

Sociology S132
METHODS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH
Spring 2003

Professor David Brady
Tuesday/ Thursday 2:30-3:15PM
Section #6598
Sociology/Psychology 127

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OVERVIEW:

Welcome to S132: Methods of Social Research! This class 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 through JSTOR (J), E-reserve (E) or Pro-Quest (P). When using Pro-Quest, be sure to use “Page Image.” 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. Students should read the assigned material prior to

class and should bring the readings to class. 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 three 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 two 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 22%	B	80-89
Exam #2 23%	C	70-79
Final Exam 30%	D	60-69
	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. Final grades are final. University policy prohibits the changing of grades after the semester, unless there was an error in calculating the grades. Relatedly, my record of students' attendance and absences is not open to debate.
3. Do **NOT** eat meals during class.
4. 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.
5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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!

9. 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, it is your responsibility to inform me at the beginning of the semester and immediately before the day you will be absent. I am willing to accommodate these concerns, but **let me know ASAP.**

10. 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.

11. 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>	
January 9	Introduction
January 14	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. J
January 16	Theory and Research Becker, Howard. 1953. “Becoming a Marijuana User.” <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 59: 235-242. J 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. J

Seating Chart Established

- January 21 Research Design and Causality I
 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**
- January 23 Research Design and Causality II
 Hanson, Thomas L. 1999. "Does Parental Conflict Explain Why Divorce Is Negatively Associated With Child Welfare?" *Social Forces* 77: 1283-1315. **J or P**
 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. **P** (use the page view option)
- January 28 Measurement I: Conceptualization
 Ferraro, Kenneth F. and Melissa M. Farmer. 1999. "Utility of Health Data from Social Surveys." *American Sociological Review* 64: 303-315. **P**
 Steensland, Brian et al. 2000. "The Measure of American Religion." *Social Forces* 79: 291-318. **J**
- January 30 Measurement II: 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**
 Project #1: Variables, Sampling and Basic Statistics (due 2/11 – 14 points)
- February 4 Sampling I: Probability Sampling
- February 6 Sampling II: Non-Probability Sampling
 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**
- February 11 **EXAM #1**
 Project #1 DUE before Exam
- February 13 *Quantitative Research Methods*
 Surveys I
 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**

- February 18 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**
Project #2: Constructing and Conducting Surveys (due 2/25 – 15 points)
- February 20 Surveys III
Krysan, Maria and Reynolds Farley. 2002. "The Residential Preferences of Blacks: Do They Explain Persistent Segregation?" *Social Forces* 80: 937-980. **P**
- February 25 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. **J**
Project #3 Content Analysis of Media (due 3/4 – 15 points)
- February 27 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**
- March 4 Experiments II
Shively, JoEllen. 1992. "Cowboys and Indians: Perceptions of Western Films Among American Indians and Anglos." *American Sociological Review* 57: 725-734. **J**
- Qualitative Research Methods***
- March 6 Ethnography I
Chapter 2: "Learning from Kids" in Thorne, Barrie. 1993. *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. **E**
Project #4: Ethnographic Fieldwork (fieldnotes due 3/18, paper due 3/20 – 20 points)
- March 11&13 No class – Spring Break!
- March 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**

- March 20 Intensive Interviewing and Other Qualitative Methods
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. **P**
Project #5: Intensive Interviewing (due 3/27 – 14 points)
- March 25 **EXAM #2**
- March 27 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**
- April 1 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. **P**
- April 8 Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods
Andrews, Kenneth T. 2001. "Social Movements and Policy Implementation." *American Sociological Review* 66: 71-95. **P**
Zhao, Dingxin. 1998. "Ecologies of Social Movements: Student Mobilization During the 1989 Prodemocracy Movement in Beijing." *American Journal of Sociology* 103: 1493-1529. **J**
- April 3 ***Politics, Values and Critiques of Social Research***
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.
www.apa.org/journals/ccp/ccp674590.html or **P**
- April 8 Critiques of Research
Editor. 1998. "A Symposium on Church Attendance in the United States." *American Sociological Review* 63: 111-145. **P**
Stacey, Judith and Timothy J. Biblarz. 2001. "(How) Does the Sexual Orientation of Parents Matter?" *American Sociological Review* 66: 159-183. **P**
Project #6: Research Article Critique (due 4/22 – 22 points)

- April 10 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**
- April 15 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**
- April 17 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**
- April 22 Review for Final Exam
Project #6 DUE at beginning of class
- April 29 **FINAL EXAM 2PM-5PM**