

**Sociology S132**  
**METHODS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH**  
**Fall 2002**

Professor David Brady  
Section #4373  
MWF 1:10-2:00PM  
Sociology/Psychology 126

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**OVERVIEW:**

Welcome to S370, Research Methods! S132 provides an introduction to the fundamentals of social research. Four broad areas will be covered over the semester. First, we will study the “Foundations of Social Research” where we will lay the groundwork for sociological inquiry. Second, we will learn about a variety of “Quantitative Research Methods.” Third, we will seek to understand “Qualitative Research Methods.” Finally, we will step back, reflect on what we have learned and analyze the “Politics, Values, and Critiques of Social Research.” Overall, I have four goals for this course:

1. Students will be exposed to a host of different methodological techniques in order to both critically consume and carefully conduct research using these techniques.
2. We will seek to develop students writing and communication skills and further their professionalization as sociologists.
3. Students will understand the theoretical bases of choosing amongst various methodological approaches and will understand the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches.
4. This course will prepare Sociology majors for professional or graduate school and for careers (e.g. business, politics, social services and many other fields) practicing and utilizing social science.

Students will find that Research Methods entails an exciting and interesting set of debates about the role of social science in society. Further, in this course you will actively participate in the craft of sociological research as consumers, critics, practitioners and scholars.

**READINGS:**

A packet of readings will be available through the Reserve Readings system in the university library. In the calendar below, readings are available either through [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org) (J) or the E-reserve system (E). The readings include chapters from books, journal articles, and a few popular commentaries on social science. I hope the readings are both stimulating and valuable. Please feel free to openly discuss your reactions to the readings. Students should read the assigned

material prior to class meetings. Students who are unwilling to do the readings will not perform well in the class, as they will comprise a large segment of the exams.

### **EVALUATION:**

A host of different projects and tests will comprise students' grades. We will have four exams. The exams will be balanced between lecture and reading material. The exams will be "in-class" exams and will include a combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay. The exams will be graded for an integration and deep understanding of course material, coherent and well-reasoned arguments, and professional writing skills. The first three exams will be non-cumulative, while the final exam will be partially cumulative. Of course, the final exam will not request the most minute details about information early in the semester. However, students will be expected to cumulatively retain the core concepts throughout the semester. Also, students will complete six research projects (for a total of 100 points). The composition of final grades and grading scale are as follows:

Six Research Projects 25%	A	90-100
Exam #1 16%	B	80-89
Exam #2 17%	C	70-79
Exam #3 17%	D	60-69
Final Exam 25%	F	≤59

The research projects will be due at the beginning of class on the due date. Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade for each day late. That is, after the first day late, the maximum grade attainable will be an B+, after the second day late, the maximum grade will be a C+, after three days late, the maximum will be a D+, and after four days late, the maximum will be a D-. Students who turn in assignments after the beginning of class, but on the due date will be penalized one-half of a letter grade – such that the maximum grade will be an A/A-.

In addition, class attendance is required. I take roll at each class meeting, mainly for the purpose of learning students names and getting a sense of students' participation. However, if you miss more than three classes, I begin to deduct points from your final grade. Also, I take attendance into account when calculating borderline grades.

### **GUIDELINES:**

1. **Be on time.** I start class on time and I end class on time. Moreover, I take roll only once—at the beginning of class. Also, please do not leave class before it ends.
2. Do **NOT** eat meals during class.
3. I do not give make-up exams or give incomplete grades, except under the most extreme emergencies. If you encounter such an emergency, you should contact me **before** the test is administered, and you must verify your emergency.
4. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that we receive completed assignments. If for any reason, we do not receive the exam, we will assume the exam was not submitted on time. Also, we will **NOT** accept the email submission of assignments.
5. A great deal of this course involves class discussion. Please respect the "rules of good discussion". In particular, please consider the following: a) be good listeners to your fellow students (a democratic and open classroom necessitates a respectful environment); b) try to focus your discussion on broader society, social theory and course concepts; c) discussion is usually

more stimulating when many people are involved, thus I ask for your help in trying to get everyone to contribute; d) respect and welcome all political and ideological perspectives and give them fair and critical consideration.

6. Please respect the Duke Honor Code. The vast majority of students are very honest and I appreciate that. To the few students who do not hold such ideals, I want to stress that cheating and plagiarism in any form are completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Failure to comply by this directive will be handled with the most serious means possible.

7. I cannot overemphasize the importance of regular class attendance. A substantial amount of each exam is based on lecture material that is not covered in the readings. Further, active class participation will be rewarded in the final grades!

8. Students with disabilities that may affect their ability to participate fully in the class or to complete all course requirements are encouraged to bring this to my attention promptly so that appropriate accommodations can be made. Students whose first language is not English should discuss any concerns with me. If students have conflicts related to University-sponsored events, please inform me immediately. I am willing to accommodate these or related concerns, but **let me know as soon as possible.**

9. My notes will NOT be made available to students who miss class. The lecture material in this course is copyrighted and any reproduction of course notes for profit is strictly prohibited.

10. I will do my very best to be straightforward and fair throughout the course. Please feel free to approach me at any point if you encounter any difficulties. I would both be happy to help in any way. Students will find that I am a reasonable and straight-forward person, so long as students meet these course guidelines.

### **CALENDAR of Topics and Assignments:**

	<i>The Foundations of Social Research</i>
August 26	Introduction
August 28	Social Science and the Research Process Jacobs, David and Robert M. O'Brien. 1998. "The Determinants of Deadly Force" <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 103: 837-862. <b>J</b>
August 30	Theory and Research Becker, Howard. 1953. "Becoming a Marijuana User." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 59: 235-242. <b>J</b> Wallace, Michael. 1987. "Dying for Coal: The Struggle for Health and Safety Conditions in American Coal Mining, 1930-1982." <i>Social Forces</i> 66: 336-364. <b>J</b>
September 2	Theory and Research II
September 4	Research Design and Causality Downey, Douglas B. 1995. "When Bigger is Not Better: Family Size,

Parental Resources, and Children's Educational Performance." *American Sociological Review* 60: 746-761. **J**

Bradshaw, York et al. 1993. "Borrowing Against the Future: Children and Third World Indebtedness." *Social Forces* 71: 629-656. **J**

September 6 The Nature of Causation

Amato, Paul R. and Juliana M. Sobolewski. 2001. "The Effects of Divorce and Marital Discord on Adult Children's Psychological Well-Being." *American Sociological Review* 66: 900-921. **E**

September 9 Conceptualization and Measurement

Ferraro, Kenneth F. and Melissa M. Farmer. 1999. "Utility of Health Data from Social Surveys." *American Sociological Review* 64: 303-315. **E**

Steensland, Brian et al. 2000. "The Measure of American Religion." *Social Forces* 79: 291-318. **J**

September 11 Operationalization

Hadaway, C. Kirk, Penny Long Marler, and Mark Chaves. 1993. "What the Polls Don't Show: A Closer Look at U.S. Church Attendance." *American Sociological Review* 58: 741-752. **J**

Bianchi, Suzanne et al. 2000. "Is Anyone Doing the Housework? Trends in the Gender Division of Household Labor" *Social Forces* 79: 191-228. **J**

September 13 Foundations of Social Research

September 16 **EXAM 1**

***Quantitative Research Methods***

September 18 Basic Descriptive Statistics

Project #1: Working With SPSS: Variables, Sampling and Statistics  
(due 9/25 – 18 points)

September 20 Sampling I

Lowenthal, Terri Ann, and Felice J. Levine. 2000. "Census 2000: Counting on a Civic Moment." *Footnotes* 28: 1, 4. **E**

September 23 Sampling II

Snow, David A. et al. 1986. "The Myth of Pervasive Mental Illness Among the Homeless." *Social Problems* 33: 407-423. **E**

Wright, James D. 1988. "The Mentally Ill Homeless: What is Myth and What is Fact?" *Social Problems* 35: 182-191. **E**

September 25 Surveys I

Project #1 DUE at beginning of class

Chapter 2: “The Sex Survey” and Chapter 7: “Practices and Preferences”  
in Michael, Robert T., John H. Gagnon, Edward O. Lauman, and Gina  
Kolata. 1994. *Sex in America: A Definitive Survey* Boston, MA: Warner  
Books. **E**

Project #2: Constructing and Conducting Surveys (due 10/2 – 14 points)

September 27 Surveys II

Davis, Nancy and Robert Robinson. 1996. “Are the Rumors of War  
Exaggerated? Religious Orthodoxy and Moral Progressivism in America.”  
*American Journal of Sociology* 102: 756-787. **J**

September 30 Surveys III

Krysan, Maria and Reynolds Farley. 2002. “The Residential Preferences of  
Blacks: Do They Explain Persistent Segregation?” *Social Forces* 80: 937-  
980. **E**

October 2 Content Analysis

Project #2 DUE at beginning of class

Pescosolido, Bernice A. et al. 1997. “Culture and Conflict: The Portrayal  
of Blacks in U.S. Children’s Picture Books Through the Mid- and Late-  
Twentieth Century.” *American Sociological Review* 62: 443-464. **E**

Project #3 Content Analysis of Media (due 10/9 – 13 points)

October 4 Experiments I

Lovaglia, Michael J., Jeffrey W. Lucas, Jeffrey A. Houser, Shane R. Thye,  
and Barry Markovsky. 1998. “Status Processes and Mental Ability Test  
Scores.” *American Journal of Sociology* 104: 195-228. **J**

October 7 Experiments II

Shively, JoEllen. 1992. “Cowboys and Indians: Perceptions of Western  
Films Among American Indians and Anglos.” *American Sociological  
Review* 57: 725-734. **J**

October 9 Quantitative Methods Guest Panel

Project #3 DUE at beginning of class

October 11 EXAM #2

October 14 No class – Fall Break!

### ***Qualitative Research Methods***

October 16 Ethnography I

Project #4: Ethnographic Fieldwork

(fieldnotes due 10/20, paper due 10/23– 20 points)

Chapter 2: "Learning from Kids" in Thorne, Barrie. 1993. *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. **E**

- October 18 Ethnography II  
Chapter 3: "The Impact of Drugs" in Anderson, Elijah. 1990. *Streetwise: Race, Class and Change in an Urban Community* Chicago: The University Chicago Press. **E**
- October 20 Ethnography III
- October 23 Interviewing and Other Qualitative Methods  
Project #5: Intensive Interviewing Exercise (due – 13 points)  
Selections from Pierce, Jennifer L. 1995. *Gender Trials: Emotional Lives in Contemporary Law Firms* Berkeley: University of California Press. **E**  
Lee, Jennifer. 2000. "The Salience of Race in Everyday Life." *Work and Occupations* 27: 353-376. **E**  
Kirschenman, Joleen, and Kathryn M. Neckerman. 1991. "'We'd Love to Hire Them, But...': The Meaning of Race for Employers." Pp. 203-232 in *The Urban Underclass*, edited by C. Jencks and P.E. Peterson. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution. **E**
- October 25 Comparative-Historical I  
Beisel, Nicola. 1993. "Morals Versus Art: Censorship, the Politics of Interpretation, and the Victorian Nude." *American Sociological Review* 58: 145-162. **J**
- October 28 Comparative-Historical II  
Evans, Peter, and James E. Rauch. 1999. "Bureaucracy and Growth: A Cross-National Analysis of the Effects of 'Weberian' State Structures on Economic Growth." *American Sociological Review* 64: 748-765. **E**
- October 30 Comparative-Historical III  
Zhao, Dingxin. 1998. "Ecologies of Social Movements: Student Mobilization During the 1989 Prodemocracy Movement in Beijing." *American Journal of Sociology* 103: 1493-1529. **J**
- November 1 Guest Lecture Panel on Qualitative Methods
- November 4 Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods  
Andrews, Kenneth T. 2001. "Social Movements and Policy Implementation." *American Sociological Review* 66: 71-95. **E**
- November 6 EXAM #3

*Politics, Values and Critiques of Social Research*

- November 8 Evaluation Research  
“Lynam et al. 1999. “Project DARE: No Effects at 10-Year Follow-Up.”  
*Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 67(4): 590-593. **E**  
[www.apa.org/journals/ccp/ccp674590.html](http://www.apa.org/journals/ccp/ccp674590.html)
- November 11 Critiques of Research  
Project #6: Research Article Critique (due 11/25 – 22 points)  
Editor. 1998. “A Symposium on Church Attendance in the United States.”  
*American Sociological Review* 63: 111-145. **E**
- November 13 Critiques of Research  
Stacey, Judith and Timothy J. Biblarz. 2001. “(How) Does the Sexual  
Orientation of Parents Matter?” *American Sociological Review* 66: 159-  
183. **E**
- November 15 Research Ethics I  
Allen, Charlotte. 1997. “Spies Like Us: When Sociologists Deceive Their  
Subjects.” *Lingua Franca* November: 31-39. **E**  
“Code of Ethics” American Sociological Association **E**  
“Ethics Cases for Discussion” **E**
- November 18 Research Ethics II
- November 20 Feminism, Identity and Politics in Social Research  
Collins, Patricia Hill. 1991. “Toward An Afrocentric Feminist  
Epistemology.” Pp. 201-220 in *Black Feminist Thought* New York:  
Routledge. **E**
- November 22 The Role of Sociology and Social Research in Society  
Gans, Herbert. 1989. “Sociology in America: The Discipline and the  
Public.” *American Sociological Review* 54: 1-16. **J**
- November 25 Topic of Students’ Choice: Focus Groups, Oral History, Biographies, Time  
Diaries, Computer Simulation, Organizational Analyses  
Project #6 DUE at beginning of class
- December 2 Review for Final Exam
- December 4 Careers in Sociology
- December 12 **FINAL EXAM 2PM-5PM**