Purpose of the Course

This is an introductory course in social research methods and methodology. It introduces data-collection methods used by social scientists to study the social world, with an emphasis on what can be done to yield trustworthy information for our understanding of social life. You will learn how to construct a testable hypothesis, design a small-scale research project that tests it, and write up the findings. Throughout the course, you will develop a critical eye to the structure of social science research: identifying the object of inquiry, noting what the independent and dependent variables are, analyzing how the variables are being operationalized, learning how to present and analyze the data, and evaluating the quality of a research project. The course assumes no background in research methods or statistics.

My goals are: (1) to introduce you to the elements of research design, (2) to teach you how to read a research report with a critical eye, (3) to inform you about the limitations and problems of doing research into human behavior, and (4) to show you that doing and reading social research is not only rewarding, but also fun.

Rules of the Road

1. Class participation and active learning are vital to the success in this course!
2. I do not take attendance. However, if you miss more than two classes, you may have much greater difficulty in understanding the course materials, as well as in the assignments and quizzes. It is your own responsibility to obtain the information from missed classes.
3. Check your CU email account regularly. All communication about the course (including schedule and syllabus changes) will be made via e-mail (and be reiterated in class if possible).
4. Always bring the reading materials to class.
5. Late assignments will NOT be accepted.
6. You are responsible for completely understanding the rules associated with the Columbia Honor Code before you hand in your first assignment.
7. For the reading, you do not need to study it intensively before class, just read through it once so you can be ready to learn from class.
8. The quizzes and assignments will be drawn from the reading materials and class lectures.
9. I will distribute a study guide before each quiz, and guidelines before each team project.

Text

W. Lawrence Neuman. 2011. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative*
**Approaches.** 7th edition. Allyn & Bacon. (6th edition is acceptable.)
Additional readings are available on Courseworks.

**Components of Your Grade**

1. Two team projects (total of 60%): a field experiment and a field observation
2. Three non-cumulative quizzes (total of 30%): matching or/and multiple choice
3. Three homework assignments (total of 10%): see daily assignments

**Grading Scale**

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DAILY ASSIGNMENTS

July 3 (Tuesday): Introduction
Film: “People Like Us: Social Class in America” (2001; 124 minutes).
Assignment 1: Does class matter at Columbia University? How would you study it? (1 page, single spaced)

July 5 (Thursday): Getting started with social research

July 10 (Tuesday): Theory and Methodology
Neuman, Chapters 3-4 (Pp. 55-122).

July 12 (Thursday): Ethics of social research
Films: “Laud Humphreys’ Tearoom Trade—‘Once Upon A Time’” (5 minutes); “How Evil are You?” (2011; 43 minutes)

July 17 (Tuesday): Research design, measurement, and sampling
Neuman, Chapters 6-8 (Pp. 163-274).


**Quiz 1.**

**Assignment 2: Revisit assignment 1, and answer the following questions:** (1) Make one normative statement based on the subject of the article. (2) Develop one research question about the topic. (3) State two (counter) hypotheses coming from the research question that you could test. (4) State the unit of analysis that you would study. (5) What is your dependent variable and how would you operationalize it? (6) What is the independent variable and how would you operationalize it? (1 page, single spaced)

**July 19 (Thursday): Experimental Research, I**

Neuman, Chapter 9 (Pp. 175-307).


Films: “Eye of the Storm” (1970; 26 minutes); “True Colors” (1992; 18 minutes)

**Team project 1 (experiment) pretest due.**

**July 24 (Tuesday): Experimental Research, II**


Film: “Quiet Rage” (1992; 50 minutes)

**July 26 (Thursday): Survey research**
Neuman, Chapter 10 (Pp. 308-357).

**Assignment 3: To be announced in class.**
**Team project 1 (experiment) report due.**

**July 31 (Tuesday): Nonreactive research and secondary analysis**
Neuman, Chapter 11 (Pp. 358-382).

**Quiz 2.**

**August 2 (Thursday): Field research and focus group research, I**
Neuman, Chapter 13 (Pp. 420-463).

**Team project 2 (observation) pretest due.**

**August 7 (Tuesday): Field research and focus group research, II**

**August 9 (Thursday): Historical-comparative research, writing the research report, and the politics of social research**

Neuman, Chapter 14 and Chapter 16 (Pp. 464-506, 542-574).


**Quiz 3.**

**Team project 2 (observation) report due.**