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Spring 2003  
Office Hours: M & W 1:30 – 2:30 and Tues 1 - 4  
and by appointment

### **Our course materials are available on WebCT**

Teaching Assistant: Maranda Killian, Office Hours: Tues 9:30 – 10:30 & 1:30 – 2:30, Thurs 9:30 – 12:30  
Phone number for Luzerne 201: 872-3150

### **SOCIOLOGY 305 SECTIONS 00, 01 SOCIAL RESEARCH METHODS**

**INTRODUCTION:** In this course, I provide an overview of quantitative and qualitative methods. These methods include survey research, analysis of existing data, experiments, unobtrusive research, participant observation, and in depth interviews. This year, I am introducing the use of visual imagery as data to coincide with a visit from Sandy Skoglund, a renown American photographer. You are free to choose the method that best answers your research question and fits the time constraints of a semester course. Although some of you have conducted independent research projects for other courses, you may not re-submit that project for this course. **Note:** This is a time intensive course. Plan to spend 6 hours a week on this course and more once you begin data collection.

**PREREQUISITES:** Successful completion of Sociology 250, Sociology 303 (Social Theory), and Sociology 210 or Sociology 211.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** During this course, you will pose a sociological research question, review relevant scholarly literature, describe theories that inform your research, develop a formative research model, devise a detailed research design, systematically observe the world around you, record and analyze your observations, interpret your findings, and prepare an oral and written presentation of research findings. You will also evaluate the research of other scholars, explain the ethical and political implications of social research, apply principles of probability and non-probability sampling, as well as record, observe and analyze social behaviors in a public setting. Specific objectives for each class session are available upon request.

**SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES:** It is my responsibility to come prepared to class, share information with you in a comprehensible manner, direct you to resources which help you fulfill your tasks, provide you with opportunities to meet outside of class, ensure that the classroom is a place where we are free to respectfully acknowledge and express our differences, answer your questions, stimulate creative thought, facilitate discussions, evaluate your progress, and return your work in a timely fashion. It is your responsibility to also come prepared to class, ask questions, participate in class discussions, think analytically, apply the concepts you will learn in class, be respectful of me and others in the classroom, and finish your assignments on time. If either one of us fails to live up to these standards, this interaction will break down and learning becomes more difficult. To maximize your learning, I expect that you will have the reading completed before class, you will attend class, and you will inform me if you are having difficulty meeting your obligations. I also expect that you will bring your books and required readings to every session. Last, I value your comments regarding the development of this course. Please speak with me if you are particularly pleased or dissatisfied with some aspect of this class.

**REQUIRED TEXTS and MATERIALS:** The following texts and materials are available for purchase at the University Bookstore. These titles have been placed on reserve at Ganser Library. I have included the ISBN for each book if you choose to order them from on-line booksellers like [www.booksamillion.com](http://www.booksamillion.com), [www.half.com](http://www.half.com), or [www.bigwords.com](http://www.bigwords.com) (which will give you a competitive list of booksellers and book costs).

Babbie, Earl. 2000. *The Practice of Social Research*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition. Belmont, CA: ITP/Wadsworth.  
ISBN: 0534574742

Schensul, Stephen, Jean Schensul, and Margaret D. LeCompte. 1999. *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews, and Questionnaires*. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press. ISBN 0761991441

The Sociology Writing Group. 2001. *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Worth. ISBN: 1572599510

⇒ Electronic reserve items at Ganser Library. Ask me for the password.

1 zip disk formatted for IBM PCs **or** 3- 3 1/2" floppy disks formatted for IBM PCs.

**GRADING:** All assignments are required. All work (except for exams) must be completed with word processing software and proofread before submission. I will deduct points for typographical errors.

Review of empirical studies	10%
2 Exams @ 15% each	30%
2 Exercises @ 5% each	10%
Research Proposal	15%
Final paper	30%
Oral presentation	5%

If several of you choose to work as a group, you may submit a co-authored problem statement and project proposal, collect data together, and give your oral presentation together. However, the other assignments including the review of empirical studies and final paper must be completed individually. **Note:** If you plan to do a survey, you will need to pay for the photocopying and distribution of the surveys.

I use the following grading distribution. I round tenths place values  $\leq 0.5$  to the ones place below and tenths place values  $> 0.5$  to the ones place above.

A = (93 - 100)	B = (83 - 86)	C = (73 - 76)	D = (63 - 66)
A- = (90 - 92)	B- = (80 - 82)	C- = (70 - 72)	D- = (60 - 62)
B+ = (87 - 89)	C+ = (77 - 79)	D+ = (67 - 69)	F = (below 60)

#### MISCELLANEOUS:

**Attendance:** I require and monitor attendance. Missing more than 2 classes will reduce your final grade by **3 points** for every class missed unless your absence is excused (e.g., documented by the infirmary or other means approved by me). **WARNING:** If you skip class, sleep through class, attend only a portion of class, or otherwise not give full attention to the class, I reserve the right to count these as unexcused absences. Frequent absences will jeopardize your ability to successfully complete this course even if they are excused. If you miss more than 3 classes regardless of the reason, I will recommend that you withdraw from the course. Documentation for excused absences will not be accepted after May 7.

**Snow Day Policy:** If the university is closed because of inclement weather, you are responsible for the material that we would have discussed in class. If in class assignments or handouts were planned, they will be posted on the course WebCT page. Check the course page and complete the exercises and readings prior to the next class. If inclement weather occurs on the day that an assignment is due or a test would have been given, assignments must be submitted to me via email (as a virus free document) and tests will be administered during the next class session. If we have inclement weather, but the university is not closed, use your discretion. You will still be responsible for the work you miss and for submitting work on the day it is due.

**Late Work:** Timely completion of your assignments is imperative. However, emergency and unexpected situations do occur. Therefore, if you notify me in advance of the assignment's due date (not immediately before class on the day it is due), I may grant you an extension. If I do grant you an extension, we will sign a contract noting when the work will be submitted. Late work is penalized 5 points for each day after the due date. Work that remains outstanding by the time of the exams will be assigned a zero (0). Make up exams will only be given in the event of a medical or other serious emergency and must be documented. The make up exams will not be the same as the exam taken by the rest of the class. **Note: I do not give make up assignments or extra credit work. Grades of incomplete are given only in extreme cases that meet the criteria established by the Registrar's office.**

Academic Honesty: Please read the relevant pages in the Academic Honesty and Dishonesty brochure for a detailed explanation of the university's policy. Briefly, if you plagiarize, cheat, or misrepresent yourself or your work, I will assign you a zero (0) on the assignment and submit a report of the offense to the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs. The second offense will result in being reported to the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, and you will be awarded an F in the class. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to: copying someone else's work, submitting someone else's work, working with someone else such that the "separate" works appear identical, making minor modifications to someone else's work, or borrowing someone else's ideas. See [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/research/r\\_plagiar.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/research/r_plagiar.html) for a very easy to understand explanation of plagiarism.

People with Physical or Learning Disabilities: Please speak to me within the first two weeks of class if you require accommodations. Documentation from Office for Learning Services is required. If you need an alternate testing environment, it is your responsibility to provide me with the paperwork and make the arrangements at least 3 days before the exam.

Calculating Final Grades: If you believe that the final grade you receive in this class is incorrect, you must do the following before contacting me. 1- Multiply each assignment/test by the weight listed on the syllabus. 2- Add those numbers. This is your total grade before absence penalties. 3- Multiply each day you missed class (beyond 2 classes) by 3 and subtract from your total grade. If your calculated grade does not match the equivalent letter grade shown on the syllabus' grading distribution, send me your calculations following this formula and the dates that you believe that you missed class. See the syllabus for the definition of an excused absence. Remember, it is your responsibility to ensure that I received all notes documenting excused absences.

**SOCIOLOGY 301 COURSE OUTLINE, SPRING 2003 (M, W Schedule)**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>READINGS</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT DUE</b>
Week 1 Mon	27-Jan	Introduction and Overview of Methods		
Wed	29-Jan	Sociology and Empirical Research	Babbie Ch 1 & 19	
Week 2 Mon	3-Feb	Paradigms, Theory, and Social Research	Babbie Ch 2 & Michaels and Miethe (e-reserve)	
Wed	5-Feb	continued	Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte Ch 1-2 & Guba and Lincoln (e-reserve)	
Week 3 Mon	10-Feb	Causation	Babbie Ch 3	
Wed	12-Feb	Research Design	Babbie Ch 4	
Week 4 Mon	17-Feb	continued		<b>Problem Statement</b>
Wed	19-Feb	Library Resources and Evaluating Sources	Babbie Appendix A, Guide to Writing Ch 6, <a href="http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/research/skill26.htm">http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/research/skill26.htm</a>  <a href="http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/research/webeval.html">http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/research/webeval.html</a>	Meet in the Library Instructional Room, Main floor of Ganser Library
Week 5 Mon	24-Feb	Operationalization and Conceptualization	Babbie Ch 5, pp. 120 – 139	
Wed	26-Feb	Ethics and Politics of Research	Babbie Ch 18	<b>Exercise 1</b>
Week 6 Mon	3-Mar	Reliability and Validity	Babbie Ch 5, pp. 140 – 145 & Schensul et al Ch 3 & 11	
Wed	5-Mar	Index Construction and Writing a Review of Empirical Studies	Babbie Ch 6 Guide to Writing Ch 2-4	
Week 7 Mon	10-Mar	Index Construction continued	Jang (e-reserve)	<b>Review of empirical studies</b>
Wed	12-Mar	Survey research	Babbie Ch 9	
Week 8	17-Mar	Survey research continued		

Mon				
Wed	19-Mar	<b>EXAM 1</b>		
	24-Mar	<b>Spring Break – No Classes</b>		
Week 9 Mon	31-Mar	Probability sampling	Babbie Ch 7	
Wed	2-Apr	Non-probability sampling	Schensul et al Ch 10	
Week 10 Mon	7-Apr	Experiments	Babbie Ch 8	<b>Research Proposal and Human Subjects form</b>
Wed	9-Apr	Qualitative Field Research	Babbie Ch 10 Schmitt and Martin (e-reserve)	
Mon	14-Apr	continued	Schensul et al Ch 4-6 and Pifer (e-reserve)	
Wed	16-Apr	Visual Imagery as Data	Harper (e-reserve) & Bolton, Pole, and Mizen (e-reserve)	
Wed-Thurs	16 & 17-Apr	Sandy Skoglund's visit to the Art Department: Look for her public lecture		
Mon	21-Apr	Qualitative Data Analysis	Babbie Ch 13	
Wed	23-Apr	Unobtrusive Research	Babbie Ch 11 and Messner, Dunbar, & Hunt (e-reserve)	<b>Exercise 2</b>
Mon	28-Apr	<b>EXAM 2</b>		
Wed	30-Apr	Quantitative Data Analysis and Data Entry	Babbie Ch 14-17 Location TBA	
Mon	5-May	continued	Location TBA	
Wed	7-May	Data Entry and Writing the Final paper	Guide to Writing Ch 7 or 8 Location TBA	
Mon	14-May	Oral Presentation at 8 am Paper Due same time		