

SOCIAL RESEARCH I

Sociology 301 / Fall Semester 2018
Hahne Building 421 / Tuesdays & Thursdays
10:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.

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& by appointment

OVERVIEW

This course is an introduction to social research. We will learn how social scientists conduct social research; i.e., we will learn about how they observe, document, measure, analyze, interpret, and explain social phenomena. In the first part of the course we will focus on the logic and process of social research. In the second part, we will examine common research methods used by social scientists to gather data, assess or formulate hypotheses, and test hypotheses and answer research questions, such as experimental and quasi-experimental research, survey research, field research, comparative-historical research, and the use of existing statistics.

Main topics we will cover include:

- the logic and ethics of social scientific research
- research design, conceptualization, operationalization, measurement, and sampling
- types of research methods, both qualitative and quantitative

By the end of the semester you should be a knowledgeable practitioner and an informed consumer of social scientific research. That is, you should be able to: (1) formulate research questions and hypotheses and select an appropriate research method, (2) know how to carry out a research project that generates data that can be used to test hypotheses and answer research questions, and (3) understand and critically evaluate social science research done by others.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The textbook is on reserve at Dana Library. It may be purchased from the Rutgers University Bookstore (848-445-2200) or from a variety of other sources.

- ***The Basics of Social Research***, by Earl Babbie (Cengage Publishing). The most current edition is the 7th edition, but the 4th, 5th, or 6th editions are fine (and probably less expensive).

The following chapter (from a different textbook) is available on Blackboard.

- “Single-Case Evaluation Designs,” by Allen Rubin and Earl R. Babbie. Chapter 12 in ***Research Methods for Social Work***. (2008, 6th edition, Thomson-Brooks Cole).

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

In order to pass this course, it is imperative that you attend every class and keep up with the assigned readings. This course requires a lot of reading and thinking. Much of the material might have to be re-read and thought through in order to be comprehended. Class participation is highly encouraged. Feel free to ask questions or express relevant thoughts at any time.

In-Class Group Exercises (numerous) (19%)

In a number of classes, we will conduct group exercises that will help you to better understand the material covered in class and in the readings. The lowest score from the in-class group exercises will be dropped. Make-up in-class group exercises are not given.

Examinations (3) (81%)

There will be three in-class closed-book examinations consisting of multiple choice and short answer questions. The exams are cumulative. A study guide will be distributed at least one week before each exam. Make-up exams are given only if there is an extraordinary emergency that prevents you from taking the exam and you have contacted the professor prior to the exam.

Grading:

In-Class Exercises	19
First Exam	26
Second Exam	27
Final Exam	<u>28</u>
	100%

PLEASE NOTE

- In order to pass this class, you must be able to read and write at a satisfactory college level and you must attend class. Excessive unexcused absences (5+) will result in a failing grade.
- If you happen to miss a class, then you will have missed something important. In addition to the assigned readings done outside of class, you are responsible for all material covered in class, all handouts distributed in class, and all announcements made in class.
- Some Rutgers University students have a bad habit of sending e-mails to their professors without identifying themselves in the text of the e-mail. The professor of this course does not respond to anonymous e-mails. If you send the professor an e-mail and expect a response, then clearly state your full name in the **text** of the e-mail.
- According to university regulations an “incomplete” final grade can be given only under the following circumstances: (1) at least 75% of the coursework has been completed, and (2) there is an extraordinary and documented circumstance that prevents you from completing the remainder of the coursework.
- It is your responsibility to understand the University’s policies on **academic integrity**, **student conduct**, and **plagiarism**. Cheating on exams will not be tolerated and violations of the polices will be dealt with according to University procedures. To familiarize yourself with the regulations, see the following Rutgers University web page:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

SCHEDULE

Please have the readings done by the beginning of each week. If there are changes in the schedule, they will be announced in class.

Week 1: Tuesday 9/4 & Thursday 9/6

Topics: introduction to the course; introduction to social research

Readings: none

Week 2: Tuesday 9/11 & Thursday 9/13

Topics: social research

Readings: Babbie chapter 1, chapter 2 (pp. 43-55)

Week 3: Tuesday 9/18 & Thursday 9/20

Topics: research design

Readings: Babbie chapter 4

Week 4: Tuesday 9/25 & Thursday 9/27

Topic: conceptualization, operationalization, & measurement

Readings: Babbie chapter 5 (pp. 126-149)

Week 5: Tuesday 10/2 & Thursday 10/4

Topic: first exam

Readings: none

Week 6: Tuesday 10/9 & Thursday 10/11

Topic: measurement & sampling

Readings: Babbie chapter 5 (pp. 149-158) and chapter 7

Week 7: Tuesday 10/16 & Thursday 10/18

Topic: ethics of social research & experimental research

Readings: Babbie chapter 3 (pp. 60-80) and chapter 8

Week 8: Tuesday 10/23 & Thursday 10/25

Topic: experimental research

Readings: Babbie chapter 8

Week 9: Tuesday 10/30 & Thursday 11/1

Topic: survey research

Readings: Babbie chapter 9

Week 10: Tuesday 11/6 & Thursday 11/8

Topic: second exam

Readings: none

Week 11: Tuesday 11/13 & Thursday 11/15

Topic: field research

Readings: Babbie chapter 10

Week 12: Tuesday 11/20 (no class on Thursday 11/22 - Thanksgiving)

Topic: field research

Readings: Babbie chapter 10

Week 13: Tuesday 11/27 & Thursday 11/29

Topic: unobtrusive research: existing statistics & comparative-historical research

Readings: Babbie chapter 11 (pp. 344-360)

Week 14: Tuesday 12/4 & Thursday 12/6

Topic: single subject designs

Readings: chapter by Rubin & Babbie (*on Blackboard*)

Week 15: Tuesday 12/11

Topics: TBA

Readings: none

Finals Week: Thursday 12/20

Final exam 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.