

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
[Department of Sociology](#)
Spring, 2015
(1/14/15)

Soc. 920:311:03-04-H1, Introduction to Social Research

(MTh1 MTh2*)

Tillett 258: Mon & Thurs 8:40-10 a.m (Lecture)

Tillett 207 (03: M2*) (recitation)

Tillett 207 (04: Th2*) (recitation)

Tillett 103B (H1: M2*) (recitation)

Prof. [Patricia Roos](#); TA: Tsai-Yen Han

Offices: Roos: Rm. 115, Davison Hall (Douglass campus)

Han: Rm. 017, Davison Hall (Douglass campus)

Office hours: Roos: Mondays, 11:30-12:30 and Thursdays, 10:30-11:30 (or by appointment)

Han: tba (or by appointment)

Emails: Roos: roos@rutgers.edu

Han: tsaiyen.han@rutgers.edu

Note: The best way to contact us is through email. Make sure you include "Soc. 311" in the subject line, to ensure your email doesn't get lost.

I. Course Objectives

This course will present an overview of social scientific methods--that is, the process whereby researchers in the behavioral and social sciences investigate theoretically-informed hypotheses about the behavior of individuals and the organization of social institutions. We will address the major components of the research process, including the development of theoretically informed hypotheses, the operationalization of theoretical concepts, the collection of data, the testing of hypotheses through data analysis, and the presentation of research results. Through class discussions, readings, and assignments, you will gain expertise in the *practice* of social science research. You will develop the skills

necessary to read and evaluate social science research in an intelligent and critical manner, learn statistical data analysis, and discuss the ethics of social research. You will use the web to do research, and test hypotheses on a representative sample of the U.S. population in 2012 ([General Social Survey](#)).

II. Readings/Data Access

There is one required book for this course, available at the Rutgers bookstore (make sure you get the fourth edition!):

Daniel F. Chambliss and Russell K. Schutt
2013. Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation. Fourth Edition. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Additional readings will be available online through Sakai (sakai.rutgers.edu).

You will use the General Social Survey to conduct analyses. Access through the web:

<http://sda.berkeley.edu/sdaweb/analysis/?dataset=gss12>

III. Expectations

The grade for the course will be based on:

- a. **attendance at lecture** twice each week (MTh1);
- b. **attendance at one scheduled recitation section** per week (you are assigned either M2* or Th2*); this is a 4-credit course, and you **must** attend recitations to pass the course; **Note: recitations will start directly after lecture (approx. 10:15 a.m., not at the time specified in the schedule of classes);**
- c. **first examination** (20 percent; tentatively scheduled for **Thursday, February 26th**); I will conduct a review session the class before the exam, and post a study guide on Sakai.

d. **second examination** (20 percent; tentatively scheduled for **Thursday, April 2nd**); I will conduct a review session the class before the exam, and post a study guide on Sakai.

e. **five assignments** that require application of the techniques learned in class; these assignments will be available on Sakai on a regular basis, **and will be submitted through Sakai no later than 8 a.m. on the day they are due**. One of the assignments will involve class presentations; late assignments will be penalized (1/2 point each day they are late) and those not turned in within one week of due date are still required but will not receive points (40 percent, 8 points each);

Tentative assignment due dates (submit to Sakai):

Ass. 1, due Monday February 2nd @ 8 a.m.

Ass. 2, due Monday February 16th @ 8a.m.

Ass. 3, due Monday February 23rd @ 8 a.m. (no late assignments permitted for this assignment; I'll be going over results in class in preparation for Test 1)

Ass. 4, due Monday March 23rd @ 8 a.m.

Ass. 5, due Thursday April 9th @ 8a.m. (panels 1&2); Monday April 13th @ 8 a.m. (panels 3&4); Thursday April 16th @ 8 a.m. (panel 5)

f. a **final project** involving hypothesis construction, data analysis, and presentation of research results that builds on the written assignments; selection of topics will be based on data available from a representative sample of the U.S. population in 2012 (20 percent; approximately 8 pages, due **Monday, May 11th @ 12 noon, Rm. 115 Davison Hall (Roos office in hardcopy)**).

g. **class participation** will be taken into account for those who are on the borderline between grades (e.g., B to a B+; C+ to B).

The two examinations will be open book and notes and will consist of both short essays and problems. You will need a calculator that allows for scientific notation for the second exam and for some of the assignments. There are **NO** makeups for the two examinations without a **WRITTEN** excuse from your physician.

Attendance policy: We will take attendance, both in lectures and recitations. Given the nature of this 4-credit course, **missing class reduces your course grade!** If you have to miss class for any reason, please use the university absence reporting website: <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>. An email will be automatically sent to me.

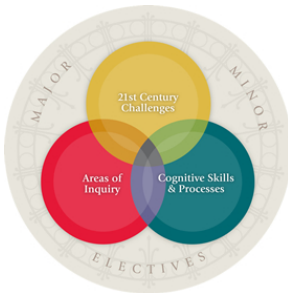
Because unforeseen circumstances may require changes in the assigned readings, the course outline, or examination dates, you are responsible not only for due dates specified in the syllabus, but also for any handouts or announcements made in class or on Sakai. Please let me or the TA know if you

must miss class for a religious holiday or major medical issue, and we will ensure that you can make up the material.

You are encouraged to consult with me and/or the teaching assistant about any problems you may encounter with lectures, reading material, or class assignments. Do not wait until the class is almost over before coming in for assistance.

Note: ALL course requirements must be completed to get a C grade or higher in the course. **If you are a Sociology major or minor (or a Criminal Justice major) you must get at least a C in this course to have it count toward your degree.**

IV. SAS Learning Goals



SAS Core Curriculum Learning Goals Met by this Course: QQ (Cognitive Skills and Processes: Quantitative and Formal Reasoning). This course meets this goal: formulate, evaluate, and communicate conclusions and inferences from quantitative information.

V. Academic Integrity

This course will be conducted in full accordance with the university's Academic Integrity Policy:

“The principles of academic integrity require that a student:

- properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others.
- properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work.

- make sure that all work submitted as his or her own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of unsanctioned materials or unsanctioned collaboration.
- obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with his or her interpretation or conclusions.
- treat all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress.
- uphold the canons of the ethical or professional code of the profession for which he or she is preparing.” (Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy, 2011, p. 1)

Note: it is very easy to cut and paste from the internet, and/or copy verbatim selections from articles or books. If you do this without attribution, **it's called plagiarism**. It's also pretty easy to find plagiarism nowadays. You can use internet sources (preferably academic sources you find online through Rutgers libraries), as well as print sources, but paraphrase the work you use and properly cite it. Avoid over-quoting, but if you do use an author's exact words you must put them in quotes and cite, including page numbers.

I will not accept any assignments or papers from students involved in dishonest behavior, and I am required to report such students. Students engaging in dishonest behavior hurt all students.

Please link to these, and read through:
 Interactive-Tutorial on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity
 Don't Plagiarize? Document Your Research

VI. Classroom Atmosphere

The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by individual instructors. Courteous and lawful expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted (and indeed encouraged).

VII. Course Outline (and approximate dates)

I. Introduction to Social Science Inquiry (January 22-26)

- A. The scientific method
- B. Theory and method
- C. Deduction and induction

Readings: Chs. 1-2

II. The Research Process (January 29-February 2)

- A. Research design
- B. Variables and variation
- C. Units of analysis
- D. Ecological fallacy
- E. Conceptualization, operationalization
- F. Measurement: nominal, original, interval, ratio
- G. Reliability and validity

Readings: Ch. 4

III. Association and the Logic of Causation (February 5-12)

- A. Association vs. causality
- B. Cause and effect
- C. Determinism
- D. The elaboration paradigm

Readings: Ch. 6 (pp. 103-107)

Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, 10th ed. (Ch. 15) (Sakai)

IV. Testing Causal Hypotheses: Qualitative Research (February 16-23)

- A. Field research
- B. Roles of observers
- C. Sampling and data collection

Readings: Chs. 9-10

Marc Dunkelman, "What Data Can't Convey"

http://chronicle.com/blogs/conversation/2014/08/19/what-data-cant-convey/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

Qualitative Research Examples (read at least one):

Alice Goffman, "On the Run: Wanted Men in a Philadelphia Ghetto." (Sakai)

Pamela Stone, Opting Out? Why Women Really Quit Careers and Head Home (Chs. Intro & 5) (Sakai)

EXAM ONE: Thursday, February 26th

V. Testing Causal Hypotheses: The Classic Experiment (March 2nd-12th)

- A. Independent and dependent variables
- B. Experimental and control groups
- C. Quasi-experimental designs

Readings: Ch. 6 (pp. 107-127)

Experimental Design Examples (read at least one):

Devah Pager, Marked: Race, Crime, and Finding Work in an Era of Mass Incarceration (Chs. 4 & 5) (Sakai)

Shelley J. Correll, Stephen Bernard, and In Paik, "Getting a Job: Is there a Motherhood Penalty?" (Sakai)

Laurie A. Rudman, Richard D. Ashmore, and Melvin L. Gary, "Unlearning" Automatic Biases: The Malleability of Implicit Prejudice and Stereotypes." (Sakai)

VI. Testing Causal Hypotheses: Survey Research (March 23rd-March 30th)

- A. The logic of sampling
 - 1. Concepts and terminology
 - 2. Sampling theory and sampling distribution
 - 3. Sampling design

Readings: Ch. 5

- B. Survey research
 - 1. Questionnaires
 - 2. Survey designs
 - 3. Evaluation research

Readings: Chs. 7, 11 (skim Ch. 11)

Survey Research Examples (read at least one):

Deborah Carr, “My Daughter Has a Career; I Just Raised Babies’: The Psychological Consequences of Women’s Intergenerational Social Comparisons.” (Sakai)

Kristen W. Springer and Dawne M. Mouzon, “Macho Men’ and Preventive Health Care: Implications for Older Men in Different Social Classes” (Sakai)

Christine R. Schwartz and Hongyun Han, “The Reversal of the Gender Gap in Education and Trends in Marital Dissolution” (Sakai)

EXAM TWO: Thursday, April 2nd

VII. Ethics in Social Science Research (April 6th- 16th)

- A. Ethics in the research process
- B. The politics and use of social research

Readings: Ch. 3 (review ethics sections of other chapters)
[Rutgers Policy on Human Subjects Research](#) (skim through)
(additional readings online for class presentations; see Assignment 5, when available)

VIII. Data Analysis: The Empirical Testing of Research Hypotheses (April 20th-May 4th).

- A. Descriptive statistics: univariate analysis; measures of central tendency and dispersion
- B. Descriptive statistics: bivariate analysis, chi square

Readings: Ch. 8, 12
Agresti, “Descriptive Techniques”
Agresti, “Chi Square Test of Significance”

**Final Paper due: Monday, May 11th, @ 12 noon to Rm. 115 Davison Hall
(Roos office in hard copy)**
