Getting in touch

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Course materials available in CE: http://online.fiu.edu
Teaching Assistant: Matt Kronz (mkronz@gmail.com)

Objective

The objective of this course is to provide students explanations and experience on conducting social research. Social Research Methods are the set of tools and principles used to explore and explain general patterns of social behavior. We will focus on the existing frameworks to explain social behavior as well as in the relationship between explaining why people behave in a certain way and collect and analyze data on observed behavior. At the end of the course you should be able to judge critically other people’s research and to conduct basic survey research in the social sciences. The tools presented in this course will improve your skills for the capstone seminar and the job market. If you complete your assignments, work with your team, understand the materials provided and attend lectures, by the end of the semester, you should be able to:

− Formulate a research question
− Write a literature review (find, evaluate and discuss materials on a given topic)
− Design a small research project
− Critique a research design
− Collect quantitative and qualitative data
− Analyze your data (graphs and descriptive statistics)
− Develop a hypothesis test (connect your research question and your data analysis)
− Present your research findings to an audience
− Write a research report

All students in this class are expected to observe FIU’s policies regarding academic honesty, plagiarism and students’ attendance as described in the FIU Student Handbook. The instructor and the TA reserve the right to use turnitin.com as well as google.com to check the content of your assignments.

Class and Group Project

In order to put into practice the material you will learn in this course, we will all work together in a semester long group project. We will design and conduct a study chosen by the students enrolled in the class (__________________________________________). During the course we will review the literature on the topic, design a survey questionnaire, develop
a sampling method and select a sample, conduct interviews, entry and clean the data and produce a quantitative analysis of the data collected in class. Each student will participate in every step of the process and she/he will conduct interviews on campus at the selected time and location. At the end of the semester every group will present his/her findings to the class and every student will submit an individual research report.

The study will have 6 sections and each group will choose a section. The groups should have 4 students in each group.

Each group member is going to perform one of the following group assignments:

1. Group leader for the research papers archive (Due date:)
2. Field supervisor (in charge of following the group members during the data collection process. This person will also collect and organize weekly field notes) (Due date:)
3. Data entry and quality control and codebook supervisor (Due date:)
4. Presenter of data analysis and main findings (Due date:)

**Grading Policies**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly quizzes (Friday)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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*In case you do not complete ALL project assignments ON TIME you will not be authorized to use the data we produced in the class and as a consequence your maximum grade will be 60/100 points (D)*

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Assignments (individual)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Assignments (group)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Report (individual)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Required Books**


**Recommended Books**


Morgan, David L. (1996) *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research* Sage Foundation, New York, NY


**REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED READINGS**

**Week 1: Introduction to the Course and the Philosophy of Science**
August 24, 26 and 28

- **Required**
  - Babbie Chapters 1 & 2
- **Recommended**
  - Bernard Chapters 1 & 2
  - Wysocki Chapter 1 (p. 5-16)
  - Chapter 2 (p. 17-21)

**Week 2: Research Design and Measurement**
August 31, September 2 and 4

- **Required**
  - Babbie Chapters 4 and 5
- **Recommended**
  - Bernard Chapter 5
  - Wysocki Chapters 4 and 5

**Week 3: Samples and Populations**
September 9 and 11 (September 7: Labor Day, University Closed)

- **Required**
  - Babbie Chapter 7
- **Recommended**
  - Bernard Chapters 6, 7 and 8
  - Wysocki Chapter 7

**Week 4: Ethics of Social Research and Survey Research**
September 14, 16 and 18

- **Required**
  - Babbie Chapters 3 and 9
- **Recommended**
  - Bernard Chapters 10 and 12
  - Wysocki Chapter 9

**Week 5: Experiments**
September 21, 23 and 25

- **Required**
  - Babbie Chapter 8
- **Recommended**
  - Wysocki Chapter 8

**Week 6: Evaluation Research**
September 28, 30 and October 2

- **Required**
  - Babbie Chapter 12

**Week 7: Open-Ended and Semi-Structured Interviewing**
October 5, 7 and 9

- **Required**
  - Bernard Chapter 9

**Week 8: Data Processing and Coding Survey Research**
October 12, 14 and 16

- **Required**
  - Babbie Chapter 14 (p. 443-448)
- **Recommended**
  - Miethe Chapter 3
Weeks 9 and 10: Analyzing Survey Data
October 19 to October 30
Required
Miethe
Chapters 1, 4, 5 and 6
Recommended
Bernard
Chapters 19, 20 and 21
Babbie
Chapter 14

Week 11: Literature Review
November 2, 4 and 6 (Review session for Midterm Exam: Nov 6)
Required
Galvan
Chapters 1-6, 8 and 9
Babbie
Chapter 15
Recommended
Bernard
Chapters 3 and 4
Wysocki
Chapter 3, Appendix (p. 213-226),
FIU Library
http://library.fiu.edu/Assistance/
Schmidt
Book

Week 12: MIDTERM EXAM
November 9, 11 and 13 (November 11: Veteran’s Day, University Closed)
Monday November 9, Part A: Weeks 2-5
Friday November 13, Part B: Weeks 9-10

Week 13: Qualitative Field Research and Unobtrusive Research
November 16, 18 and 20
Required
Babbie
Chapters 10 and 11
Recommended
Bernard
Chapters 15 (p.437-450) and 17
Wysocki
Chapter 9 (p. 169-184)

Week 14: Focus Groups
November 23, 25 and 27 (November 27: Thanksgiving, University closed)
Required
Morgan
Book: Focus Groups as Qualitative Research
Dawson and
Part I: www.unu.edu/Upress/food2/UIN03E/uin03e00.htm
Manderson
Babbie
Chapter 10 (p. 338-339)
Recommended
Bernard
Chapter 9 (p. 232-239)

Deadline for turning in your Final Research Report is November 25th, 2009 at 9:00 a.m.

Weeks 15: Group Presentations
November 30, December 2 and 4
The group leader should follow the instructions on the How to Prepare a Research Presentation and communicate effectively with the group members. Please use the course website for all communications. The communications and the content of slides used during the presentations will be graded as the Group Project Assignment 4. The presentation is considered as the Group Project Assignment 5. All group members should communicate with the speaker and provide all materials s/he will need.

Schedule
Group 1
Nov 30
9:00 to 9:15, 10 min for Q&A
Group 2
Nov 30
9:25 to 9:40, 10 min for Q&A
Group 3
Dec 2
9:00 to 9:15, 10 min for Q&A
Group 4
Dec 2
9:25 to 9:40, 10 min for Q&A
Group 5
Dec 4
9:00 to 9:15, 10 min for Q&A
Group 6
Dec 4
9:25 to 9:40, 10 min for Q&A
General
TBA
Aysa and Kronz
### PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>Task 1</td>
<td>Choose one of the five topics listed for the class project and write a short paragraph (about 100 words) explaining your preference. Write ONE research question related to the topic you choose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling Design</td>
<td>Sep 11</td>
<td>Task 2</td>
<td>Describe an appropriate sampling strategy for the class project. Bring a question related to your group project. This question might be included in the survey questionnaire, you should be careful in phrasing your question. Follow the guidelines in the Babbie textbook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Design</td>
<td>Sep 16</td>
<td>Task 3</td>
<td>Bring a question related to your group project. This question might be included in the survey questionnaire, you should be careful in phrasing your question. Follow the guidelines in the Babbie textbook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Pilot Survey</td>
<td>Sep 23</td>
<td>Task 4</td>
<td>Interview 2 respondents. Bring the completed questionnaires. <strong>Before turning in your questionnaire you must check them</strong> for: completeness, accuracy and consistency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 4A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Write a paragraph about the problems you had during the interviews (structure of the questionnaire, questions that were difficult to understand or explain, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>Oct 5</td>
<td>Task 5</td>
<td>Interview 10 respondents. Bring the completed questionnaires. <strong>Before turning in your questionnaire you must check them</strong> for: completeness, accuracy and consistency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Task 5A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bring a brief description of your experiences as interviewer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Task 6</td>
<td>Interview 10 respondents. Bring the completed questionnaires. <strong>Before turning in your questionnaire you must check them</strong> for: completeness, accuracy and consistency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 6A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bring a brief description of your experiences as interviewer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Entry</td>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>Task 7</td>
<td>Input the data of your 20 surveys following the indications of the instructor. Check for accuracy in the data entry process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Oct 30</td>
<td>Task 8</td>
<td>Univariate and bivariate descriptive statistics and graphs of the variables related to your research question (Mean, Median, Mode, Standard Deviation, IQR, Box plot, Cross-tabulation, Correlation). Include an interpretation of estimations and figures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>Nov 2</td>
<td>Task 9</td>
<td>Bring a list of 10 academic journals or book references related to your research question. Follow the author-date format for references in the Chicago Manual of Style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>Nov 18</td>
<td>Task 10</td>
<td>Write a literature review using your list of references. Follow the How to Write a Literature Review Guide posted on the course website. A literature review is NOT an annotated bibliography or a summary of the articles. It is an analytic discussion of what is known about your research question and hypotheses.</td>
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### GROUP PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team and topic</td>
<td>Sep 31</td>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>Names of members, topic and research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Report</td>
<td>Oct 14</td>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>Report on surveys of the group members (fill out form provided by instructor) and compilation of field experiences in a single file</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codebook</td>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
<td>Work as a group in this assignment. You should identify the variables of your topic and create a codebook for each one of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank of References</td>
<td>Nov 6</td>
<td>Assignment 4</td>
<td>List of all research papers used in the Lit. Rev. of the group members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Nov 20</td>
<td>Assignment 5</td>
<td>Bring hard copy of the power point slides for your presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination of Findings</td>
<td>Nov 30</td>
<td>Assignment 6</td>
<td>Presentation (see schedule in the first part of this syllabus)</td>
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## CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 Philosophy of Science</td>
<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>Question A: In your own words define the terms: induction, deduction, replication, theory, attribute, variable.</td>
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<td>Question B: Explain which are the common errors in casual inquiries</td>
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<td>Question C: List five social variables and the attributes they comprise</td>
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<td>Question D: In your own words define the terms: hypothesis, null hypothesis, paradigm, operationalization</td>
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<td>Question E: Complete this library tutorial: <a href="http://tilt.lib.utsystem.edu/">http://tilt.lib.utsystem.edu/</a></td>
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<td>Question B: Explain in your own words the following terms: conceptualization, indicator, reliability and validity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3 Samples and Populations</td>
<td>Sep 9</td>
<td>Question A: In your own words explain the differences between these sampling designs: simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling and multistage cluster sampling, snowball sampling and quota sampling</td>
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<td>Question B: Explain the purpose of weighting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4 Survey Research and Ethics</td>
<td>Sep 18</td>
<td>Question A: Explain the strengths and weaknesses of: interview surveys, telephone surveys and self-administered questionnaires</td>
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<td>Question B: Using Google Scholar search for “informed consent” AND “research”. Skim the articles and identify groups of people for whom informed consent may be problematic, and explain why.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5 Experiments</td>
<td>Sep 25</td>
<td>Question A: Describe the terms: double-blind experiment, control group, experimental group, randomization, matching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7 Open-Ended and Semi-Structured Interviewing</td>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>Question A: Choose a research question for which you will use open-ended and/or semi-structured interviewing, and explain why.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 9, and 10 Analyzing Survey Data</td>
<td>Oct 28</td>
<td>Question A: Explain why we use mean, median, mode and standard deviation or frequencies to describe quantitative data</td>
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<td>Question B: Describe a cross tabulation of two variables</td>
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<td>Question C: Describe a correlation between two variables</td>
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<td>Question D: In your own words explain what is univariate and bivariate analyses.</td>
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## NOTES

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