SOC100-401: Introduction to Sociological Research

Draft Copy (Final Copy given on First Day of Class)

Meets: Mon/Wed 3:00-4:30, Vance B6

Instructor: Prof. Kristen Harknett, harknett@sas.upenn.edu, 271 McNeil Building
Office Hours: Mon/Wed from 4:30-5:15 or by appointment

Course Objectives:

1. Learn the basic principles underlying all types of social research
2. Become familiar with a variety of methods of conducting social research
3. Develop tools to be an intelligent consumer and critic of social research

Grading:

Four research projects (50%)
Midterm exam (15%)
Final examination (30%)
Attendance and participation (5%)

Required Books:

2. Course packet. Available at Campus Copy Center.

Course Rules:

Procedures for contesting a grade: If you disagree with a grade you received, you may submit a written request for a review of the test question or assignment. Written requests will be accepted during the 5-day period after you receive the graded test or assignment. Written requests must include your argument for why you think you should have received a different grade. Please note that grade reviews may result in your grade being changed either up or down.

Late projects: Late projects will be accepted, but your grade on the assignment will be lowered by 1 letter grade for each day the assignment is late. For example, an assignment that would have earned an A if on time would receive a B if 1 day late, a C if 2 days late, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPORTANT DATES</th>
<th>% of grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 27</td>
<td>Project 1 due (10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 18</td>
<td>Project 2 due (15%)</td>
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<td>Oct 20</td>
<td>Midterm examination (15%)</td>
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<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>Project 3 due (15%)</td>
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<td>Dec 6</td>
<td>Project 4 due (10%)</td>
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<td>Dec 22?</td>
<td>Final examination (30%)</td>
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PART I: FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

Week 1  Course overview

Readings:  Syllabus

9/8  Discuss syllabus, course requirements, and course goals
     In-class survey

Week 2  General Introduction: Social Research and Theory

Readings:  Singleton, Chapter 1
           of Sociological Method and Selected Texts on Sociology and its

9/13  What is sociological research and why is it important?

9/15  The role of theory in social research

Week 3  Research Design

Readings:  Singleton, Chapters 3-4
           U.S. News cheats in picking its 'best American colleges.'”
           [http://slate.msn.com/id/34027/]
           Rankings: US News responds to Slate's 'best colleges' story.”
           [http://slate.msn.com/id/34278/]

9/20  Research Design

9/22  Measurement

PROJECT #1: Assignment based on the US News and World Report rankings.

DUE 9/27

Week 4  Sampling

Readings:  Singleton, Chapter 5
           15-41.

9/27  Sampling

9/29  Sampling
PART II: COMMONLY-USED RESEARCH METHODS

Week 5  Survey Research

Readings: Singleton, Chapter 8-9
Schuman, Howard. 2002. “Sense and Nonsense about Surveys.”
Contexts. Summer, pp 40-47.
Read about the General Social Survey at the following web sites:
http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/projects/gensoc1.asp
http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/projects/gensoc3.asp

Assignment: Choose a topic and write a testable hypothesis based on the General
Social Survey codebook. (More detailed instructions will be handed out in
class).

10/4  Survey Research
10/6  Survey Instrumentation

Week 6  Data Analysis and Presentation of Results

Readings: Singleton, Chapter 14
Challenger” PP. 17-30 in Visual and Statistical Thinking: Displays of

10/11  Data analysis lab and demonstration
10/13  Data analysis and presentation of results

PROJECT #2: Analysis and report using the General Social Survey

DUE 10/18

Week 7  Review and Midterm

10/18  Midterm review
10/20  In-class Midterm examination
Week 8  Public Opinion Polls and Predicting Election Results


10/25  Fall Break –Class does not meet

10/27  The Statistics behind Public Opinion Polls

Week 9  Evaluation Research

Readings:  Singleton, Chapter 13

11/1  Evaluation Research

11/3  Evaluation research

Week 10  Experimental Research

Readings:  Singleton, Chapter 6

11/8  Experimental research design

11/10  Experimental research design
Week 11  Qualitative Research

Readings:  Singleton, Chapter 10

11/15 Qualitative research
11/17 Qualitative research

PROJECT #3: Qualitative Research Project
DUE 11/22

Week 12  Historical/Comparative Research


11/ 22 Historical/comparative research
11/ 24 Historical/comparative research
PART III: CRITICS, POLITICS, AND ETHICS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

Week 13  Social Research in Critical Perspective


11/29 Social Research Critiques
12/1 The Debate over Public Sociology

PROJECT #4: Report summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of one of a choice of research articles

DUE 12/6

Week 14  The Ethics of Social Research and Review for Final Exam

Readings: Singleton, Chapter 16

12/6 The Ethics of Social Research
12/8 Final examination review

Week of 12/15 – 12/22

12/22 Final examination 8:30-10:30am
NOTE: Date and time are tentative. Confirm with instructor!

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