

Survey of Research Methods SC 710.01

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 3-4p.m.

Course Description:

This course introduces you to a range of research methods in the social sciences. We will briefly consider epistemological issues by examining a variety of perspectives on knowledge seeking. These perspectives challenge and attempt to move beyond positivist social science.

We will consider a variety of methods including survey research, field research, intensive interviewing, content analysis, experimental research and action research. Additionally, we will briefly introduce some innovative methodological approaches.

This course seeks to prepare you for the complexities of the real world of social research, with all its myriad problems. Considerable attention will be given to the comparisons among alternative methods and an assessment of the relative strengths and limitations of each method. In connection with each methodology, we deal with issues such as measurement, reliability, validity and sampling. The readings in the course reflect both theoretical/conceptual research issues and first hand experiential research accounts.

Each student is asked to prepare a well-developed research proposal on a topic suitable for an M.A. or Ph.D. thesis.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation, Exercises and Journal (25%)

- Participation in the discussion of class readings is a vital part of the seminar. Students are responsible for the assigned readings, for taking part in class discussions, and for presenting oral summaries of their research projects. The seminar format relies on your informed contributions and therefore it is important that you read all relevant articles before the class in which they will be discussed. You will be required to lead at least **ONE** class discussion.
- Students must keep a Research Journal throughout the semester. The journal should include your reflections on at least **TWO** of the readings per week. You are asked to first summarize the reading in your own words and then integrate the reading with the topic under discussion or with your own research project. Journals will be collected **TWICE** during the course of the semester.
- Homework Exercises: I will occasionally give you short in-class and out-of class assignments to complete on specific research methods/ issues.

Assignments (75% total)

- Assignment #1: Epistemological Issues (15%)
- Assignment #2: Interview (15%)

- Assignment #3: Qualitative Data Analysis (15%)
- Pre-proposal Assignment #1 (not graded)
- Pre-proposal Assignment #2 (not graded)
- Final Proposal (30%)

1. Epistemology Assignment (15%)

The readings we have covered thus far essentially challenge the dominant or traditional paradigm for conducting social research. Below you will find four quotes from feminist social scientist Shulamit Reinharz. For each quote indicate (1) how you interpret the author's statement, (2) how that statement implicitly or explicitly challenges conventional ideas about "scientific" research, and (3) what your own response is to the quote. Please refer to readings and class discussions when applicable.

- "Scientific knowledge requires suppressing the self and treating humanness of the researcher as an obstacle."
- "The right to study human beings cannot be taken-for-granted by the educated elite... Research is frequently conducted on a rape model: the researchers take, hit, and run."
- "To be professional is to be objective, detached, impersonal, authoritative, competitive, stoic, tribal, and tough. To be professional, in short, is to be a man."
- "The forcing of a response into a yes, no, or no opinion continuum distorts the uncertain reality that opinion occupies in the symbolic world of the respondent."

2. Interview Assignment (15%)/ Provide Feedback to Colleague's Interview

Conduct and tape one semi-structured interview with a college undergraduate on her/his transition from high school to college.

- Write an interview guide.
- Hand in the tape of your interview.
- Write a thumb-nail sketch of your respondent.
- Write a brief description of the interview process. Some possible questions to ask yourself: Which questions were effective? Which, if any, were not? How would you write effective questions? Were you able to establish rapport with the interviewee? How?
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of intensive interviewing. Compare and contrast feminist interviewing (e.g. Wolff and Zavella) with traditional advice on this subject. Be specific.
- Discuss validity and reliability of qualitative work versus quantitative work. How does a researcher establish validity? Reliability? Be specific and give examples from research articles you have read thus far.

FEEDBACK to a COLLEAGUE

g. Read over Kathy Charmaz's one-pager on providing feedback to a colleague. Then: Read over a colleague's interview guide. Listen to his/her tape recorded interview. Read their description of the interview process. Critique (provide a written summary) the interview guide and the interview itself. Provide (in writing) what you consider useful and essential feedback to your colleague regarding his/her interview guide and the interview process itself. What can be improved? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the interview? Where can improvements be made?

3. Qualitative Data Analysis Assignment (15%)

You will be provided with an interview on disk. Drawing from the readings from this week (Charmaz, Strauss and Corbin, and Coffey) perform a grounded theory analysis of the interview. You can either analyze your data by hand or you can use a computer software program such as HYPERRESEARCH. We will give a workshop on using HYPERRESEARCH during the course of the semester. Code the interview in its entirety and write up a **short analysis** of your findings and your analytical process (5-7 pages). Be prepared to discuss your codes and your analysis in class.

• Final Research Proposal (30%)

One of the goals of this course is to help students prepare a research proposal on a topic suitable for an M.A. or Ph.D. thesis. To this end, there will be two intermediate assignments that will lead to the generation of a final proposal. You will be asked to team up with a classmate and give each other feedback on your pre-proposal assignments. While the two pre-proposal assignments will not be graded, you are required to submit them on time.

Pre-proposal assignment #1

The objective of this assignment is to explore a possible topic for research, to develop skills in formulating a problem, and to learn to specify a research question. You will be asked to justify your proposed research and conduct a literature review. Please follow the instructions below:

- Research Statement and Research Question (1-2 pages).
Briefly describe the problem. Describe the purpose of your research and conclude with a clearly-stated research question.
- Significance (1 page).
This section provides the rationale and justification for the research. For example, who cares about the answer? Is present opinion divided? How important is it to have an answer to this question? What are the implications for practice/policy of various possible outcomes of the research?
- Review of Relevant Literature (5-6 pages, double spaced).
This review provides background information about your topic –it summarizes what is known about the subject, and critically analyzes prior research on the topic. This review lets the reader know that you understand the problem and provides a context for your proposed research. Discuss studies that include concepts that you are focusing on.

- Conceptualization and Operationalization.
Specify key concepts on which your study will focus and how you intend to operationalize them as variables. Discuss issues of reliability and validity of measurement of key variables.
- Hypotheses.
If applicable, state the key hypotheses to be tested, indicating independent and dependent variables.
- A complete bibliography – use ASA style.

Pre-Proposal Assignment #2

This assignment will ask you to describe the research methodology for your proposed study. You are asked to specify your primary data collection method and sampling procedures. Additionally, if applicable, you should include a description of the design of your instruments and provide sample questions. This assignment builds on the previous one and when you submit assignment #2 you should include your work from assignment #1 as revised to incorporate suggested improvements. Therefore, in addition to your revised assignment #1, please submit:

- Research Design (2 pages).
Describe your research design and data collection method.
- Sample.
Specify your sample, how it will be selected, whether it is random, etc.
- Other Methodological Issues (1-2 pages).
Indicate any additional concerns you have regarding methodological issues in your study, such as response rate, sampling bias etc.
- Ethical and Political Considerations
Briefly discuss any ethical or political concerns you may have with your proposed research focus and/or procedures.
- Instrumentation and Measurement.
Provide and discuss sample instruments to be used. For example, for a survey, you would include a questionnaire or interview schedule; for in-depth interviewing, a set of open-ended questions; for content analysis, a coding sheet. Also include instructions to respondents or recorders.

Final Proposal Assignment

The final proposal should build on the work you did in the previous two assignments. You should have revised and improved your previous work based on the feedback you have received. Please refer to the Research Proposal guidelines in your “handouts” packet to include all relevant sections (your final proposal should include an abstract, a budget, etc.).

DUE DATES

Assignment #1 (Epistemological Issues)	September 29th
Pre-proposal Assignment #1	October 13th

Journal #1	October 20th
Assignment #2 (Interview)	October 27th
Assignment #3 (Qualitative Data Analysis)	November 10th
Pre-proposal Assignment #2	November 17th
Journal #2	December 1st
Final Proposal	December 8th

Course Texts:

- Neuman, Lawrence W. (2000). Social Research Methods. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. Fourth Edition.
- Diane Kholos Wysocki (2001) Readings in Social Research Methods. Wadsworth Thompson Learning, Belmont, CA. (Referred to as the Wysocki Reader)
- Course Packet (Available for Purchase: Please see Instructor)

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

September 8th *******Please come to class with a model of the scientific method from any standard research methods textbook*****

Introduction and Course Overview
Review of syllabus and assignments

Assigned Readings:

- Neuman, Science and Research. Chapter 1.
- Neuman, The Meanings of Methodology. Chapter 4.

I. Traditions in Epistemology: Overview and Critical Analysis

September 15th Overview of Major Epistemological Positions
Positivism and the Scientific Method
Post-empirical Traditions

Assigned Readings:

- Durkheim, Emile. (1938). The Rules of the Sociological Method. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press. Chapter II. (pp. 14-46). In Course Packet.
- Simmel, Georg. (1984). Female Culture. In Georg Simmel: On Women, Sexuality, and Love. (pp.65-101). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. In Course Packet.
- Nielson, Joyce McCarl. (Ed.). (1990). Feminist Research Methods. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. Introduction, pp. 1-15. In Course Packet

September 22nd

From Epistemology to Methodology: Implications for Research

Assigned Readings:

- Longino, Helen E. 1999. Feminist Epistemology. In The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology. John Greco and Ernest Sosa (Eds.). Blackwell Publishing, Malden MA. pp. 327-353. In Course Packet
- Murphy, John W. 1989. Postmodern Social Science. In Postmodern Social Analysis and Criticism. Greenwood Press. New York. pp. 37-56. In Course Packet
- Oakley, Ann. (1998). "Gender, Methodology and People's Ways of Knowing: Some Problems with Feminism and the Paradigm in Social Science." Sociology, Vol. 32, No. 4 November, 707-73 In Course Packet
- Guba, Egon G. and Yvonna S. Lincoln. (1994). Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research. In Handbook of Qualitative Research. Edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, pp. 105-117. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. In Course Packet

Recommended Readings:

- Pfohl, Stephen J. 1984. Critical Perspectives: Social Theory and Social Change. In Images of Deviance and Social Control: A Sociological History. McGraw-Hill. New York. pp. 469-475. In Course Packet
- Chafetz, Janet Saltzman. (1990). Some Thoughts by an Unrepentant Positivist who considers herself a Feminist Nonetheless. Paper presented at the 85th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association. In Course Packet

II. Doing Social Research

September 29th

*****Assignment #1 due today*****

I. Research Dimensions
From Theory to Research
The Stages of Research
The Nature of Causation

II. The Research Problem
Formulation of Specific Research Questions and Hypothesis
Quantitative and Qualitative Designs

Assigned Reading:

- Neuman, Dimensions of Research. Chapter 2.
- Neuman, Theory and Research. Chapter 3.
- Neuman, Qualitative and Quantitative Research Designs. Chapter 6.
- Hoschstetler, Andrew L. and Neal Sover.” Street Crime, Labor Surplus and Criminal Punishment, 1980-1990”. In Wysocki Reader p. 23-31.
- Yogan, Lissa J. “ School Tracking and Student Violence. In Wysocki Reader.p. 32-43.

October 6th

*******In-class exercise:**

Measurement in the Social Sciences
Conceptualization and Operationalization

Assigned Readings:

- Neuman. Qualitative and Quantitative Measurement. Chapter 7.
- Rubin, Zick. Measurement of Romantic Love and On Studying Love: Notes on the Researcher-Subject Relationship. In Patricia Golden. (Ed.). (1976). The Research Experience. Itasca, Il: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc. (pp. 495-513). In Course Packet.
- Walker, Karen. (1995). Always There for Me: Friendship Patterns and Expectations Among Middle- and Working-class Men and Women. Sociological Forum, 10: 273-296. In Course Packet.
- Yeudit Avnir and Ron Shor “ A Systematic Qualitative Evaluation of Levels of Differentiation in Families with children at risk. Pp. 117-127 in Wysocki Reader.

III. Qualitative Research Methods

October 13th *** Pre-proposal Assignment #1 due today *******

Exchange assignments with your research partner

Field Methods/Ethnographic Methods

Assigned Readings:

- Neuman. Field Research. Chapter 13. pp.343-380.
- Wolf, Diane L. Situating Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork In Course Packet
- Zavella, Patricia. Feminist Insider Dilemmas in Fieldwork In Course Packet
- bell hooks. (1990). Culture to Culture: ethnography and cultural studies as critical intervention. In *Yearning: race, gender and cultural politics*. Boston, MA: South End Press In Course Packet
- Thorne, Barrie. You Still takin' Notes? Fieldwork and Problems of Informed Consent. *Social Problems*. Vol. 27, No.3, February 1980. In Course Packet
- Campbell, Marie L. (1998). "Institutional Ethnography and Experience as Data." Qualitative Sociology Vol. 21, No. 1. In Course Packet.

October 20th *** Journal hand-in #1 due today*******

*******In-class exercise:**

Intensive Interviewing and Focus Group Interviewing

Assigned Readings:

- DeVault, Marjorie. (1990). Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis. *Social Problems*. Vol. 37, No.1. In Course Packet.
- Riessman, Katherine Kohler. When Gender is not Enough. In Course Packet
- Morgan, David. Focus Groups. In Course Packet.
- Edwards, Rosalind. (1990). Connecting Methods and Epistemology: A White Woman Interviewing Black Women. *Women's Studies International Forum*. Vol. 13, No.5, pp. 477-490. In Course Packet.
- E.I. Madriz. "Images of Criminals and Victims" In Wysocki Reader p. 216-230.

- Kasper, Anne S. (1994) “ A Feminist Qualitative Methodology: A Study of Women with Breast Cancer. Qualitative Sociology Vol 17. No. 3. In Course Packet

Recommended Readings:

- Wilkinson, Sue. (1998). Focus Groups in Feminist Research: Power, Interaction, and the Co-Construction of Meaning. Women’s Studies International Forum. Vol. 21, No.1, pp. 111-125. In Course Packet.
- Anderson, Kathryn, Susan Armitage, Dana Jack, and Judith Wittner. (1990). Beginning Where We Are: Feminist Methodology in Oral History. In Joyce McCarl Nielsen, Feminist Research Methods. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. In Course Packet.

October 27th *** Assignment #2 due today *******

Computers in Qualitative Data Analysis

Assigned Readings:

- Neuman, Analysis of Qualitative Data. Chapter 15.
- Fielding, Nigel and Raymond M. Lee. (1998). Computer Analysis and Qualitative Research. London: Sage Publications. Chapter 1. In Course Packet.
- Hesse-Biber, Paul Dupuis and T. Scott Kinder. HyperRESEARCH: A Computer Program for the Analysis of Qualitative Data with an Emphasis on Hypothesis Testing and Multimedia Analysis. Qualitative Sociology. Vol.14, No.4, 1991. In Course Packet.
- Hesse-Biber, Frankenstein’s Monster: The Use of Computers in Analyzing Qualitative Data. In Course Packet.

November 3rd

Analyzing Qualitative Data

Assigned Reading:

- Charmaz, Grounded Theory. In Course Packet.
- Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin. Grounded Theory Methodology: An Overview. In Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln. (Eds.). Handbook of Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. In Course Packet.
- Coffey, Amanda and Paul Atkinson. (1996). Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complimentary Research Strategies. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Chapter 2. In Course Packet.
- Miles and Huberman ch.10. In Course Packet.

IV. Quantitative Methods

November 10th ******* Assignment #3 due today *******

Quantitative Research Methods: Survey Research
Sampling
Questionnaire Construction
Interviewing
Data Reduction
Assessment of Strengths and Weaknesses of Survey Research

Assigned Readings:

- Neuman, Qualitative and Quantitative Sampling. Chapter 8
- Neuman, Survey Research. Chapter 10.
- Neuman, Analysis of Quantitative Data. Chapter 12.
- Robert G. Rychtarik, Gerald J. Connors, Kurt H. Dermen and Paul R. Stasiewicz. “Alcoholics Anonymous and the Use of Medications to Prevent Relapse: an Anonymous Survey of Member Attitudes.” In Wysocki Reader. 170-178
- Jacobs and Steinberg. 1990. Compensating Differentials and the Male-Female wage Gap: Evidence from the New York State Comparable Worth Study. *Social Forces*. Vol. 69, No. 2, pp.439-468. In Course Packet.
- Smith, Michael D. (1994). “Enhancing the Quality of Survey Data on Violence Against Women: A Feminist Approach.” Gender and Society

November 17th ******* Pre-proposal Assignment #2 due today *******

Exchange assignments with your research partner

Unobtrusive and Experimental Methods

Assigned Readings:

- Neuman, Nonreactive Research and Secondary Analysis. Chapter 11.
- Neuman, Experimental Research. Chapter 9.
- Leske, Jane S. “Intraoperative Progress Reports Decrease Family Members’ Anxiety.” In Wysocki Reader. 184-193.
- Haney, Banks, Zimbardo. In Course Packet.
- Foschi, Martha, Larissa Lai and Kristen Siegersson. 1994. Gender and Double Standards in Assessment of Job Applications. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 57: 326-339. In Course Packet.

- Levin, Jack, Spates, Hippie values. In Course Packet.
- Diane K. Wysocki and Rebecca Harrison. “ AIDS and the Media: A Look At How Periodicals Influence children and Teenagers in their Knowledge of AIDS.” In Wysocki Reader, pp. 261-279.

November 24th No class

V. Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

December 1st ***Journal hand-in #2 due today *******

*******In-class exercise:**

Combining qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies

Assigned Readings:

- Julia Brannen. “Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches: An Overview”. In Course Packet.
- Mark R. Rank. “The Blending of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Understanding Childbearing Among Welfare Recipients”. In Course Packet.
- Tolman Deborah L. and Laura A. Szalacha. 1999. Dimensions of Desire: Bridging Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in a Study of Female Adolescent Sexuality. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 23, 7-39. In Course Packet.
- Altabe, Madeline. Ethnicity and body image: quantitative and qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Eating Disorder* 23 no2:154-9 Mar '98. In Course Packet.

Recommended Readings:

- Heather Laurie and Oriel Sullivan. “Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Data in the Longitudinal Study of Household Allocations”. In Course Packet.
- Prevalence of wife abuse in the Netherlands: combining quantitative and qualitative methods in survey research. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 12:99-125 Feb '97. In Course Packet.

- Lackey, Jill Florence, Moberg, D Paul. Understanding the onset of intercourse among urban American adolescents: a cultural process framework using qualitative and quantitative data. 57 no4:491-501 Winter '98 Human Organization. In Course Packet.

December 8th

*******Final Proposal due today*******

Action Research and Wrap Up

Assigned Readings:

- Lykes, M Brinton. Activist participatory research among the Maya of Guatemala: constructing meanings from situated knowledge. '97 The Journal of Social Issues 53 no 4:725-46 Winter. In Course Packet.
- Vitucci, Judi and Whiteford, Linda M. Pregnancy and addiction: translating research into practice. Social Science & Medicine 44 no9:1371-80 May '97. In Course Packet.
- Small, Stephen A. Action-oriented research: models and methods. Journal of Marriage and the Family 57:941-55 Nov '95. In Course Packet.

Recommended Readings:

- Sparr, Pamela. Looking through the telescope from both ends: participatory research and action as a feminist political practice. Women's Studies Quarterly 26 no3-4:68-76 Fall/Winter '98. In Course Packet.
- Ong, B N. Research from within: blurring boundaries and developing new methods. The Sociological Review 37:505-17 Aug '89. In Course Packet.
- Aguinis, Herman. Action research and scientific method: presumed discrepancies and actual similarities. The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science 29:416-31 Dec '93. In Course Packet.