

## SYA7309.1 Advanced Sociological Research Methods

Semester: Fall 2010  
 Room: PH 406I  
 Time: T 6:00-8:50 p.m.

Professor: Jay Corzine, PH403B, 823-2202, [hcorzine@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:hcorzine@mail.ucf.edu)

Office Hours: T 4:30-5:30 p.m. or by appointment

### Course Description

**SYA7309** is the required course in research methodology for doctoral students in the Ph.D. in Sociology Program at UCF. As such, it is a high-level survey of the major strategies for data collection and analysis currently used in sociology and the other social sciences. The course also covers the underlying assumptions, logic, and philosophy of research in the social sciences. Both quantitative and qualitative methods will be reviewed, and the instructor's standpoint is that the appropriate method is dependent on the research problem, not on a preconceived notion that either quantitative or qualitative methods are "better." This course also moves beyond a focus on how to do research to include critical reflection on methodological issues and viewpoints.

Again, **SYA 7309** is first and foremost a survey of the logic underlying the research process and the strategies for collecting and analyzing empirical data currently used in sociology and many of the other social sciences. A second goal is to increase your ability to systematically evaluate social research that appears in academic journals and other outlets. Third, my belief is that the best way to learn social research is to do social research. Therefore, a major requirement of the course will be the completion of a research paper appropriate for submission to a peer-reviewed journal and/or for presentation at the annual meeting of a professional association. Fourth, we will discuss ethical issues in social research, including the American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UCF. Finally, there will be discussions of selected professional issues during four class periods.

The weekly work in this course is cumulative and you should understand that, in order to receive an acceptable grade, you **must**: 1) attend on a regular basis and 2) stay current with your readings. **There will be no opportunity to do extra work to improve a low grade.** The instructor will devote substantial time outside of the scheduled course hours to assist you, but the responsibility for committing the required time to do well in this course is yours. While I am generally on campus from about 9:00am to 6:00 pm when in Orlando, I travel frequently and have an irregular daily schedule as Department Chair. I will let you know in class when I will be out of Orlando, but you should typically call or email me to set an appointment instead of dropping by. If I am in my office, I will be happy to see if you do drop by, however, unless I am working on something that has an approaching deadline. When I am in Orlando, you can expect an email response from me in 48 hours. If this does not occur, assume there is a glitch in cyberspace and call me.

Students should be familiar with the UCF rules and policies related to academic dishonesty as stated in *The Golden Rule*. Anyone who engages in academic dishonesty will receive an "F" in the course, and their case will be considered for additional penalties consistent with department, college and UCF policies.

I am assuming that everyone in this course has completed a master's level course in research methods in sociology or a closely related social science. Students should see me if this is not the case.

### Required Texts

1. Berg, Bruce L.. 2007. **Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences**, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
2. Firebaugh, Glenn. 2008. **Seven Rules for Social Research**. Princeton University Press.

3. Nardi, Peter M. 2006. **Doing Survey Research: A Guide to Quantitative Methods**, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
4. Spector, Paul E. 1981. **Research Designs**. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
5. Numerous articles, chapters, and papers from various sources (a complete list is below).

### Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following requirements.

- 1) **Final Exam**. There will be an in-class comprehensive exam on **December 7th**. All questions will be short essay. (100 points)
- 2) **Research Paper**. Each student will write a paper, representing either a completed empirical study or an in-depth analysis of an issue or topic related to research methods. The length of these papers will vary dependent on the topic, but students should strive for the typical length of a journal article, i.e. 20-30 pages. The topic for the proposal should be approved by the professor no later than **September 21st**. To obtain approval, submit a written statement of four-to-five sentences that specifically identify your topic to the professor. Approval is not automatic and may require further discussion. The paper is due on **November 30th**. (150 points)

**3) Completion of IRB Training Workshop**. All students are required to complete the Office of Research and Commercialization IRB Training Workshop (online) for Social and Behavioral Sciences prior to the completion of the course. Students who have not done so will receive an Incomplete until this requirement is completed. For many paper topics, IRB Training must be completed prior to this date. Anyone whose paper topic will require IRB approval should complete training no later than **September 21st**. (25 points)

- 4) **Class participation**. Students will receive points at the end of the term based on quality of their class participation throughout the semester. (25 points)

There are a total of 300 points that can be earned in the course, and your final grade will be calculated according to the standard formula: 90%+ = A, 86-89% = B+, 80-85% = B, ..., below 60% = F. I do not give minus grades, e.g., B-.

**Anyone who misses over one night without an acceptable reason during the semester will have their final grade reduced one letter for each additional absence. Acceptable reasons are: 1) documented illness of self or a dependent, 2) documented death of a relative involving travel, and 3) a documented work requirement. Number 3 can be used only once during the semester.**

**The professor reserves the right to change the grading formula above to include reflection papers on weekly readings if he believes that the readings are not being done on schedule by all students.**

### Course Outline

The course outline is subject to change if more time is needed to cover a topic or if class does not meet on a scheduled night.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
1	8/24	Introduction; syllabus distributed	*Smith

*Professional Issue #1: "Research and Careers in Sociology"*

2	8/31	Ethical Issues in Social Research	Berg, ch. 3; ASA Code of Ethics, *Leo; *Scarce
3	9/07	Foundations of Social Research	*Bryman; Firebaugh, ch. 1; *Harding; *Maynard
4	9/14	Research Designs	Firebaugh, ch. 2; *Sampson et al; Spector (entire book)
5	9/21	Survey Research Designs	Firebaugh, chs. 3-4; Nardi, chs. 1, 3-5; *Couper & Bosnjak; *Farrell & Petersen
<b>Paper topics are to be approved Discussion of expectations for research papers</b>			
6	9/28	Analyzing Survey Data	Firebaugh, ch. 5; Nardi, ch. 6-10; *Robinson
<b>Professional Issue #2: "Publishing in the Social Sciences"</b>			
7	10/05	Writing in the Social Sciences	*Becker, chs. 1-3, 5
<i>Professional Issue #3: "Structure of the Research paper"</i>			
8	10/12	Qualitative Research Strategies	Berg, chs. 1-2, 4-6; *Adler & Adler
9	10/19	Qualitative Research Strategies, continued	Berg, chs. 8-11; *Goldthorpe
10	10/26	Advanced Research Designs	Firebaugh, chs. 6-7
11	11/02	Social Research and Public Issues	* <i>Social Forces</i> , *Nyden & Wiewal
12	11/09	Issues in Methodology	*Lieberman & Horwith
<i>Professional Issue #4: "The Academic Job Search"</i>			
13	11/16	No class	
14	11/23	The Place of Space in Sociological Research	*Tickamyer; *Howell & Porter
15	11/30	Review for Final Examination	
<b>Research papers are due.</b>			
16	12/07	<b>Final examination</b>	

\*See the list of articles and chapters below for a complete reference. These readings will be made available in the Sociology Department Office one week before they are assigned to be read if not available through online journals..

## Articles and Chapters

Adler, Patricia A. & Peter Adler. 2008. "Of Rhetoric and Representation: The Four Faces of Ethnography." **The Sociological Quarterly** 49:1-30.

**American Sociological Association Code of Ethics**. 1999. Washington, D.C.: American Sociological Association (available online).

Becker, Howard S. 1986. Writing for Social Scientists. University of Chicago Press.

Bryman, Alan. 1998. "Quantitative and Qualitative Research Strategies in Knowing the Social World." Pages 138-156 in **Knowing the Social World**, edited by Tim May and Malcolm Williams. Buckinghamshire: Open University Press.

Couper, Mick P. & Michael Bosnjak. 2010. "Internet Surveys." Pages 527-550 in **Handbook of Survey Research, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.**, edited by Marsden, Peter V. & James D. Wright. Howard House, UK: Emerald.

Farrell, Dan and James C. Petersen. 2010. "The Growth of Internet Research Methods and the Reluctant Sociologist." *Sociological Inquiry* 80:114-125.

Goldthorpe, John H. 2000. **On Sociology: Numbers, Narratives, and the Integration of Research and Theory**. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 4: "Sociological Ethnography Today: Problems and Possibilities.

Harding, Sandra. 1987. "Introduction: Is There a Feminist Method?" Pages 1-14 in **Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues**, edited by Sandra Harding. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Howell, Frank M. & Jeremy R. Porter. 2010. "Surveys and Geographic Information Systems." Pages 681-705 in **Handbook of Survey Research**, edited by Marsden, Peter V. & James Dr. Wright. Howard House: Emerald.

Leo, Richard A. 2001. "Trial and Tribulations: Courts, Ethnography, and the Need for an Evidentiary Privilege for Academic Researchers. Pages 260-279 in **Contemporary Field Research, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.**, edited by Robert M. Emerson. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.

Lieberman, Stanley, and Joel Horwith. 2008. "Implication Analysis: A Pragmatic Proposal for Linking Theory and Data in the Social Sciences." **Sociological Methodology** 38:1-50.

Maynard, Mary. 1998. "Feminists' Knowledge and the Knowledge of Feminism: Epistemology, Theory, Methodology and Method." Pages 120-137 in **Knowing the Social World**, edited by Tim May and Malcolm Williams. Buckinghamshire: Open University Press.

Nyden, Philip and Wim Wiewel. 1992. "Collaborative Research: Harnessing the Tensions Between the Researcher and Practitioner." **The American Sociologist** 23:43-55.

Robinson, William S. 1950. Ecological Correlations and the Behavior of Individuals. **American Sociological Review** 15:351-357.

Sampson, Robert J., Jeffrey D. Morenoff, and Thomas Gannon-Rowley. 2002. "Assessing 'Neighborhood Effects': Social Processes and New Directions in Research." Pages 443-478 in **Annual Review of Sociology**, edited by Karen S. Cook and John Hagan. El Camino Way, CA: Annual Reviews

Scarce, Rik. "Scholarly Ethics and Courtroom Antics: Where Researchers Stand in the Eyes of the Law." Pages 258-273 in **Extreme Methods: Innovative Approaches to Social Science Research**, edited by J. Mitchell Miller and Richard Tewksbury. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Smith, Joel. 1991. "A Methodology for Twenty-First Century Sociology." **Social Forces** 70:1-17.

*Social Forces*. 2004. "Debate on Public Sociologies." 82:1601-1643.

Tickamyer, Ann R. 2000. "Space Matters! Spatial Inequality in Future Sociology." **Contemporary Sociology** 29:805-812.