



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Sociology 707 (4 credits)
**Methods of Social Research:
Research Design, Data Collection, & Measurement**
Spring 2014
Wednesdays & Fridays 9:30-11:15am
Hamilton Hall 151

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Course Description

Methods of Social Research (Soci 707) is a graduate-level course covering research design broadly conceived. Our focus is how research questions are developed in such a way that they can be convincingly addressed by the analysis of empirical data (quantitative or qualitative).

Major topics covered in the course include the relationship between theory and research, variables and measurement, causality, the political and ethical dimensions of research, and the main methods of data collection in social science – including participant observation, ethnography, semi-structured interviews, sample surveys, content analysis, experiments, and comparative-historical methods.

The goals of the course are (1) to improve students' abilities to constructively critique research methods and approaches used in the social sciences, (2) to equip students with fundamental tools to design and conduct their own research, (3) to provide foundational guidance for student choices about further in-depth training in specific methods, and (4) to further socialize students to the profession of Sociology.

Course Materials

Readings for this course will come from a selection of assigned books listed below and articles or chapters that are available online or will be posted on Sakai. Specific readings are listed in the Course Schedule below.

Required Books (Available at UNC Student Stores)

- (1) Alford, Robert R. 1998. *The Craft of Inquiry: Theories, Methods, and Evidence*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- (2) Singleton RA, Jr. and Straits BC. 2010. *Approaches to Social Research*, Fifth Edition. New York: Oxford.
- (3) Carmines EG, Zeller RA. 1979. *Reliability and Validity Assessment*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- (4) Groves RM et al. 2009. *Survey Methodology*, 2nd ed. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- (5) Javier Auyero and Débora Alejandra Swistun, *Flammable: Environmental Suffering in an Argentine Shantytown*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2009.

Course Website

<http://sakai.unc.edu>

Requirements

- Written statement of your research question/s (due Mon, Jan 20)
- Short paper on how your research topic could be studied using all three of the approaches that Alford outlines: multivariate, interpretive, and historical (due Mon, Feb 3)
- Interview project (due Mon, Feb 10)
- Specific Aims (NIH) / Project Summary (NSF) version of your research proposal plan (due Mon, Feb 17 to student critic; critiques due Fri, Feb 21)
- Article critique: short paper critiquing the strengths and weaknesses of an article we provide (due Mon, March 3)
- Full draft of research proposal (due Mon, Mar 17 to student critic; critiques due Mon, Mar 24)
- Presentation of proposal to the class (Mar 26->Apr 11)
- Proof of Certification in Human Subjects Research: CITI training (due Fri, Apr 11)
- Final proposal (due Apr 28)

Research Proposal. The main requirement for this course is to develop your MA thesis proposal (or if you have already completed a thesis, a research article). In the course of the class you will turn in a statement of your research questions, a description of the project in the form of NIH Specific Aims or NSF Project Summary, a draft of the proposal, present the project orally to the class, and turn in a final draft. Due dates for these requirements are provided above.

Interview Project. The interview project is designed to provide a data collection experience from which to learn and reference later in the course as your exposure to research methods grows. For this project you will select one faculty member who is not your advisor and one post-MA graduate student to interview for about 15 minutes. The topic will be, "How to Produce an Exceptional MA Paper." You should compile some open-ended questions to guide the interview, listen carefully, and take notes immediately after (possibly jotting notes during). You will submit a 3-4 page paper that includes reflections on your interviewing experiences (e.g., What worked well? What did not?) AND summarizes your initial hunches as to key themes or findings that may arise or that you would hope to follow up if you continued interviewing other faculty/students.

Article Critique. The assigned critique is modeled after the kinds of reviews sociologists are routinely asked to do, although the focus here will be more methodological than substantive. The critique will be of an already published article we select from a top sociological journal. We assume no specific substantive knowledge of the topic area represented in the chosen article. Your critique should focus on aspects of measurement, case selection, and causal inference covered in class. Further details will be provided in a handout about the assignment. Due dates are listed above.

Certification in Human Subjects Research. UNC is participating in a required ethics training program known as CITI (Collaborative IRB Training Initiative). All faculty, staff, and students involved with research must complete this training to be in compliance. The following web site is the primary link for the onsite training modules as well as additional information about the program: <https://www.citiprogram.org/default.asp>

If you have not already done so, please complete the course for social and behavioral scientists. Forward a copy of the CITI Course Completion Record to us no later than the start of class on April 11.

Academic Honesty

We expect that all work you do for this course will be your own. The University Honor Code is in effect for all written assignments. Please read the provisions of the Honor Code carefully, and make certain that you understand and follow them. Let us know if you have any questions. Violations of the Code will not be tolerated. <http://honor.unc.edu/>

Course Schedule

Date		Topic	Reading
Jan	8 W	The Research Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alford, Robert R. 1998. Introduction and Chapter 1, <i>The Craft of Inquiry: Theories, Methods, and Evidence</i>. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
	10 F	Theory and Research Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alford, Robert R. Chapters 2-3, <i>The Craft of Inquiry</i>
	15 W	Writing Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Howard Becker, <i>Writing for Social Scientists</i>, Chs 1, 7, 8 Munger, Michael C. "10 Tips on How to Write Less Badly." <i>The Chronicle of Higher Education</i> 57.03 (2010) Grant, Adam M and Timothy G Pollock. "Setting the Hook" <i>Academy of Management Journal</i>, Oct2011, Vol. 54 Issue 5, p873-879
	17 F	From Research Question to Research Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Singleton RA, Jr. and Straits BC. 2010. "Chapter 4: Elements of Research Design" in <i>Approaches to Social Research</i>, 5th Edition. New York: Oxford. Rachel Kahn Best, 2012. "Disease Politics and Medical Research Funding: Three Ways Advocacy Shapes Policy." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 77(5):780-803
	22 W	Multivariate Approaches – Core Issues, Exemplars, and Critiques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alford, Robert R. Chapters 4, <i>The Craft of Inquiry</i> Budig, MJ. and England P. "The Wage Penalty for Motherhood." <i>ASR</i> Vol. 66, No. 2 (Apr., 2001): 204-225. Abbott, Andrew. 1988. "Transcending General Linear Reality." <i>Sociological Theory</i> 6: 169-186.
	24 F	Interpretive Approaches – Core Issues, Exemplars, and Critiques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alford, Robert R. Chapters 5, <i>The Craft of Inquiry</i> Rivera, Lauren. 2012. Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms. <i>American Sociological Review</i>. 77: 999-1022 Fine, Gary Alan. 1993. "Ten Lies of Ethnography: Moral Dilemmas of Field Research." <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i> 22: 267-294.
	29 W	Historical Approaches – Core Issues, Exemplars, and Critiques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alford, Robert R. Chapters 6, <i>The Craft of Inquiry</i> Young, Michael. 2002. "Confessional protest: The religious birth of US national social movements." <i>ASR</i> 67:660-688. Lieberson, Stanley. 1991. "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases" <i>Social Forces</i> 70:307-320
	31 F	Measurement in Qualitative and Quantitative Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carmines EG, Zeller RA. 1979. <i>Reliability and Validity Assessment</i>. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. Bryson B. 1996. "'Anything But Heavy Metal': Symbolic

Exclusion and Musical Dislikes." *ASR* 61: 884-899.

Feb	5	W	Selecting Cases & Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Singleton RA, Jr. and Straits BC. 2010. "Ch 6: Sampling" in <i>Approaches to Social Research</i>, Fifth Edition. New York: Oxford.• Barber, JS, Shivakoti GP, Axinn WG, and Gajurel K. 1997. "Sampling Strategies for Rural Settings: A Detailed Example from Chitwan Valley Family Study, Nepal." <i>Nepal Population Journal</i> 6(5):193-203.• OPTIONAL: Groves R et al. 2009. Chapter 4: Sample Design and Sampling Error. <i>Survey Methodology</i>, 2nd ed
	7	F	Selecting Cases & Sampling Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small ML. 2009. "How Many Cases Do I Need?: On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Fieldbased Research." <i>Ethnography</i>. 10(1): 5-38.• Lareau A, 2011. "Chap 1: Concerted Cultivation and the Accomplishment of Natural Growth" pp. 1-14 and "Appendix A" pp. 345-360 in <i>Unequal Childhoods</i>, 2nd Ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.
	12	W	Issues of Causality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Morgan SL and Winship C. 2007. Chapters 1 & 2, <i>Counterfactuals and causal inference: methods and principles for social research</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.• Lieberman S. 1992. "Einstein, Renoir, and Greeley: Some Thoughts about Evidence in Sociology." <i>ASR</i> 57:1-15.• OPTIONAL: Holland PW. 1986. "Statistics and Causal Inference." <i>Journal of the American Statistical Association</i> 396: 940-970.
	14	F	Causal Inference, Mechanisms, and Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reskin, B. 2003. "Motives and Mechanisms in Modeling Inequality." <i>ASR</i> 68:1-21.• David J. Harding. 2003. "Counterfactual Models of Neighborhood Effects: The Effect of Neighborhood Poverty on Dropping Out and Teenage Pregnancy." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 109(3): 676-719
	19	W	Collecting Qualitative Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pps. 55-68, 78-91, 120-131, 155-172, & 223 from Spradley JP. 1979. <i>The Ethnographic Interview</i>. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.• Ezzell MB. 2009. "'Barbie dolls' on the pitch: Identity work, defensive othering, and inequality in women's rugby." <i>Social Problems</i> 56:111-131.• Lareau A. 2011. "Chap 14: Reflections on Longitudinal Ethnography and the Families' Reactions to Unequal Childhoods" pp. 312-341.
	21	F	Analyzing Qualitative Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Saldaña J. 2013. "Chap 1: An Introduction to Codes and Coding." <i>The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers</i>.

				Los Angeles: Sage.
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryan G and Bernard R. 2003. "Techniques to Identify Themes." <i>Field Methods</i> 15:85-109. • Kleinman S and Kolb KH. 2011. "Traps on the Path of Analysis," <i>Symbolic Interaction</i> 34:425-446.
	26	W	Ethnography/Participant Observation Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Javier Auyero and Débora Alejandra Swistun, <i>Flammable: Environmental Suffering in an Argentine Shantytown</i>, Oxford University Press, New York, 2009.
	28	F	Semi-Structured Interviewing Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith SS. 2005. "Don't put my name on it': (Dis)Trust and Job-Finding Assistance among the Black Urban Poor." <i>AJS</i> 111(1):1-57. • Viterna J. 2006. "Pulled, Pushed and Persuaded: Explaining Women's Mobilization into the Salvadoran Guerrilla Army." <i>AJS</i> 112: 1-45.
Mar	5	W	Sample Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaps 1, 2, & 5 in Groves R et al. 2009. <i>Survey Methodology</i>, 2nd ed • Add Health Design Slideshow
	7	F	Survey Error	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaps 3 and 6 in Groves R et al. 2009. <i>Survey Methodology</i>, 2nd ed • Yeager DS et al. 2011. "Comparing the Accuracy of RDD Telephone Surveys and Internet Surveys Conducted with Probability and Non-Probability Samples." <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i> 75(4):709-747.
	12	W	<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>NO CLASS</i>
	14	F	<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>NO CLASS</i>
	19	W	Questionnaire Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaps 7 & 8, Groves R et al. 2009. <i>Survey Methodology</i>, 2nd ed. • Chang, L. and Krosnick, J. A. (2003), Measuring the Frequency of Regular Behaviors: Comparing the "Typical Week" to the "Past Week". <i>Sociological Methodology</i>, 33:55-80.
	21	F	Survey Interviewing and Data Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chaps 9 & 10, Groves R et al. 2009. <i>Survey Methodology</i>, 2nd ed. • Weinreb AA. 2006. "The Limitations of Stranger-Interviewers in Rural Kenya." <i>ASR</i> 71:1014-1039. • Winship C and Radbill L. 1994. "Sampling Weights and Regression Analysis." <i>Sociological Methods and Research</i> 23:230-257.
	26	W	Quantitative Approaches to Relational, Contextual,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haynie DL. 2001. "Delinquent Peers Revisited: Does Network Structure Matter?" <i>AJS</i>. 106(4):1013-1057. • Schofer, E and M. Foucade-Gourinchas. 2001. "The

		and Spatial Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structural Contexts of Civic Engagement: Voluntary Association Membership in Comparative Perspective.” <i>ASR</i> 66: 806-828. OPTIONAL: Breiger, Ronald L. 2004. “The Analysis of Social Networks,” Ch. 22 in <i>Handbook of Data Analysis</i>
28	F	Longitudinal Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gordon Gauchat. 2012. “The Politicization of Science in the Public Sphere: A Study of Public Trust in Science in the U.S., 1974-2010.” <i>American Sociological Review</i> 77:167-187 Dechter, Aimee R and Glen H Elder. 2004 “World War II Mobilization in Men’s Work Lives: Continuity or Disruption for the Middle Class?” <i>AJS</i> 110:761-793. OPTIONAL: Tuma, Nancy. 2004. “Modeling Change,” Ch. 13 in <i>Handbook of Data Analysis</i>
Apr	1	W	Comparative-Historical Design: Comparative Logic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skocpol, Theda and Margaret Somers. 1980. “The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry.” <i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i> 22:174-197. Edwin Amenta et al., “Age for Leisure? Political Mediation and the Impact of the Pension Movement on Old-Age Policy.” <i>American Sociological Review</i> 70 (2005): 516-38. Andreas Wimmer and Yuval Feinstein. "The rise of the nation-state across the world, 1816-2001", in <i>American Sociological Review</i> 75(5):764-790, 2010
	4	F	Comparative Historical Design: Temporal Patterns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bennett, Andrew and Colin Elman. 2006. “Qualitative Research: Recent Developments in Case Study Methods.” <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 9:455-476. Fourcade, Marion and Sarah Babb. 2002 "The Rebirth of the Liberal Creed: Paths to Neoliberalism in Four Countries." <i>AJS</i> 108:533-579
	9	W	Experiments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Singleton RA, Jr. and Straits BC. 2010. “Chapter 8: Experimental Designs” in <i>Approaches to Social Research</i>, 5th Edition. New York: Oxford. Correll, Shelley J, Stephen Benard, and In Paik. 2007 “Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?” <i>AJS</i> 112:1297-1338.
	11	F	Research Ethics and IRBs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chap 11, Groves R et al. 2009. <i>Survey Methodology</i>, 2nd ed CITI Training ASA Code of Ethics “Changes in the Common Rule? The Social and Behavioral Sciences at Center Stage,” by Sally T. Hillsman, ASA Executive Officer in <i>ASA Footnotes</i> Dec 2011
	16	W	Mixed Methods Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Johnson BR & Onwuegbuzie AJ. 2004. “Mixed Methods Research: A Paradigm Whose Time Has Come.” <i>Educational Researcher</i> 33(7):14-26.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Morgan DL. 2007. "Paradigms Lost and Pragmatism Regained: Methodological Implications of Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods." <i>Journal of Mixed Methods Research</i> 1(1):48-76.
18	F	HOLIDAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Class
23	W	Examples of Mixed Methods Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2008. Small ML, Jacobs EM, and Massengill RP. "Why Organizational Ties Matter for Neighborhood Effects: A Study of Resource Access through Childcare Centers." <i>Social Forces</i>. 87(1). Laubach M. 2005. "Consent, Informal Organization and Job Rewards: A Mixed Methods Analysis." <i>Social Forces</i> 83:1535-1566.
25	F	Publication and Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cornwall M. 2010. "From the editor: Ten most likely ways an article submission fails to live up to publishing standards." <i>Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion</i> 49(4):i-v. Michele Lamont. 2009. "Opening the Black Box of Peer Review" from <i>How Professors Think</i>