Professor: Dana Britton
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Virtual Office hours: by Zoom, Thursday 4:00 – 5:00PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is an introduction to the methods of research employed by social scientists. Most of us are exposed to social research every day, from the latest numbers of COVID cases and vaccination rates, to population tabulations to reports crime rates. The main purpose of this course is to make you a more critical consumer of this kind of material by showing you how social research is done and also by engaging you in the process of social research itself.

OBJECTIVES
This course is designed to:

1) Help students to understand the basics of methodological reasoning – how to formulate research problems and how to understand issues of social causality. (Assessment goals: research skills, qualitative, quantitative and analytical skills)

2) Guide students in making ethical decisions in doing research. (Assessment goals: research skills, professional development)

3) Give students an understanding of the nuts and bolts issues of research – e.g., research design, sampling, measurement. (Assessment goal: research skills)

4) Allow students to develop their abilities as researchers by conducting a project using three specific methodologies. (Assessment goals: Application of Knowledge, written communication, quantitative, qualitative, and analytical skills)

5) Make students more critical consumers of the social science knowledge presented to them in their everyday lives. (Assessment goal: Understanding context)

REQUIRED TEXTS
The required text for this course is:

Blackstone, Amy. 2012. Principles of Sociological Inquiry – Qualitative and Quantitative Methods. Saylor Foundation. Open access: https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/139

This is a text by a sociologist, but basic social science research methods are pretty much universal across disciplines. This is a good basic text, and even better, it is open access and free. I will supplement with other readings as necessary. Any reading material in this course will be posted in Persuall – more on this below.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This is a combined undergraduate and graduate course. This means the requirements will differ somewhat for graduate students versus undergraduates. The main difference is that graduate students (enrolled in 501) *are required to* complete a research project.

Undergraduate students (enrolled in 401) *may* (with my permission) complete a research project, but my assumption is that most will take the examination option instead.

Research Project – required for graduate students, optional, with permission for undergrads: Much of your grade will be accounted for by the research project. This project will be completed in segments throughout the semester, each of which will build on one another. See Canvas for complete description. The research project will account for 30 percent of your grade.

Examinations – required for undergraduates except with permission: There will be three examinations, all of which will be a combination of short/long answers. Taken together, these will account for 30 percent of your grade.

Exercises: There will be a series of exercises. These will count for 20 percent of your grade.

Lecture/Discussion/Class Participation: Discussion will happen mostly through Voicethread lecture presentations and through comments on student presentations (also to be made on Voicethread). The number of comments per lecture will be variable, but this component of the course will be worth 30 percent of your grade.

Reading comments/annotations: I have posted the textbook in Persusall (I will give you a walkthrough for this). For each reading assignment, you will be required to post a set number of comments and responses (usually seven). In total, these annotations will be worth 20 percent of your grade.

Class participation: Keep in mind that Canvas and Perusall give me detailed reports of the time you spend in the course and the pages with which you interact. Though I will not use this to take "attendance," per se, it will matter in borderline cases.

Final Grade: Your grade for the class will be calculated as follows:

Research Project/exams   30 percent
Exercises   20 percent
Lecture/Discussion   30 percent
Reading annotations   20 percent
    Total   100 percent

POLICIES

Special Needs Accommodations
Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all educational programs. To receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where they are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation (https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines). If the documentation supports your

request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS: (https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form).

Office of Disability Services contact and address
Lucy Stone Hall, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Suite A145, Piscataway, NJ 08854.
E-mail Address: dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu
Phone: (848) 445-6800 • Fax: (732) 445-3388
https://ods.rutgers.edu/

Scholastic Dishonesty
For the purposes of this course, scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the submission of assignments that are plagiarized or written in collusion with another or the falsification of any records connected with this course or any examination. Plagiarism includes quoting or closely paraphrasing a printed source without giving appropriate credit (i.e. Gould, 1981:123) or the use of AI methods to produce text. It is acceptable to talk with classmates about homework assignments, projects and papers.   Handing in substantially the same assignment constitutes plagiarism, however. I will give a grade of 0 to any written assignment that appears to be substantially similar to that of another class member or that uses others' material without proper citation; further consequences may follow at my discretion. If you have any doubts at all about what constitutes plagiarism check with me before you turn in any assignment.   I will use Turnitin.com for examinations and projects.

Grade appeals
If you believe you have received a lower grade than you should have, you may contest it within two weeks by following these steps. 1) Allow a 24-hour "cooling off" period so that you will be calm when you ask for reconsideration of your work. 2) Write out the reason you think the grade should be changed. Describe how your work fulfills the assignment. We're all human and make mistakes but, "I just think I deserve better" doesn't tell me what I might have missed, and it will not make for a successful appeal.

Class day/Assignment Policies:
I have treated this class as if it meets on Monday every week (except for week 1, which starts on a Wednesday), though of course I realize that this is an asynchronous class and you will be doing your assignments and listening to and reading the content as your schedules allow. Assignments are due by 5:00 PM on Friday of a given week. If you are making comments on someone else's assignment, these will be due a week later. More specific details in Canvas.

Office hours:
My office hours are on Thursdays, 4:00 – 5:00 on Zoom. I can also make time available and do my best to accommodate your requests. This is a time when you can drop in to talk about whatever you want - questions you have about the material, how you're doing in the course, things that you find particularly striking (or irritating) about the course or the readings. Please do not hesitate to use this time. If you are having trouble, it is better for both of us if I know this early in the semester.   Please also understand that I serve as Chair of Labor Studies and I try to maintain at least a little work/life balance myself. If I don't get back to you immediately, you will hear from me as soon as possible. I believe you are all doing the best you can, as I am too.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS *

Unit One: Framing Research/Basic issues*					
Week	**Date**	**Topic**	**Reading**	**Assignments**	**Video**
0	1/17/2023	Learning your way around, meeting the instructor and your classmates	Course site activities	Complete week 0 activities	N/A
1	1/23/2023	Epistemology and intro to methodology	Blackstone Ch 1	View Main lecture, post comments	N/A
				Complete two extended examples, post comments	
				Reading annotations	
2	1/30/2023	Theory and research	Blackstone Ch 2	View Main lecture, post comments	N/A
				Complete two extended examples, post comments	
				Reading annotations	
3	2/6/2023	Research Ethics	Blackstone Ch 3	View Main lecture, post comments	N/A
				Complete two ethics case studies	
				Reading annotations	
4	2/13/2023	Topics in social research	Blackstone Ch 4 and Ch 5	View Main lecture, post comments	N/A
				Complete two extended examples, comment	
				Lecture assessment	
				Reading annotations	
				PROJ: Submit topic area	
Unit Two: Research Design and Methods					
5	2/20/23	Sampling	Blackstone Ch 7	View Main lecture, comment	N/A
				Complete two extended examples, comment	
				Reading annotations	
	2/24/2023	EXAM 1		Due by 3/03/23	

6	2/27/2023	Measurement	Blackstone Ch 6	View Main lecture, comment	N/A
				Complete two extended examples, comment	
				Reading annotations	
7	3/6/23	Experimental research	Blackstone Ch 12.2, supplement	View Main lecture	A Class Divided
				Complete experimental critiques	
				Reading annotations	
				PROJ: Lit Review Due	
8	3/20/23	Observation research	Blackstone Ch 10, supplemental article	PROJ: Observation sites approved (3/24)	N/A
				View Main lecture, comment	
9	3/27/2023			Complete two extended examples, comment	
				Reading annotations	
				PROJ: Observation Voicethread (4/4)	
				PROJ: Observation comments (4/8)	
10	4/3/2023	Content analysis	Blackstone Ch 11, article	View Main lecture	Still Killing Us Softly 4
				Complete reflection questions	
				Reading annotations	
11	4/10/2023			PROJ: Content analysis (4/18)	
				PROJ: Comments due (4/22)	
	4/14/2023	Exam 2		Due by 4/19/2023	

		Unit Three: Existing Data and Quantitative Methods			
12	4/17/2021	Quantitative data analysis	Blackstone Ch 8, supplemental material	View Main lecture	N/A
				Complete reflection questions	
				Reading annotations	
				Data analysis 1	
13	4/24/2021			Data analysis 2	
				PROJ: Data analysis	
14	5/1/2021			PROJ: Comments due	
	5/5/2023	Exam 3		Due by 5/10/23	
		Final projects due 1 5/8/23, 12:00 PM			
* If these last years have taught us anything, it is that things change. If we need to shift dates around, I will do my best to announce this well in advance					