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.

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: Oxford.
   (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) Ribas, V. 2015. *On the Line: Slaughterhouse Lives and the Making of the New South*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Course Website

https://sakai.unc.edu/portal/site/soci707_sp16

Requirements

- Written summary of research question/s for MA (or equivalent) project (due Fri, Jan 15)
- Short paper on how your topic *could* be studied within each of Alford's three paradigms (due Fri, Feb 5)
- Article critique/discussion (scheduled throughout the semester: see below)
- Proof of Certification in Human Subjects Research: CITI training (due, Mon Feb 8)
- Specific aims/Project summary for MA (or equivalent) project (due, Fri Mar 4)
- Interview project reflection (due, Fri, Mar 25)

- Draft of MA (or equivalent paper) proposal (due, Fri, Apr 8)
- Peer feedback on proposal (due, Fri, Apr 15)
- In –class presentation of proposal (dates TBD)
- MA (or equivalent paper) proposal (due Mon, May 2)

Research Proposal. The main requirement for this course is to develop your MA proposal (or an equivalent). In the course of the class you will turn in a statement of your research question/s, 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.

Article Critique. Another requirement for the course is that each student will be assigned (based on preferences) one of the readings for class that has a star by it in the syllabus and be responsible for initiating class discussion on the article as well as turning in a written review of the article by the start of that day's class. The written review should be 5-7 double-spaced pages critically evaluating the article's research design. A more detailed description of the assignment will be available on Sakai.

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.](https://www.citiprogram.org/default.asp) If you have not already done so, please complete the course for social and behavioral scientists. Upload a copy of the CITI Course Completion Record to Sakai (under Assignments) no later than midnight on Feb 7.

Interview Project and Reflection. The interview project is designed to provide a hands on experience with data collection, especially the less structured sort. 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 each. 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.

Meetings and Contacting Me
I am available and happy to meet outside of class at a time that works well for both of us. Email, of course, is great for asking smaller questions, but if you would like to meet in person, please talk to me about it in class or email to set something up.

General Courtesy and Commitment
It is important that for all of us to get everything out of the course as possible, we honor a few expectations. Please come to all classes. Please always be on time. Use laptops in class only for course related activities. Finally, respect the ideas and contributions of all class members.

Academic Honesty
I 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 me know if you have any questions. Violations of the Code will not be tolerated. http://honor.unc.edu/

Course Schedule

Date			Topic	Reading
Jan	11	M	The Research Process	• Alford, RR. 1998. Introduction and Chapter 1, *The Craft of Inquiry: Theories, Methods, and Evidence.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
	13	W	Theory and Research Questions	• Alford, RR. Chapters 2-3, *The Craft of Inquiry*
	18	M	NO CLASS -- HOLIDAY	
	20	W	From Research Question to Research Design	• Singleton RA, Jr. and Straits BC. 2010. "Chapter 4: Elements of Research Design" in *Approaches to Social Research*, 5th Edition. New York: Oxford. • Rachel Kahn Best, 2012. "Disease Politics and Medical Research Funding: Three Ways Advocacy Shapes Policy." *American Sociological Review* 77(5):780-803
	25	M	Multivariate Approaches – Core Issues, Exemplars, and Critiques	• Alford, Robert R. Chapters 4, *The Craft of Inquiry* • Budig, MJ. and England P. "The Wage Penalty for Motherhood." *ASR* Vol. 66, No. 2 (Apr., 2001): 204-225. • Abbott, Andrew. 1988. "Transcending General Linear Reality." *Sociological Theory* 6: 169-186.
	27	W	Interpretive Approaches – Core Issues, Exemplars, and Critiques	• Alford, Robert R. Chapters 5, *The Craft of Inquiry* • Rivera, Lauren. 2012. Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms. *American Sociological Review*. 77: 999-1022 • Fine, Gary Alan. 1993. "Ten Lies of Ethnography: Moral Dilemmas of Field Research." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 22: 267-294.
Feb	1	M	Historical Approaches – Core Issues, Exemplars, and Critiques	• Alford, RR. Chapters 6, *The Craft of Inquiry* • Young, M. 2002. "Confessional protest: The religious birth of US national social movements." *ASR* 67:660-688. • Lieberson, S. 1991. "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases" *Social Forces* 70:307-320.
	3	W	Writing Research	• Becker, H. *Writing for Social Scientists*, Chs 1, 7, 8 • Munger, MC. 2010. "10 Tips on How to Write Less Badly." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 57.03 • Grant, AM and Pollock, TG. 2011."Setting the Hook" *Academy of Management Journal* 54(5):873-879.

8	M	Research Ethics	• Chap 11, Groves R et al. 2009. *Survey Methodology* • CITI Training • ASA Code of Ethics
10	W	Measurement in Qualitative and Quantitative Research	• Carmines EG, Zeller RA. 1979. *Reliability and Validity Assessment*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. • Jerolmack, C. and Khan, S., 2014. Talk is cheap ethnography and the attitudinal fallacy. *Sociological Methods & Research*. • Pugh, A.J., 2013. What good are interviews for thinking about culture?: Demystifying interpretive analysis. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*, *1*(1), pp.42-68.
15	M	Selecting Cases & Sampling	• Singleton RA, Jr. and Straits BC. 2010. "Ch 6: Sampling" in *Approaches to Social Research*, Fifth Edition. New York: Oxford. • Groves R et al. 2009. Chapter 4: Sample Design and Sampling Error. *Survey Methodology*, 2nd ed
17	W	Selecting Cases & Sampling Applications	• Small ML. 2009. "'How Many Cases Do I Need?':On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Fieldbased Research." *Ethnography*. 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 *Unequal Childhoods*, 2nd Ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.
22	M	Issues of Causality	• Morgan SL and Winship C. 2007. Chapters 1 & 2, *Counterfactuals and causal inference: methods and principles for social research.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. • Katz, J., 2014. Situational Evidence Strategies for Causal Reasoning From Observational Field Notes. *Sociological Methods & Research* • OPTIONAL: Holland PW. 1986. "Statistics and Causal Inference." *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 396: 940-970.
24	W	Causal Inference, Mechanisms, and Interactions	• Reskin, B. 2003. "Motives and Mechanisms in Modeling Inequality." *ASR* 68:1-21. • Lee, D., 2010. The early socioeconomic effects of teenage childbearing: A propensity score matching approach. *Demographic Research*, *23*(25), pp.697-736.*

	29	M	Collecting Qualitative Data	• Pps. 55-68, 78-91, 120-131, 155-172, & 223 from Spradley JP. 1979. *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. • Kolb, K.H., 2011. Sympathy work: Identity and emotion management among victim-advocates and counselors. *Qualitative sociology*, *34*(1), pp.101-119.* • Lareau A. 2011. "Chap 14: Reflections on Longitudinal Ethnography and the Families' Reactions to Unequal Childhoods" pp. 312-341.
Mar	2	W	Analyzing Qualitative Data	• Saldaña J. 2013. "Chap 1: An Introduction to Codes and Coding." *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Los Angeles: Sage. • Ryan G and Bernard R. 2003. "Techniques to Identify Themes." *Field Methods* 15:85-109. • Kleinman S and Kolb KH. 2011. "Traps on the Path of Analysis," *Symbolic Interaction* 34:425-446.
	7	M	Ethnography/Participant Observation Examples	• Ribas, V. 2015. *On the Line: Slaughterhouse Lives and the Making of the New South*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
	9	W	Semi-Structured Interviewing Examples	• Gerson, K., 2002. Moral dilemmas, moral strategies, and the transformation of gender lessons from two generations of work and family change. *Gender & Society*, *16*(1), pp.8-28.* • Viterna J. 2006. "Pulled, Pushed and Persuaded: Explaining Women's Mobilization into the Salvadoran Guerrilla Army." *AJS* 112: 1-45.*
			SPRING BREAK	
	21	M	Sample Surveys	• Chaps 1, 2, & 5 in Groves R et al. 2009. *Survey Methodology*, 2nd ed
	23	W	Survey Error	• Chaps 3 and 6 in Groves R et al. 2009. *Survey Methodology*, 2nd ed • Yeager DS et al. 2011. "Comparing the Accuracy of RDD Telephone Surveys and Internet Surveys Conducted with Probability and Non-Probability Samples." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75(4):709-747.

	28	M	Questionnaire Design	• Chaps 7 & 8, Groves R et al. 2009. *Survey Methodology*, 2nd ed. • Chang, L. and Krosnick, J. A. (2003), Measuring the Frequency of Regular Behaviors: Comparing the "Typical Week" to the "Past Week". *Sociological Methodology*, 33:55–80.
	30	W	Survey Interviewing and Data Preparation	• Chaps 9 & 10, Groves R et al. 2009. *Survey Methodology*, 2nd ed. • Weinreb AA. 2006. "The Limitations of Stranger-Interviewers in Rural Kenya." *ASR* 71:1014-1039. • OPTIONAL: Winship C and Radbill L. 1994. "Sampling Weights and Regression Analysis." *Sociological Methods and Research* 23:230-257.
Apr	4	M	Comparative-Historical Design: Comparative Logic	• Skocpol, Theda and Margaret Somers. 1980. "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22:174-197. • Andreas Wimmer and Yuval Feinstein. "The rise of the nation-state across the world, 1816-2001", in *American Sociological Review* 75(5):764-790, 2010* •
	6	W	Comparative Historical Design: Temporal Patterns	• Bennett, Andrew and Colin Elman. 2006. "Qualitative Research: Recent Developments in Case Study Methods." *Annual Review of Political Science* 9:455-476. • Fourcade, Marion and Sarah Babb. 2002 "The Rebirth of the Liberal Creed: Paths to Neoliberalism in Four Countries." *AJS* 108:533-579* •
	11	M	Quantitative Approaches to Relational, Contextual, and Spatial Effects	• Haynie DL. 2001. "Delinquent Peers Revisited: Does Network Structure Matter?" *AJS*. 106(4):1013-1057.* • Schofer, E and M. Foucade-Gourinchas. 2001. "The Structural Contexts of Civic Engagement: Voluntary Association Membership in Comparative Perspective." *ASR* 66: 806-828.* • OPTIONAL: Breiger, Ronald L. 2004. "The Analysis of Social Networks," Ch. 22 in *Handbook of Data Analysis*
	13	W	Longitudinal Design	• Meadows, S.O., McLanahan, S.S. and Brooks-Gunn, J., 2008. Stability and change in family structure and maternal health trajectories. *American sociological review*, *73*(2), pp.314-334.* • Schwadel, P., 2011. Age, period, and cohort effects on religious activities and beliefs. *Social Science Research*, *40*(1), pp.181-192.* • OPTIONAL: Tuma, Nancy. 2004. "Modeling Change," Ch. 13 in *Handbook of Data Analysis*

18	M	Experiments	• Singleton RA, Jr. and Straits BC. 2010. "Chapter 8: Experimental Designs" in *Approaches to Social Research*, 5th Edition. New York: Oxford. • Correll, Shelley J, Stephen Benard, and In Paik. 2007 "Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?" *AJS* 112:1297-1338.*
20	W	Defining Mixed Methods Research	• Johnson BR & Onwuegbuzie AJ. 2004. "Mixed Methods Research: A Paradigm Whose Time Has Come." *Educational Researcher* 33(7):14-26. • Pearce, LD. 2015. "Thinking Outside the Q Boxes: Further Motivating a Mixed Research Perspective." in Hesse-Biber and Johnson (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Mixed and Multimethod Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
25	M	Examples of Mixed Methods Research	• 2008. Small ML, Jacobs EM, and Massengill RP. "Why Organizational Ties Matter for Neighborhood Effects: A Study of Resource Access through Childcare Centers." *Social Forces*. 87(1).* • Giordano, P.C., Copp, J.E., Longmore, M.A. and Manning, W.D., 2015. Contested domains, verbal "amplifiers," and intimate partner violence in young adulthood. *Social Forces*.*
27	W	Publication and Funding	• Cornwall M. 2010. "From the editor: Ten most likely ways an article submission fails to live up to publishing standards." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49(4):i–v. • Brunsma, Prasad, and Zuckerman. 2013. "Strategies for Reviewing Manuscripts." Report of ASA Task Force on Journal Review Times. Pp. 1-5.