

Sociology 368: Introductory Methodology
Professor Garot
Bowling Green State University

Office: 209 Williams Hall
Office Phone: 22415
Office Hours: 1-2, Tuesday and Thursday
Sociology Department Office: 222 Williams Hall

Overview

As social beings, each of us experience and make claims about the social world throughout our lives. As social scientists, in order to make credible claims, we must base them in rigorous research practices. This course will provide a general understanding of such practices, in order to give you the tools to conduct your own research, and evaluate the research of others.

Required Text

Babbie, Earl. 2004. The Basics of Social Research. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
Additional readings (only for Week 11) will be on reserve in the library.

Research Proposal

This course is organized to lead you through the steps of writing a research proposal, which you will present at the end of the class. The topic should be a research question of personal interest to you, on which you are willing to work for the entire term. Be flexible, as you may need to adjust your research question or your mode of analysis as we proceed. If you keep up with the assignments and consult with me if you have any questions, you should not be overwhelmed by the proposal. Further guidelines on the research proposal are included below in this syllabus. *Be sure to read all the information provided.*

Exams

Three exams will be offered in this course. Each will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions, covering any material which preceded the exam. I will offer study guides one week before the exam, and provide opportunities for review in class. The best way to study for the exam is to meet with members of a study group and quiz each other on important concepts.

Grading Policy

You will not be graded on a competitive basis, so in theory everyone can do well in the class. However, to earn a top grade, you will be expected to achieve standards of excellence in your work. If you are dissatisfied with any grade you receive, you must submit a written request for a review of the grade, including a defense, no later than one week after the work is handed back to the class. By requesting a review of the grade you receive, you invite the possibility that the new grade will be lower than the original grade, as well as the possibility that it will be higher. Points will be distributed as follows:

Research Proposal Assignments:	10%
In-Class Assignments:	14%
Mid-term #1:	15%

Mid-term #2:	15%
Final:	15%
Research Proposal:	15% (See Appendix)
Research Proposal Presentation:	5%
Attendance and Participation	16% (on time, prepared, stay for entire class)
Note that 105 points are possible for the course.	

Grades will be distributed along the following scale. The cut-offs for grades are firm and not subject to negotiation.

A: 89.5-105 B: 79.5-89.49 C: 69.5-79.49 D: 50-69.49

Attendance and Late Papers

For the final project, one point will be deducted for each day the project is late. *I do not accept papers handed in through e-mail.* Research proposal assignments and in-class assignments will only be accepted late if accompanied by a note from a recognized authority figure such as a doctor or dean. Absences will also be excused after the fact with such a note, or beforehand if you *inform me* that you have a credible conflict, such as a snow emergency or you play on an athletic team. *Please do not email me to request material you missed while you were absent.* Instead, work together with your study group to keep abreast of the material.

Etiquette

I am here as a resource for students who are excited about learning. Together, we can create a supportive classroom environment. To facilitate that, please pay heed to the ways your behavior contributes to the ambience of class. When responding to the comments of classmates, choose your words carefully, in the spirit of responding to ideas, not individuals. If you need to read a newspaper or novel, talk with friends, or work on material for another course during class time, you will distract from the focus we need to master the material, and I will ask you to leave. Finally, make sure your cell phone is turned **off** before class begins.

Cheating/Plagiarism

Familiarize yourself with the BGSU Academic Honesty Policy on pages 18-27 of the Student Handbook. *Also, be sure to read Babbie, pp. 458-459 on Avoiding Plagiarism.* Any student who violates this policy will be referred directly to the academic dean.

Academic Assistance

Your first source of assistance should be other students in class. Be sure to exchange phone numbers with others, and form study groups. Secondly, come see me during office hours, or contact me with your questions via email. In addition to myself, following are some of the resources available on campus to assist you:

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Writers Laboratory	303 Mosley Hall	22221
Study Skills Laboratory	213 Mosley Hall	28840
Office of Academic Enhancement,	101 University Hall	28943
Counseling Center	320 Saddlemere Student Services Bldg.	22081

Weekly Topics and Readings

Please complete the readings and be prepared to discuss them on the day they are assigned. We will work hard to establish an atmosphere that encourages questions, discussion, and debate.

You will get much more out of this course if you come with questions you want answered and/or ideas you wish to discuss. Please feel free to discuss topics further with me after class, or before class by appointment.

Calendar

Please note that the following schedule is tentative, and may change based on how quickly we cover the material. **Be sure to read the assigned materials prior to the day when they are assigned.**

Part 1: Introductory Concepts

Week 1

Tuesday, January 11th

Lecture 1: Introductions, overview

Thursday, January 13th: Basic Terms

Lecture 2: Chapter 1; pp. 442-444: "Journals versus Books;" pp. 448-455: "Using the Internet Wisely"

In-Class Assignment #1

Week 2

Tuesday, January 18th: Theory in Social Science

Lecture 3: Chapter 2, p. 444: "Theoretical Orientations"

Bring an article you have found on your research topic.

In-Class Assignment #2

Thursday, January 20th: Ethics

Lecture 4: Chapter 3

In-Class Assignment #3

Part 2: The Structure of Inquiry

Week 3

Tuesday, January 25th: Research Design

Lecture 5: Chapter 4; p. 444: "Research Design"

Part 1 study sheet distributed.

Bring a second article you have found on your research topic.

In-Class Assignment #4

Thursday, January 27th

Review for Mid-Term #1

Week 4

Tuesday, February 1st

Mid-term Exam #1

Thursday, February 3rd: Conceptualization, Observation and Measurement

Lecture 6: Chapter 5; pp. 444-445, "Measurement"

In-Class Assignment #5

Research Proposal: Collect three additional articles on your research topic.

Week 5

Tuesday, February 8th: Indexes, Scales and Typologies

Lecture 7: Chapter 6

Thursday, February 10th

In-Class Assignment #6

Week 6

Tuesday, February 15th: Sampling

Lecture 8: Chapter 7; p. 445, "Sampling"

Thursday, February 17th

In-Class Assignment #7

Part 2 study sheet distributed

Week 7

Tuesday, February 22nd

Review for Mid-term

Thursday, February 24th

Mid-term Exam #2

Part 3: Modes of Observation

Week 8

Tuesday, March 1st: Experiments

Lecture 9: Chapter 8; pp. 445-446, "Experiments"

Thursday, March 3rd

Research Proposal: Turn in annotated bibliography (5 points).

Week 9

March 7th to March 13th: Spring Break

Week 10

Tuesday, March 15th: Survey Research

Lecture 10: Chapter 9; p. 446, "Survey Research"

In-Class assignment #8: determine a survey topic

Thursday, March 17th: Interviews

Lecture 11

In-Class assignment #8 (cont.): design surveys

Week 11

Tuesday, March 22nd: Qualitative Field Research

Lecture 12: Chapter 10; pp. 446-447, "Field Research"

Additional reading: AA Snowball=s Chance in Hell...@

In-Class assignment #9: field notes

Thursday, March 24th: The Ethnographic Interview

Lecture 13

Additional reading: W.F. Whyte, AInterviewing in the Field@

In-Class assignment #10: interviewing

Week 12

Tuesday, March 29th: Content Analysis/Analyzing Existing Statistics

Lecture 14: Chapter 11, pp. 326-345; pp. 447, "Analyzing Existing Statistics"

In-Class Assignment #11

Thursday, March 31st: Historical/Comparative Analysis

Lecture 15: Chapter 11, pp. 346-356

Research Proposal: Turn in first draft of research design (5 points).

Week 13

Tuesday, April 5th: Evaluation Research

Lecture 16: Chapter 12; p. 447, "Evaluation Research"

Thursday, April 7th: Evaluation Research cont.

In-Class Assignment #12

Part 4: Analysis of Data

Week 14

Tuesday, April 12th: Qualitative Data Analysis

Lecture 17: Chapter 13; p. 447, "Data Analysis"

In-Class Assignment #13

Thursday, April 14th: Quantitative Data Analysis

Lecture 18: Chapter 14

In-Class Assignment #14

Part 5: Student Presentations of Research Proposal

Week 15

Tuesday, April 19th: Student Presentations

Tuesday, April 21st: Student Presentations

Week 16

Tuesday, April 26th: Student Presentations

If we do not have time for all presentations, those who have not presented will send their PowerPoint Presentations to their classmates via email.

Thursday, April 28th: Final Research Proposals due; Review for Final

Final Exams:Course Meeting Time

11:30-12:45

2:30-3:45

Day/Time of FinalWed., May 5th, 10:45-12:45Fri., May 7th, 3:30-5:30

**Introduction to Methodology
Course Planning Chart**

	Tuesday	Thursday
Week 1	January 11th: Introduction	January 13th: Basic terms In-Class Assignment #1
Week 2	January 18th: Theory <u>Bring an article you have found on your research topic.</u> In-Class Assignment #2	January 20th: Ethics In-Class Assignment #3
Week 3	January 25th: Research Design <u>Bring a second article you have found on your research topic.</u> In-Class Assignment #4	January 27th: Review for Mid-Term #1 In-Class Assignment #5 Research Proposal: Collect three additional articles on your research topic.
Week 4	February 1st: Mid-Term #1	February 3rd: Conceptualization In-Class Assignment #5
Week 5	February 8th: Indexes and Scales	February 10th In-Class Assignment #6
Week 6	February 15th: Sampling	February 17th In-Class Assignment #7 Part 2 study sheet distributed
Week 7	February 22nd: Review for Mid-term Exam #2	February 24th: Mid-term Exam #2
Week 8	March 1st: Experiments	March 3rd Research Proposal: Turn in annotated bibliography (5 points).
Week 9	S p r i n g	B r e a k
Week 10	March 15th: Survey Research In-Class assignment #8: determine a survey topic	March 17th: Interviews In-Class assignment #8 (cont.): design surveys
Week 11	March 22nd: Qualitative Field Research In-Class Assignment #9: field notes	Thursday, March 24th: The Ethnographic Interview In-Class Assignment #10: interviewing

Week 12	March 29th: Content Analysis/Analyzing Existing Statistics In-Class Assignment #11	March 31st: Historical/Comparative Analysis Research Proposal: Turn in first draft of research design (5 points).
Week 13	April 5th: Evaluation Research	April 7th In-Class Assignment #12
Week 14	April 12th: Qualitative Data Analysis In-Class Assignment #13	April 14th: Quantitative Data Analysis In-Class Assignment #14

My Proposal Presentation Date and Time is: _____

Final Exam:

Research Proposal Guidelines

An 8-12 page research proposal is required for this course. The proposal will be graded based on the following elements:

Introduction/statement of the problem:	25% (1-2 pages)
Literature review:	25% (3-5 pages)
Research design:	25% (3-5 pages)
In-class presentation:	25% (10 minutes presentation, 5 minutes for questions)

In the Introduction, you state why your research is pertinent. You can write part of the introduction after our first class, in a paragraph or two in which you describe what you would like to study, and why this is an interesting topic. This initial statement will guide you through your literature review and your research design. After completing those, you should return to your intro. in order to make sure that it is interesting to the reader, and fits with what you've learned about the literature on your topic.

We will progress through the literature review in stages. I would like you to find your first article on your topic after our second class session, read the article, and bring it to our third class on January 18th, where you will complete an in-class assignment. You will do the same with your second article, which we will discuss in class on January 25th. You will then need to find at least three additional articles on your topic, and turn in an annotated bibliography in which you list each reference in proper ASR citation format, followed by a one-paragraph description. You will then need to think about how to move from summaries of individual articles to weaving them together in the form of an argument which will constitute your literature review. Be sure to point out the strengths and weaknesses of each article, critiquing them on the methodological grounds you have learned in this course.

Your research design should present the best method for addressing your research question, and explain why the method you chose is better than other methods for addressing your topic. If your methods will be ethnographic field research, you need to specify where you plan to conduct your observations, and any problems you may foresee in entrée. You should also list questions you will pose in informal, ethnographic interviews. If you plan to conduct a survey, you need to

design your questionnaire, and describe how it will be administered. If you would like to conduct an experiment, you need to describe how you will select subjects, and how you will conduct your experiment. For whichever method you choose, you need to address concerns with reliability, validity, and reactivity, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of your approach. Try to show how your methodology remedies problems, or addresses controversies you discussed in your lit. review. Then discuss how your research will address ethical issues as presented in class.

Finally, you will present your research proposal to the class. You will have five to ten minutes to describe your research question and what motivated you to pursue this question, explain what you learned from the literature, and show how you propose to study this topic. You may use the chalkboard, overhead transparencies, posters and PowerPoint for your presentation; however, these are not required. Final presentations will be graded by your peers on a form which I will provide.

General Writing Guidelines*

Format and Presentation

Do not skip lines between paragraphs (like I'm doing here). Use Times New Roman or CG Times as your font, 12-point size. Papers must be typewritten, double-spaced with approximately 1" margins. Number all pages. Papers must be stapled. This means no plastic binders, no folding the edges together and no paper clips. Do not use a cover page. The following information should appear on the upper right-hand corner of the first page: the names and student ID# (P00#) of each person in your group, class meeting time, paper topic, and title. A bibliography is a necessary part of a research paper (see Citation, below), and should be attached at the end. Papers which egregiously fail to follow these guidelines will be returned to the authors without a grade.

Citation

This is sometimes tricky, but by this point in your academic career, it is essential that you do it correctly. It is expected that you will use material from the texts and lecture to analyze your subject. Thus, whether you use direct quotes or paraphrases, you must give credit to the authors of those words, when they are not your own.

If you cite a lecture, do it this way: (Lecture, 11/30/04). However, relying solely on lecture citations for material that is also in the readings reveals to me that your familiarity with the readings is inadequate. So you should be sure to prioritize. Where appropriate, always cite the original source and not my delivery of it in lecture.

In the text, directly quoted course materials from the textbook should be cited in one of the following ways:

"The stereotypes that we learn not only justify prejudice and discrimination but also can produce the behavior depicted in the stereotype" (Henslin, 2001:331).

Or alternately:

James Henslin (2001:331) suggests that, “The stereotypes that we learn not only justify prejudice and discrimination but also can produce the behavior depicted in the stereotype.”

Also, be sure to cite any ideas that you borrow, not just quoted text. For instance:

Many analysts have noted how stereotypes may produce the behavior they depict (Henslin, 2001:331).

Any direct quotation that is longer than three lines needs to be set off from the body of the paper by indenting and single-spacing. Since your papers will be double-spaced and indented only to begin paragraphs, you will see the contrast. Be careful to differentiate between what the textbook authors are saying themselves, and the other authors that they may in turn quote. Cite accordingly. Do not string quotes together without putting them in context with your own prose.

When you use a direct quote, place it in the context of a sentence that includes an explanation of what the quote means and why it is useful in service of the point you are making.

A full reference, including the author’s name, book or article title, publishing information and page numbers will appear in a separate, alphabetically organized bibliography at the end of the paper, under the heading, “References”. Below is an example of a reference from the reader and from Henslin.

Anderson, Elijah. 1996. “The Code of the Streets.” Pp. 62-73 in Susan J. Ferguson (Ed.) Mapping the Social Landscape. London: Mayfield.

Henslin, James. 2001. Mapping the Social Landscape. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Style

In general, write as simply as possible. Never use a big word, when a little one will do. Big words don’t necessarily convey intellectual prowess, especially when they are awkwardly used. Your word choice should be appropriate to formal writing: no slang, and no contractions (“can’t”, “don’t”), unless you are quoting others or it somehow better helps you to make your point. You must use words that actually exist, and words must be used correctly. Look up definitions and spellings if you are unsure. Spell check often misses words.

Avoid using the indefinite “you.” You will notice that I am addressing these instructions to you; that is, I am using the second person. That is because I am giving these instructions to a definite person or set of persons. In your papers, unless you mean to address the reader directly, do not use “you” when you mean to use “one” or “we.” Refer to yourself as “I” in describing your experience, and as “we” in your analysis. It is perfectly acceptable to use the first person singular in papers – it is not too informal. Use “we” for the author and the reader together: “We have seen how breaching experiments disturb our taken-for-granted notions about reality.” Never refer to “society” as an active agent (that’s my pet peeve), as in, “Society requires that people follow norms.”

Avoid “a lot” (and by the way it’s not spelled “alot”), and “very.” Hemingway and Morrison do not need them, and neither do you. Don’t confuse “their/there/they’re” or “it’s/its”, or “to/two/too”, or “were/we’re/where”, etc. Also please differentiate between “suppose” and “supposed.” These are not interchangeable, and are almost always improperly applied. These

are sets of words that give students trouble, so please be careful.

Try to avoid using “he”, “his”, or “mankind” to mean anyone or all in general. If for some reason you have a strong ideological commitment to using “he” as the generic, you may do so, but it is not accurate, and there are other options available.

Make sure that nouns and verbs agree in number. Avoid sentence fragments. Make sure that the sentences you write have subjects and predicates. Verbs are also necessary. Do not leave a clause hanging without these necessary components. Avoid run-on sentences. Make sure that if you link things together in a sentence that you do so by using the proper connective words or punctuation marks. These kinds of mistakes can often be caught by reading your paper aloud. If it sounds wrong, it probably is.

Always follow the parsimony principle. That is, use as few words as possible to make your point.

Process

One way to start is by saying your ideas out loud, and writing them down. Just get the words out of your head and onto the page where you will be able to work with them more easily. I strongly suggest that you write more than one draft of your paper. Most successful papers are begun well in advance of the night before the assignment is due. The best way to start is to just spew out a messy first draft, getting all of your ideas and facts down on paper (if you write long-hand) or your computer screen (if you prefer to word process). Then, a second draft will help you to organize the sections, focus your argument, and refine the content and style.

You must be at this point before you come to see me about your paper. Although I will be unable to read entire drafts, I may be able to discuss with you specific parts of your thesis or analysis, and/or help you with difficulties in transitions between ideas or sections of your argument. Be sure that all spelling and grammatical errors, and the formatting the paper are correct in the final draft. You must proofread your own paper. It is not acceptable to turn in a paper with typographical errors, misspellings, nouns and verbs that do not agree, misused words, run-on sentences, sentence fragments, etc. You may want to rewrite the beginning or end of your paper in the last draft. Often in composing your paper, you will have changed your focus or ideas somewhat by the time you finish. You will want to make sure that these changes are reflected in a new version of your introduction or conclusion.

Finally, re-read your own paper and imagine that someone else wrote it. Does it make sense? Fix it, if it doesn't. You may also want to get someone else to read your paper and give you comments. It is often hard to be objective when you are so close in the writing process. If you have trouble with your writing, get help. I am happy to help you in office hours or by appointment, and the campus has a variety of tutoring services available to you.

Good luck, and start writing now!

*This document adapted with thanks from Dr. Kerry Ferris' Case Study Essay Guidelines.