

SOCIOLOGY 311
Introduction to Social Research

Spring 2022

Instructor: Professor Julie Phillips
Class Meeting: Mondays and Thursdays, 10:20 to 11:40 am, BE-251, Livingston
Office Hours: Mondays, 2:00-3:00 pm or right after class on Monday/Thursday
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Teaching Assistant: Armani Beck-McField
Class Meeting (01): Fridays, 10:20-11:15 am, LSH-B111
Class Meeting (02): Fridays, 12:10 - 1:05 pm, TIL-123
Office Hours: Fridays, 1:15 - 2:15 pm (right after class on Fri) and by appointment
Office: Tillett 123
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Course Description

This introductory course in social research methods offers an overview of how sociologists study the social world. It provides the basic tools needed to conduct social research while also developing the skills necessary to critically evaluate the research of others. We will begin with a discussion of the fundamental concepts and issues involved in social science research and move on to consider a variety of approaches to social research, including qualitative research methods, surveys and experimental research design. Students will learn these methods through firsthand experience with data collection and hypothesis testing. The course assumes no background in research methods or statistics.

Course Goals and Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- (1) Formulate, evaluate, and communicate conclusions and inferences from quantitative information. (**Core Curriculum Goal (QQ)**)
- (2) Define and explain the basic elements of research design.
- (3) Critically evaluate the research of others.
- (4) Understand what it means to be a sociologist.
- (5) Identify and understand the problems and limitations of studying the social world.
- (6) Understand the relevance of sociological research methods to your everyday lives.



Required Readings

Chambliss, Daniel F. and Russell K. Schutt. 2019. Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation. Edition 6. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

A small collection of articles assigned in the course can be found on the Canvas website.

The textbook is available for purchase from Rutgers University Bookstore.

Handouts and Announcements

I will post important announcements and lecture outlines on the course web site listed above. *It is important that you check the web site regularly to ensure that you don't miss important updates or supplementary class material.* These additional materials will help you follow and understand the major points of each lecture.

Requirements and Grading

Data collection exercises: Sociological research methods are best learned through active involvement with the course material. With this in mind, students will conduct several hands-on group research projects. Recitation periods are set aside to work on these research projects. Therefore, **attendance in recitation is mandatory**; without

participating in recitations, you will not be able to successfully complete required coursework. Full instructions for the research projects will be posted on the course website. **DATA COLLECTION EXERCISES MUST BE SUBMITTED ON CANVAS BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON THE DUE DATE TO RECEIVE FULL CREDIT.** The content analysis exercise and observation exercise contribute 10 percent to your final grade and the survey exercise contributes another 20 percent to your final grade. **Note: Each individual group member must hand in his/her own copy of any group work.**

Exams: There will be two exams that cover material from the lectures, readings, discussion sections, and group projects. The first exam contributes 25% to your final grade; the second exam counts for 25% of your final grade.

Homework: There will be several homework assignments over the semester. The homework assignments are listed at the end of the syllabus. All are graded on a credit / no-credit basis; **NO LATE HOMEWORKS WILL BE ACCEPTED.** You must complete **THREE** of the **SIX** homework assignments and submit those assignments via Canvas by the due date. Together, these three homework assignments contribute five percent to your final grade.

In-class exercises: I will frequently ask you to apply the concepts we are discussing in a lecture with a short exercise or set of questions. These exercises are graded on a credit/no credit basis and constitute 15% of your final grade.

I will not take attendance in this class, but class and discussion section participation are vital to your success in the course. Keep in mind that students who actively participate in class discussions tend to perform better on assignments and exams. Getting engaged in this material really does enhance learning. When missing class or discussion section is unavoidable, **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FIND OUT WHAT MATERIAL WAS COVERED AND WHAT ANNOUNCEMENTS WERE MADE.** Missing class is never an acceptable excuse for missing deadlines or not completing coursework.

To review, your total course grade will be calculated as follows:

Exam 1 -- 25%

Exam 2 -- 25%

Observation exercise -- 5%

Content analysis exercise -- 5%

Survey exercise -- 20%

In-class exercises -- 15%

Homework -- 5%

Please note that I will not give out grades over the phone or via email. Grades for exams will be posted on the course website; homework assignments and projects will be returned in recitations. For your final grade, please find out your grades through official channels.

Makeup exams and timely completion of projects

Make-up exams are unfair to other students in the class, so I can only allow them under extraordinary circumstances. If you have a problem with a scheduled exam, **I must be notified at least 24 hours prior to the exam, and you must receive my written permission (e-mail or letter) that a makeup exam is allowed.** If you have an emergency that arises the day of the exam, you should notify me as soon as you possibly can; provided you have valid documentation, a makeup exam can be scheduled. If you fail to get my written permission that a makeup exam is allowed within a week of the originally scheduled exam date, you will receive a failing grade for the test. Any makeup exams will be administered during the final exam period and may contain both essay and oral components.

Please note that there is no way to improve ex postea your grade on an examination; no extra-credit assignments are given out. Plan to do well on the required material. If you have a problem with the assignment, make an appointment to see me **BEFORE** the work is due or ask questions during the class period.

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.

If a student engages in disruptive behavior, the instructor, following the University Code of Student Conduct, may direct the student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. Instructors may specify other consequences in their syllabi. Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or other students can lead to university disciplinary proceedings. The University Code of Student Conduct is at <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/judaff/ucsc.shtml>.

Texting: Texting is disruptive and disrespectful of the process of education. If you have an emergency that requires you to text, please go out into the hall to do so. Otherwise, I ask that you do not text during the 80 minute class period. If I see you texting during class, I will ask you to leave for the day. If you cannot abide by these restrictions, please find another course to take.

Examination Rules

1. You cannot enter the exam 20 minutes or more after the exam has begun.
2. Exams will consist of multiple choice type questions. Be sure you bring a #2 pencil and eraser to the exams.
3. Bring your Rutgers ID card and leave it on your desk during the exam. You may not be allowed to take the exam if you do not have your valid ID card.
4. No calculators, rulers or other aids can be used. Only pencils, pens, erasers, pencil sharpeners, a watch, and your Rutgers ID card should be on your desk. You are best off not bringing anything else to the exam. If you do, put it in a bag under your seat.

A Word to the Wise

1. If you are having problems, please seek out help early. Come in prepared, having gone over the lectures, text, homework assignments, and problems in the text. Please keep appointments that you make to see me. If your plans change and you can't make the appointment, please notify me as soon as possible (before the meeting).
2. If you have missed any classes, make sure you get the missed notes from classmates. In cases like this, it usually pays to get the notes from at least two of your classmates. Please don't ask me to give you a condensed version of lectures you have missed.
3. Please note that the readings are not substitutes for the lectures nor are the lectures a substitute for the readings. Not all the material in the lectures appears in the readings, nor is all the material in the readings covered in the lectures. You are responsible for the material in the texts and in the lectures. I make every effort to have class attendance a necessary (though not sufficient) factor in performing well on examinations.
4. Make it a habit to read a national newspaper daily. A good exercise is to pick up the newspaper and apply concepts we've learned to pertinent news stories.
5. Do not wait until after I have lectured on something to read the material work. Come to class prepared!
6. If possible, please email me to make and/or confirm an appointment (even if you come during office hours).

University Policy on Academic Integrity

Students in this class are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. I will not tolerate cheating of any kind in my courses, and I will report the incident directly to the appropriate college officer if I believe the university's policy on academic integrity has been violated. Cheating, plagiarism in written work, receiving and providing unauthorized assistance, and sabotaging the work of others are among the behaviors that constitute violations of the [Policy On Academic Integrity](#). You are expected to be familiar with this policy; please see [here](#) for student resources. If you have questions about specific assignments, be sure to check with me.

Statement on Diversity

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.

Tentative Course Schedule and Readings

January 20	Overview of course
PART I	Introduction to social research and the scientific method
January 24	The nature of scientific knowledge <i>Film Clip: Bowling for Columbine (10-213)</i> Reading: C&S Ch. 1 (pp.1-5) (*) Homework # 1 is due at the beginning of class.
January 27	The purpose and process of social research Reading: C&S Ch. 1 (pp. 6-16) & Ch. 2 (pp.20-26)
January 31	Measurement I: Conceptualization, operationalization and levels Reading: C&S Ch. 4 (pp. 70-87) ARTICLE: Doob, A. and A. Gross. 1968. "Status of Frustrator as an Inhibitor of Horn- Honking Responses." <i>Journal of Social Psychology</i> 76: 213-218. (*) Homework # 2 is due at the beginning of class.
February 3	Measurement II: Validity and reliability Reading: C&S Ch. 4 (pp. 88-93) ARTICLE: Rubin, Z. 1970. "Measurement of Romantic Love" <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> 16: 265-273. (*) Homework # 3 is due at the beginning of class.
February 7	The nature of causality and elaboration model Reading: C&S Ch. 6 (pp. 120-125) ARTICLE: Babbie "Elaboration Model" ARTICLE: Waite, L. J. "Does Marriage Matter?" <i>Demography</i> 32(4):483-507. (*) Homework # 4 is due at the beginning of class
February 10	Research Designs Reading: C&S Ch. 2 (pp. 27-39)
February 14	Review for Exam I Come prepared with questions
February 17	Exam I (NO RECITATION)
PART II	Approaches to research
February 21	Overview to qualitative methods / Field research Reading: C&S Ch. 9 (pp. 216-245); C&S Ch. 10 is optional The Trials of Alice Goffman, <i>New York Times</i> , January 2016 <i>Short Film: Deadheads: An American Subculture (10-501)</i> (*) Observation exercise due at the beginning of class NO RECITATION
February 24	Content analysis in practice Reading: C&S Ch. 11 (pp. 291-298) <i>In-class exercise: Begin in class and complete in recitation</i>
February 28	Sampling Reading: C&S Ch. 5 (pp. 98-116)
March 3	Overview of survey research Reading: C&S Ch. 7 (pp. 150-151 & pp. 160-176) (*) Content analysis exercise due at the beginning of class

- March 7 Survey research I (Instrumentation)
Reading: C&S Ch. 7 (pp. 152-159)
- March 10 Career Services: Options for Sociology Majors
- March 12-20 HAPPY SPRING BREAK!**
- March 21 Statistics in social research: An introduction
Reading: C&S Ch. 8 (pp. 180-211)
- March 24 Statistics, continued
ARTICLE: Inferential Statistics
(*) Preliminary questionnaires due at beginning of class
Each student hands in his/her own copy of the questionnaire
- March 28 Elementary analysis of questionnaire data
Reading: Review C&S Ch. 8 (pp. 180-211)
ARTICLE: Example SPSS output
- March 31 Experiments I
Reading: C&S Ch. 6 (pp. 125-146)
Film: Obedience (1746)
(*) Final questionnaires due at beginning of class
- April 4 Experiments II
ARTICLE: Pager, D. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108: 937-75.
(*) Homework # 5 is due at the beginning of class.
- April 7 LECTURE CANCELLED**
- April 11 Experiments III
ARTICLE: Ford, T. 1997. "Effects of Stereotypical Portrayals of African Americans on Person Perception." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 60:266-278.
- April 14 Review for Exam II
Come prepared with questions.
- April 18 **EXAM II**
RECITATION WILL BE HELD
- PART III Important considerations in research**
- April 21 Reporting research findings and table construction
Reading: Skim C&S Ch. 13 & Appendix A
Film: Do Scientists Cheat? (2-1346)
- April 25 The ethics and politics of social research
Reading: Review C&S Ch. 3 is optional
ARTICLE: Humphreys, Laud. 1970. *Tearoom Trade*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company. (pp. 1-44; 104-130).
ARTICLE: Maligned Study on Gay Unions is Shaking Trust, *New York Times*, May 25, 2015
(*) Homework # 6 is due at the beginning of class.
- April 28 *** Mini-seminar to discuss findings from survey research projects ***
NO RECITATION
- May 2 *** Mini-seminar to discuss findings from survey research projects ***
NO RECITATION
(*) Survey projects due at the beginning of class today

Homework/Discussion Assignments:

Discussion #1 (Due 1/24/22): Media warm-up. Find an example in the media (newspaper, magazine, television, etc.) of a claim based on some kind of empirical evidence. (1) Identify both the claim and the evidence used to support it. (2) Do you find this evidence convincing? Briefly explain your position. (Please also attach your source or a brief description of your source if this is not possible.)

Homework #2 (Due 1/31/22): Measurement I. (1) Identify the major independent variable and dependent variables in the Doob and Gross article. How was each measured? (2) State the major theoretical hypothesis of the article. (3) Was this research is a convincing test of their hypothesis? Why or why not?

Homework #3 (Due 2/3/22): Measurement II. (1) What is the relation between the concept of validity discussed in your text and what Rubin is doing? (2) List three findings in his article that support Rubin's claim that his measure of "love" is valid. (3) Comment very briefly on your feelings about this approach to measuring love.

Homework #4 (Due 2/7/22): Causality. (1) What basic argument does Waite make about marriage? (2) Based on the evidence in her article, are you convinced that the associations between marriage and the outcomes she discusses are causal? Why or why not?

CHOOSE EITHER #5a OR #5b FOR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT #5. YOU ARE NOT EXPECTED TO TURN IN A SUMMARY OF THEM BOTH (ALTHOUGH YOU ARE EXPECTED TO READ BOTH ARTICLES).

Homework #5a (Due 4/4/22): Experiments I. (1) Briefly identify the key manipulated independent variable(s) and measured dependent variable(s) from the Pager study. (2) What conclusions about the relationship between the dependent and independent variable(s) did the researcher draw? (3) Do you find the results convincing? Why or why not?

OR

Homework #5b (Due 4/4/22): Experiments II. (1) Briefly identify the key manipulated independent variable(s) and measured dependent variable(s) from the Ford study. (2) What conclusions did Ford draw from his research? (3) Briefly comment on the internal validity and external validity of this experiment.

Homework #6 (Due 4/25/22): Ethics. (1) Discuss the methods of observation used by Humphreys. Would you classify Humphreys' approach as participant or non-participant observation? (2) What methods in addition to observation did he use in this article? (3) Was the research Humphreys conducted ethical or not ethical? Briefly explain your position.

Other Resources

Learning resources

Learning Centers: <https://rlc.rutgers.edu/>

Academic Advising for SAS students: <https://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/advising/advising>

Online Learning Tools from Rutgers University Libraries including Rutgers RIOT, Searchpath and RefWorks
<http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/tutorials>

Technology

Please visit the Rutgers Student Tech Guide page for resources available to all students. If you do not have the appropriate technology for financial reasons, please email Dean of Students deanofstudents@echo.rutgers.edu for assistance. If you are facing other financial hardships, please visit the Office of Financial Aid at <https://financialaid.rutgers.edu/>.

Learning remotely presents new challenges. For assistance with learning how to address these challenges, please consult the resources available here: https://rlc.rutgers.edu/remote_instruction

Disability Services

(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/getting-registered>.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counselingservices/counseling/>

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professionals within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community, and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Crisis Intervention : <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counselingservices/counseling/crisis-intervention/>

Report a Concern: <http://health.rutgers.edu/do-something-to-help/>

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 www.vpva.rutgers.edu/

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.