so plan accordingly.

If you miss an exam because of an emergency (this means that you did not know *in advance* about the reason you were going to miss the exam), you must notify me via email within 12 hours of the start time of the exam. If you do not do this, you may not be able to write a make-up exam, and may not be able to pass course as a result. This policy applies to both the midterm and the final exams.

Assignments

This course requires several assignments, due dates TBA in class. Assignments are not graded. If an assignment is inadequate or incorrect, you must revise and resubmit to get credit. There will be time in recitation to work on most assignments, and most assignments will be due in the same class that they are assigned. You must complete all assignments to receive the 30% assignment grade; otherwise, you will receive 0 for this portion of the course, and will not be able to pass the class.

With the exception of the survey project report, which is due at the end of the course, assignments may be handed in late without penalty, within the following guidelines: all first-term assignments must be completed before the midterm, and all second-term assignments must be completed before the survey project report is due. I offer this policy as an accommodation for those who miss class because of illness or other legitimate problems, and do not recommend that you take advantage of it if you don't need to, as doing so will likely compromise your exam grades.

If the survey project report is handed in late, I will deduct 5 points *from your total assignments point allocation of 30 points* for each day I do not receive it in hard copy. "Late" begins after I have taken attendance on the day the survey project is due. Do not wait until the last minute to get your project components together or print out your report. Though I recognize that University computing lab printer problems (along with a host of other problems that may prevent you from handing your project in on time) may not be your fault, you are nevertheless responsible for handing work in on time, and will be penalized if you do not.

Participation

Participation means:

1. speaking in class in response to my questions during lectures and contributing to discussions in lectures, and
2. working on assignments during recitations.

If you do not participate in lectures, you will not get points for this part of the participation grade. Note that there is no grade for attendance. If you attend every class but never speak, you will not get points for participation in lecture. You do not need to speak in every class to get a perfect participation grade, however you do need to speak often and offer thoughtful comments.

Policy

If you find any of these policies unacceptable, you should not take this course.

Attendance

Missing more than 2 classes will result in an F in the course. I do not excuse absences, with the exception of those for religious holidays (see below). This means that you are free to miss up to 2 classes over the course of the term, without penalty. It also means that an absence for any reason counts as an absence, regardless of any documentation you may have. But because you only have 2 absences, save them for emergencies, as a third absence for any reason means automatic failure. Persistent lateness will also reduce your grade.

Please do *not* use the University Absence Reporting System to report your absences. You do not need to let me know if you are going to miss class, within the 2 absences you are permitted, but if you wish to do so, please send me an email so that I can respond.

Grading

Rutgers University uses a lettered grading system. Your final grade will be assigned in accordance with this system, shown below. You must complete all assignments and exams to get a final grade; otherwise you will receive an F.

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Point Range</i>
A	90-100%
B+	87-89
B	80-86
C+	77-79
C	70-76
D	60-69
F	< 60

Exam and Final Grades

There will be no extra credit offered in this course. I do not curve, negotiate, or change exam or final grades. Again, there will be no extra credit offered in this course. I do not curve, change, or negotiate exam or final grades. Make sure you understand what this policy means before you decide to stay in this class, especially if you are a senior who intends to graduate at the end of this term.

Further, I am happy to accommodate many different types of circumstances and emergencies, but *only if they are brought to my attention as they occur*. I do not accommodate problems or emergencies after exams have been taken or final grades have been submitted. Note also that “problem,” “emergency,” and “circumstances” are at my definition and discretion. Also see the information under “Timeliness,” below. **No end-of-term drama, please.**

The University does not allow instructors to lower final grades. Thus, a grade of D will not be lowered to a grade of F upon student request.

Disability Accommodation

Individuals with disabilities will be accommodated. Please present your documentation *at the beginning of the course*. I will only accommodate disability-related needs for those who have documentation through the Office of Disability Services. You can find additional information here: <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html>. Please note that I am not always able to accommodate requests for additional time or a reduced distraction environment for exams. If this turns out to be the case, students with documentation entitling them to these

accommodations must write their exams at the Office of Disability Services in New Brunswick or Camden (depending on student affiliation).

Religious Holidays

All absences for religious holidays will be excused. As the University no longer offers a comprehensive list of religious holidays, you must email me with the date and reason for absence to receive accommodation.

Timeliness

All course requirements must be completed by the end of the course. Should exceptional circumstances (by my determination) arise, all course requirements must be completed within one month of the final exam. I do not consider any circumstances to be exceptional, *regardless of their nature*, if they occurred during the course of the term, but you do not bring them to my attention until the end of the term, or after final grades have been submitted.

If you are having a problem that interferes with your ability to complete your work in this class, please let me know right away. This includes problems that you anticipate may interfere with your ability to complete the course requirements. I cannot make exceptions after the fact.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using another person's words and ideas as though they were your own. This includes both published work and other students' work. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense which can result in your expulsion from the University. You are responsible for knowing the standards of academic integrity as set forth by the University. You can find the most current version here: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf.

Phone Use in Class

Texting in class will reduce your participation grade (even if you participate actively), and upon multiple offenses, decrease it to zero. If you imagine that I cannot see you texting, please come to the front of the room to have a look.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please read the assigned material before class. The course schedule is subject to change if necessary. If this happens, you will be notified via email.

Tuesday September 1 Introduction and Course Overview

Read: This syllabus, in its entirety.

Tuesday September 8 NO CLASS (Monday classes meet today.)

Tuesday September 15 The Research Circle, Variables, and Hypotheses

Read: Chambliss and Schutt, Chap 2: The Process and Problems of Social Research
Stephens, "Chapter 1" (pp. 1-19) from *Hypotheses & Evidence*
Babbie, "A Variable Language" (pp. 14-19)

Tuesday September 22 Causality

Read: Chambliss and Schutt, Chap 6: Causation and Experimental Design (pp. 103-107)
Stephens, "Cause & Effect" (pp. 168-187) from *Hypotheses & Evidence*

Tuesday September 29 Experiments

Read: Chambliss and Schutt, Chap 6: Causation and Experimental Design (pp. 107-127)
Pager, "The Mark of a Criminal Record"
Babbie, "The Classical Experiment" (pp. 222-234)

Tuesday October 6 Reliability and Validity

Read: Pager and Quillian, "Walking the Talk? What Employers Say Versus What They Do"
Babbie, "Criteria of Measurement Quality" (pp. 143-148)

Tuesday October 13 Sampling + Midterm Exam Review

Read: Chambliss and Schutt, Chap 5: Sampling

Tuesday October 20 MIDTERM EXAM, 6-8pm

Tuesday October 27 Ethics

Read: Chambliss and Schutt, Chap 3: Ethics in Research
Scheper-Hughes, "Parts Unknown: Undercover Ethnography of the Organs-Trafficking
Underworld"

Tuesday November 3 Conceptualization and Operationalization

Read: Chambliss and Schutt, Chap 4: Conceptualization and Measurement
Fowler, "How Unclear Terms Affect Survey Data"
Read about The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (AddHealth) online at
<http://www.cpc.unc.edu/addhealth> ("About Add Health" and "Study Design"
sections)

Tuesday November 10 Survey Research

Read: Chambliss and Schutt, Chap 7: Survey Research
Bearman, Moody, and Stovel, "Chains of Affection: The Structure of Adolescent
Romantic and Sexual Networks"

Tuesday November 17 Quantitative Data Analysis

Read: Chambliss and Schutt, Chap 8: Elementary Quantitative Data Analysis

Tuesday November 24 Qualitative Methods

Read: Chambliss and Schutt, Chap 9: Qualitative Methods: Observing, Participating,
Listening

Edin and Kefalas, from *Promises I Can Keep*:

“Introduction”

“One: ‘Before We Had a Baby...’”

“Four: What Marriage Means”

Tuesday December 1 Data Analysis for Survey Project (Don’t miss this class.)

**Tuesday December 8 Description and Causation + Exam Review
SURVEY PROJECT DUE (or at final exam)**

Read: Edin and Kefalas, from *Promises I Can Keep*:

“Five: Labor of Love”

“Six: How Motherhood Changed My Life”

“Conclusion: Making Sense of Single Motherhood”

Tuesday December 15 FINAL EXAM, 6-9pm (Last class to hand in survey project.)

Final grades will be submitted via Rutgers’s electronic grade submission system within 48 hours of the final exam. Please do not email me for your final grade.