

SOC 332 Social Research Methods Fall 2018

Instructor: Dr. Hamil-Luker (jluker@soc.duke.edu)
Class Time: WF 11:45 – 1:00
Class Location: 124 Social Sciences Building
Office Location: 272 Sociology/Psychology Building
Office Hours: W 1-2:30 & by appointment
Graduate Assistant: Miles Marsala (miles.marsala@duke.edu)



COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course will equip you to become a critical consumer and producer of social research. You will read, write, and talk about research methods, as well as conduct your own research. Although writing, reading, and academic research can feel like isolated, individual acts, they are really social acts, on-going conversations with the people and world around us. The structure of this course facilitates scholarship as a collective process. Working in groups, we will develop research skills, improve our writing processes, and create effective presentations of research results. We will read closely and grapple with challenging texts, integrate knowledge from various media, and communicate ideas verbally and on paper. In supportive research workshops, you will learn how to use the tools social scientists employ to understand and report on the social world.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of the semester, SOC 332 students should be able to:

- List and explain systematic steps social scientists take when studying the social world
- Describe benefits, limitations, and the rationale for using various methods for conducting social research
- Summarize guidelines social scientists follow to ensure their research projects are ethical
- Locate social science studies that help answer carefully formulated research questions
- Interpret and evaluate recent social research findings within the context of prior research and through the lens of social theory
- Test hypotheses and support arguments with compelling empirical evidence
- Write an article-style sociological research paper composed of a literature review, methods section, quantitative and qualitative findings, discussion, and conclusion

COURSE FORMAT:

This is a skills-based course where you will learn social research methods by **DOING** social research. Instead of listening to lectures, interactive classes will give you time to probe texts, work with others in hands-on activities, and improve your reading, writing, communication, and research skills. First, you will encounter new material on your own outside of class by reading texts and watching online videos. You will take online quizzes to clarify and assess your knowledge of the main ideas in the chapter. During class, you will build upon that foundational knowledge of research methods by performing steps in the research process. You will work in teams to complete short assignments and mini-research projects. On your own, you will create documents that describe your methods and explain your empirical findings.

COURSE GOAL

The goal of this course is to learn the steps of various social science research methods in order to produce an article-style research paper. Working individually and with others, you will locate, evaluate, and synthesize empirical research in academic sources. You will create valid and reliable measures of variables and select appropriate samples. You will conduct experiments, observation research, in-depth interviews, content analysis, and statistical research using large data sets. For all of these steps in the research process, you will communicate your findings clearly through text, tables, and graphs.

SUMMARY OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ASSIGNMENT	DESCRIPTION	% OF GRADE
Attendance	Come to class on time and ready to contribute	5
Quizzes	Online assessments of text comprehension	25
In-class assignments	Team exercises to practice research techniques	30
Individual projects	Written components of article-style research paper	30
Final paper presentation	Written, oral, and visual presentation of findings	10

CLASS ATTENDANCE:

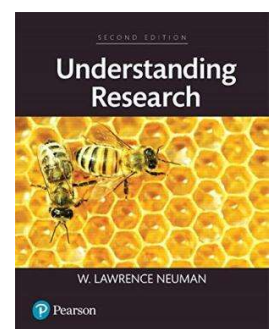
Your class attendance grade is dependent upon attending class regularly and on time, prepared to practice the concepts in the assigned reading through in-class group exercises. To accommodate illnesses, sporting events, and other absences, I will **drop three absences**. You can miss three classes for any reason without penalty. After missing three classes, your participation grade drops 5 points for each additional absence *regardless of reason*. Class attendance is worth 5% of your final grade.



You will record your attendance with Acadly, a free learning management system. Download the free app onto your IOS or Android phone. You must be physically present in the classroom when you use buttons on your phone to mark your attendance. You will receive an email to join our course website on Acadly.

TEXTS AND ON-LINE RESOURCES:

Neuman's (2017) *Understanding Research, 2nd Edition*, will be our guide through the semester. Print copies are available at the Duke Bookstore or you can rent e-books from Amazon and other websites. Assigned chapters from other texts are posted on Sakai under Readings. You will find research methods tutorials, detailed project instructions, writing guidelines, example projects, and other research support on the course Sakai website under Resources.



QUIZZES:

Instead of traditional exams, you will complete open book, on-line quizzes over each reading **BEFORE** class. This will encourage you to read and comprehend the text information that we will put into practice during our time together. Quizzes are posted on Sakai under “Tests & Quizzes.” You may take quizzes multiple times. Sakai will record your highest score in the gradebook. Because the purpose of quizzes is to encourage you to read the chapter in preparation for class, **I will not accept make up quizzes**. Quiz dates follow and are worth 25% of your final grade.

QUIZZES DUE BY 11:45 a.m.

- August 31
- September 5
- September 7
- September 12
- September 28
- October 3
- October 10
- October 12
- October 24
- October 26
- October 31
- November 2
- November 9
- November 14

IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

You will work with other students during class to complete specific phases of the research process that correspond with that day’s text and online material. Exercises are listed in red in the course outline. You can earn up to 20 points on each in-class assignment based on your out-of-class preparation, contributions to the team project, and quality of the final product. At the end of each class, you will use the Acadly app on your phone to quickly and confidentially report your assessment of your and your teammates’ work effort. I will assess your team’s product using the grading rubric below.



GRADING RUBRIC

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Exemplary</i>	<i>Acceptable</i>	<i>Inadequate</i>	<i>None</i>
Individual preparation	3	2	1	0
Individual contribution to team	5	4	2	0
Quality of final product	12	10	8	0
TOTAL:	20			

I will **drop your lowest three grades** for in-class assignments. Thus, you can miss three classes and three in-class assignments without grade penalty. If you know beforehand that you will miss class, let me know. You may complete the assignment on your own and email to jluker@soc.duke.edu by 11:45 a.m. on the missed class date.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS:

You will write six short papers, which are pieces of the final journal-style research article your team will submit and present at the end of the semester. Detailed instructions and grading guidelines are posted on the course website. You will lose 10% of the grade for each day the paper is late. Project dates are listed below and in green font in the course outline.

INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS

<i>Project</i>	<i>% Final Grade</i>	<i>Due</i>
Annotated bibliography	4	9/19
Statistical analysis	5	10/19
Unobtrusive research findings	5	11/7
Interview guide	4	11/16
Qualitative research findings	5	11/30
Section of final paper	7	12/5 or 12/7

FINAL PAPER AND PRESENTATION:

The semester culminates with the synthesis of your in-class assignments and individual projects into a final paper and oral presentation. After receiving constructive criticism from your peers and instructors, you will revise early drafts, tie pieces smoothly together within a strong organizational framework, and add an introduction, conclusion, and reference list. By December 13, your team will post an electronic copy of your final paper to Sakai. During the last week of class, your team will make a 15-20 minute presentation of your research. The final paper and presentation are worth 10% of your class average. Detailed instructions and a grading rubric are posted on Sakai.

POLICY ON ELECTRONIC DEVICES:



Research shows that even having cell phones on a table in front of us diminishes our ability to learn. Checking texts, emails, and messages is also unprofessional and disrespectful to our class community. You may bring your laptops, tablets, phones, or other electronic devices to class *if you use them for learning* course material. You may not surf the internet, play games, complete homework for other classes, read the news, chat, text, or engage in other activities unrelated to class. Doing so will forfeit your ability to bring electronics into our classroom in the future.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

I expect you to act in accordance with Duke's Community Standard. Violations of this policy include, but are not limited to cheating (intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise) and plagiarism (knowingly representing the words of another as one's own in any academic exercise). I will report violations of the Duke Community Standard to the Office of Student Conduct. During class, only use your electronic devices for class-related activities.

GRADING SCALE:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Definition</i>
A+	97-100	Exceptional work	C+	77-79.9	Satisfactory work
A	94-96.9		C	74-76.9	
A-	90-93.9		C-	70-73.9	
B+	87-89.9		D	60-69.9	Low passing work
B	84-86.9	Superior work	F	0-59.9	Failing work
B-	80-83.9				

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS:

I. Foundations for Social Research

Aug 29 Introduction to the course

In class exercise: Identify components of journal-style research article

Aug 31 Overview of social science research methods

Neuman 1

In class exercise: Evaluate research evidence

Sept 5 Conducting ethical social research

Neuman 3

In class exercise: Complete CITI Research Ethics Training Module

Sept 7 Research questions and literature reviews

Neuman 2

In class exercise: Articulate policy-relevant research question

Sept 12 Reading and reporting social science research

Neuman 12

In class exercise: Evaluate literature reviews

Sept 14 Library information session with Linda Daniel, Duke sociology librarian

Meet in Bostock 023

In class exercise: Locate relevant, recent academic sources

Sept 19 Annotated bibliographies

Individual project: Post annotated bibliography by 11:59 p.m.

Sept 21 Workshop on outlines and literature reviews

In class exercise: Organize sources into outline for lit review

II. Planning and Design

Sept 26 Links between theory and methods

Flick, Uwe. (2015). *Introducing Research Methodology*. Chapter 2

In class exercise: Draw inductive and deductive theoretical models

Sept 28 Theory, logic, and types of sampling

Neuman 4

In class exercise: Specify samples from Adult Life Changes data

Oct 3 Measuring social life

Neuman 5

In class exercise: Operationalize measures using the General Social Survey

Oct 5 Workshop on methods plan

In class exercise: Outline qualitative and quantitative methods plan

III. Working with Data

Oct 10 Surveys

Neuman 6

In class exercise: Evaluate General Social Survey and its measures

Oct 12 Statistical data analysis

Neuman 9

In class exercise: Conduct analyses of the General Social Survey

Oct 17 Presenting quantitative findings

Few, Stephen. (2010). *Telling Compelling Stories with Numbers*.

In class exercise: Create tables and figures for quantitative analysis

Oct 19 Workshop on statistical data analysis

Individual project: Post findings from multivariate analysis by 11:59 p.m.

Oct 24 Unobtrusive research

Neuman 8

In class exercise: Conduct observational research on West Campus

Oct 26 Content analysis

Neuman 6

In class exercise: Select texts and create coding scheme for content analysis

Oct 31 Historical-comparative research

Neuman 11

In class exercise: Analyze historical docs in Library of Congress Digital Collection

Nov 2	Experiments Neuman 7 <i>In class exercise: Analyze data for natural experiment</i>
Nov 7	Workshop on unobtrusive research <i>Individual project: Post findings from non-reactive research by 11:59 p.m.</i>
Nov 9	Field research Neuman 10 <i>In class exercise: Revise qualitative methods plan</i>
Nov 14	Qualitative data analysis Schutt, Russell K. (2015). <i>Investigating the Social World</i> . Chapter 11. <i>In class exercise: Collect and analyze data from focus group</i>
Nov 16	Workshop on in-depth interviews <i>Individual project: Post interview guide by 11:59 p.m.</i>
Nov 21-23	No class for Thanksgiving Holiday
Nov 28	Conduct interviews
Nov 30	Workshop on interview data analysis <i>Individual project: Post qualitative data findings by 11:59 p.m.</i>
Dec 5	Project Presentations <i>Individual project: If you are presenting today, post your section of the final paper by 11:59 p.m.</i>
Dec 7	Project Presentations <i>Individual project: If you are presenting today, post your section of the final paper by 11:59 p.m.</i>
Dec 13	Post final paper to Sakai by 5 p.m.