

Sociological MethodsCourse Description:

An examination of major methods of sociological research. Topics include theory construction and hypothesis testing, conceptualization and measurement, causation and research design, sampling, survey research, comparative and historical research, participant observation, and experimental research. We will make extensive use of the department's computer lab (102 Stubbs Hall) and will hold our classes there. We will analyze data from the General Social Survey using the SPSS statistical package. Finally, we will design, carry out, and analyze our own opinion survey in the Baton Rouge metropolitan area.

Course Requirements:

The course will consist of lectures, discussion, computer exercises, and participation in the planning, carrying out, and analysis of an opinion survey.

1. Read the assignments in the texts: Russell Schutt, Investigating the Social World, 6th edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2008, ISBN 9781412969406), and Joseph Healey, John Boli, Earl Babbie, and Fred Halley, Exploring Social Issues, 3rd edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press; February 10, 2009; ISBN-10: 1412964210) (Editions of each are also available that include a student version of SPSS). Carol A.B. Warren, Tracy Xavia Karner, Discovering Qualitative Methods: Field Research, Interviews, and Analysis (Paperback); 2 edition (March 27, 2009): Oxford University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0195384291.
2. Regular attendance at lectures. There may be several unannounced quizzes that account for up to 10% of the grade.
3. Completion of assigned exercises and participation in planning and conducting the opinion survey*; writing a final report on the survey.
4. A mid-term exam and a final exam.
5. Any other assignments to be announced in class and/or on the website.

Various course materials will be available on my website: www.fweil.com. There will be updates of assignments, listings of data sources, survey results, press clippings, and other useful materials.

**Note: Fabricating survey interviews will be treated the same as cheating on a test. Data fabrication is actually worse than cheating on a test because it harms other people. Fabricating interviews makes the data we all use unreliable; and it betrays fellow students, who conduct good interviews and depend on reliable data for their analyses. Any fabrication of data will be turned over to the Dean of Students.*

Sociology 2211: Sociological Methods

Fall 2009

(Note: Details and updates will be given on the class website)

Computer Lab Exercises from Healey	Lecture/Reading in Schutt	HOPE Survey
Monday	Wednesday	Friday
24-Aug Introduction to the course	26-Aug General introduction to the computer lab & web site	28-Aug General introduction to the computer lab & web site
31-Aug HOPE Presentation	2-Sep Theory construction & hypothesis testing; ch. 1-3	4-Sep Using SPSS & datasets; ch. 1-3
7-Sep Labor Day	9-Sep Warren/Karner, <i>Qualitative Methods</i> , ch. 2, 5, 7	11-Sep Questionnaire development
14-Sep Religiosity: ch. 4	16-Sep Conceptualization and measurement; ch. 4	18-Sep Questionnaire development
21-Sep Attitudes toward abortion: ch. 5	23-Sep Causation and research design; ch. 6 [Schutt]	25-Sep Questionnaire development
28-Sep	30-Sep Fall Holiday	2-Oct Fall Holiday
5-Oct Crime: ch. 7	7-Oct Sampling; ch. 5	9-Oct Finalize Questionnaire
12-Oct Review for Mid-term exam; Questionnaire approval	14-Oct Mid-term exam	16-Oct Introduction to Survey Lab & Data Entry; practice interviews
19-Oct Inequality and gender: ch. 9	21-Oct Survey research; ch 8	23-Oct Data entry/discussion
26-Oct Inequality and race: ch. 10	28-Oct Comparative and historical research; ch. 11	30-Oct Data entry/discussion
2-Nov The Family: ch. 11	4-Nov Experimental research; ch. 7	6-Nov Data entry/analysis
9-Nov Voting: ch. 12	11-Nov Discuss BR survey; ch. 12-14	13-Nov Data analysis
16-Nov Data analysis	18-Nov Discuss BR survey; ch. 12-14	20-Nov Data analysis
23-Nov Data analysis	25-Nov Thanksgiving	27-Nov Thanksgiving
30-Nov Data Analysis	2-Dec Discuss BR survey; Data Analysis	4-Dec Reports due