Welcome to Social Sciences Inquiry. In this first sequence of the course, you will be introduced to social science research methods, which will guide you to write a research paper in the last sequence of SSI (in Spring quarter) with the methodological training of Winter quarter. The course will be devoted to practicing social scientific concepts and skills for the completion of a policy-relevant research project. In that process, our goals are not only to develop the skills of written and oral presentation of completed research but also to learn the skills of academic cooperation to improve our works through on-going mutual critique, response, and revision processes.

We will review how social scientists ask and answer their research questions about social life and facts. We will cover four main areas of Social Research: research design, measurement, sampling, and modes of observation and data analyses. We will initially focus on the general logic of social inquiry including hypotheses, variables, causality, and ethical issues (Part I). You then explore how to define concepts, how to translate them into reliable and valid measures, and how to make questionnaires (Part II). The next portion of the course will look at the collection and management of data (Part III). Then, we will delve into various modes of observation – experimental designs, survey designs and quantitative regression analysis, content analysis, comparative/historical analysis, qualitative field research, and their relative strengths and weaknesses. For each mode of analytical strategy, we will conduct a critical review of published articles in the main venues of sociology, political science, and economics (Part IV).

In the course of reviewing these, you will be asked to develop your own research proposal step by step throughout the quarter, following detailed guidelines. We employ a simulated paper production and review process in modern academy to this course: see the detailed procedures and requirements below. We seek not only rigorous and critical peer reviews, but also cooperative and active (therefore fun) academic communications and productions.
Course Requirements:

Readings:

We will use the following text in this course. Please purchase or borrow a copy for your use during the quarter. Other readings will be available through the course web page. We will also make use of other media forms, such as audio/video segments. I refer to the book by the authors’ initials below. Page numbers below are based on the 11th edition, but if you find other editions (e.g. 10th or 12th) at a more reasonable price, you may use it.


Selected Journal Articles (See course outline below)

Assignments:

There will be 3 assignments. Homework assignments explore key ideas and techniques in greater depth. These assignments will help you learn course material, and will have components geared to build toward your final research proposal. The details for each assignment will follow as the course progresses and be posted on the assignment folder in blackboard. These assignments will cover the following topics:

#1 Certification for NIH training  
#2 Variables/causality  
#3 Probability sampling

Also there will be sporadic reading questions for article reviews, which start from class 13. You will be expected to answer and submit them.

I expect that each of you will turn in assignments on the day that they are due. There will be penalty for late assignments. Assignments over a week late will not be accepted.

Midterm:

There will be a mid-term exam (open-book).

In-Class Exercises:

There are many class sessions in which students are expected to complete an in-class activity. Often, these activities are completed in a group. The details for in-class exercises will follow in “each class” as the course progresses and be NOT posted on the course webpage. In-class exercises will not be graded but will be used for gauging your class participation.

Research Proposal:

You will develop a research proposal during the quarter. We have several steps to accomplish this: The term paper (research proposal) topic will be developed in consultation with the instructor. It should be (1) a social scientific issue and (2) have some policy-relevant implications (e.g. “who will win NCAA tournament next year?” or “what determines stock market indices?” will not be accepted). Submit the title and one paragraph.
(about a half page, 2-300 words) of the description by class 2. This submission is to judge whether your topic is appropriate for this course, therefore will not be graded. We will discuss each of your topic shortly during the class. Then, you will have to submit a preliminary research proposal by class 7. It should include the objective of the research, literature review, variables for study, and measurement (refer to the guideline on the chalk). You will present it to your group and collect comments from your group members. During the second part of the quarter, you are expected to submit a full version of research proposal -- by class 17. You will be provided with detailed guidelines of what I (TA, & your colleagues) expect. This time, the full length research proposal will include longer and more detailed literature review, your own causal explanatory model, data and measurement section, and if possible, preliminary findings (extra credits). You will present this full version to the entire class and receive several comments from your instructor, TA, and other colleagues.

The final version of the paper will be graded based on how seriously and persuasively you respond to these comments. You should submit the final version of your research proposal no later than March 15th, along with one-page response memo.

Comments on your Colleagues’ Papers:

You are expected to deliver “critical” but “constructive” and “courteous” comments to your colleagues’ research proposals and final papers. Remember: you will not reject their ideas, arguments, and analyses, but provide them with helpful, productive comments on how to improve their works when they present. Be prepared to circulate your proposal and final papers to your class mates (we will use the discussion board on the chalk).

Grading:

Your grade will be measured as follows: Grading will NOT be on a curve:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>&gt;= 93</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Proposal</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Final Paper 1st</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Final Paper Revised</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 60</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Presentation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Exercises</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments on Others’ Works</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DAILY ASSIGNMENTS

I. Research Design

Class 1:

Topic I: What are the course goals and requirements?

Topic II: What do you need to do to be successful in this class?

Topic III: What is a social research and how can we develop it?

Class 2:

Assignment: “The Art of Writing Proposals” by Przeworski and Salomon

Assignment: “Writing for Social Scientist” by Howard S. Becker
Read Summary at http://www.brint.com/papers/writing.htm

Verbal Presentation of your Preliminary Idea

Class 3:

Assignment #1 Due Today

Class 4:


II. Measurement

Class 5:
Topic I: Measurement: Conceptualization and Operationalization, Levels of Measurement

Topic II: Measurement: Levels of Measurement / Validity and Reliability


Class 6:
Topic I: Questionnaire Construction
Assignment: Read [EB] Chapter 9: Pp. 244-56, 273-75

Topic II: Variable Construction

Assignment #2 Due Today

Class 7: Student Research Proposal Presentations (within Groups)

Preliminary Research Proposal Due (Prepare Six Hard Copies)

Class 8:
Topic I: Generalization, Target Population, and Sampling Frames
Assignment: Read [EB] Chapter 7: Pp. 187-197, 199-201

Topic II: Probability Sampling

Class 9:
Topic III: Types of Sampling Designs
Assignment #3 Due Today
IV. Modes of Observation

Class 10:

Topic I: Experimental Design

Class 11:

Topic I: Qualitative Field Research Techniques

Topic II: Article Review – Focusing on Sampling and Interview Techniques

Topic III: Midterm Review

Class 12: Midterm Exam

Class 13:

Topic I: Internal and External Validity

Topic II: Article Review – Focusing on Field Experiments


Class 14:

Topic I: Article Review – Focusing on Measurement and Third Variables


Topic II: Article Review – Focusing on Causal Pathways and Interpretation of Results

**Class 15:**

**Topic I: Article Review – Focusing on Validity and Reliability**


**Topic II: Article Review – Focusing on Internal Validity**


**Class 16:**

**Topic I: Content Analysis**


**Topic II: Article Review – Focusing on Causal Mechanism (Intervening Variables)**


---

**V. Applications**

**Class 17 – Class 19: Student Proposal Presentations**

**The Term Paper -- First Submission Due Today (Class 17)**

**Comments on Each Paper: Due one day after each Presentation**

**The Term Paper -- Revise and Resubmit Due by noon March 15th (Post it on Discussion Board)**