

## Sociology 405 – RESEARCH METHODS

### Syllabus - Spring 2006

**PREREQUISITE:** Graduate standing. Completion of 401-1 and completion or concurrent enrollment in 401-2. Completion of 403 (field methods) is also desirable.

**TIME AND PLACE:** 12 – 2:30, Seminar Room in 1808 Chicago avenue

**INSTRUCTOR:** Lincoln Quillian, 1812 Chicago Avenue Room 303 (491-7488). Office Hours are Mon. 2-3 or by appointment.

**OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION (not written by me):** Fundamentals of research design, sampling, data collection, and data analysis. May include questionnaire design, aspects of archival research, content analysis, and the relationship between methods, analytic techniques, and the building and confirming of theoretical models. [sic]

**COMMENT ON OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION:** The official course description is a fair description of what we will actually cover, except that an important consideration for our course will be establishing evidence of causality. We will focus on research design, sampling, measurement, and causal inference. The course will also give you some exposure to the tremendous diversity of methods used by sociologists and will discuss their relative strengths and weaknesses.

**EXPECTATION-LOWERING STATEMENT:** Because I have never taught this course before, there will be some rough edges, and specific readings and procedures may change as we go along.

**CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:** Please NO EATING during class unless I'm allowing it for that class. A bottle of water or cup of coffee is acceptable.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:** Course grades will be assigned based on short homework, in-class participation, a final exam, and two group projects.

*Short homeworks (20%).* There will be a short homework assignment most weeks. Assignments will be reviewed for substantial correctness but will not be graded in detail. Each homework assignment will be given one of three grades: “3” if complete, substantially correct, and well-documented; “2” if there are minor deviations from the “3” standard; or “1” if substantially incomplete, poorly presented, or showing little effort. Late short homeworks will be accepted *as long as they are within one week of the original due date for that assignment*, but will receive a score one lower than if that assignment was turned in on time. Finally, the lowest short homework grade will be dropped from the final grade calculation. The dropped grade may be a “zero” for not turning an assignment in.

*In-class participation* (15%). Participation in course discussions is required. Participation is impossible without attendance.

*Group Projects* (35%). Thirty five percent of the grade will be based on group projects. One of these will be a large project that will span the entire quarter and will make up 25% of the final grade. The other project will be smaller and will make up 10% of the final grade.

*Final Exam* (30%): We will have a final exam, which will likely be take-home. Format and other details of the exam will be discussed later.

**E-MAIL LIST:** There may occasionally be messages from me to the class. You are responsible for checking your e-mail daily to make sure you do not miss announcements.

**ACADMIC INTEGRITY:** By signing up for this course, you accept the University's rules regarding academic integrity. They can be reviewed at: <http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/>. Discussion of questions on short homework assignments is allowed, assuming this is based on both parties having read the work. This is in the spirit of mutual discussion to improve understanding. You are not allowed to copy someone else's homework assignment.

**FEEDBACK:** I am interested to know your reactions to the course, and your suggestions for improvement. We may have informal evaluations at a few points at which time you are able to write comments or make suggestions anonymously. In addition, please feel free to e-mail me comments or suggestions to [l-quillian@northwestern.edu](mailto:l-quillian@northwestern.edu) or to stop by during office hours.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** This syllabus has benefited from my inspection of methods syllabuses created by Jeremy Freese and Jane Piliavin.

## **REQUIRED BOOK**

King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

## PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

Note: the schedule below is likely to change as we go along. All required readings are or will be available through blackboard as PDF files (or as links to library PDF copies) except for readings from the King, Keohane, and Verba book ordered at the bookstore.

Week 1 (March 29) Brief introduction.

Week 2 (April 5) Basic social science inference; basic validity and reliability issues; content analysis and preparation for content analysis exercise.

Reading:

King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, Chapter 1

Stinchcombe, Arthur. 1968. "Fundamental Forms of Scientific Inference." Pp. 15-28 in *Constructing Social Theories*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World.

Lieberson, Stanley. 1992. "Einstein, Renoir, and Greeley: Evidence in Sociology." *American Sociological Review* 57: 1 – 18.

Singleton, Royce A. and Bruce Straits. 2005. *Approaches to Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press. "Reliability and Validity" Pp. 90-107.

Singleton, Royce A. and Bruce Straits. 2005. *Approaches to Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press. "Historical Analysis" and "Content Analysis" Pp. 364-376.

Gilens, Martin. 1999. *Why American Hate Welfare: Race, Media and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 5.

Additional:

Collins, Randall. 1989. "Sociology: Proscience or Antiscience?" *American Sociological Review* 54(1): 124-139.

Rubin, Z. 1970. "Measurement of Romantic Love." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 16:265-73.

Griswold, Wendy. 1981. "American Character and the American Novel: An Expansion of Reflection Theory in the Sociology of Literature." *American Journal of Sociology* 86:740-65.

Humphrey, Ronald and Howard Schuman. 1984. "The Portrayal of Blacks in Magazine Advertisements: 1950-1982." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 48(3): 551-563.

Week 3 (April 12<sup>th</sup>) More Social Science Inference; Sampling; Significance Testing

King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, Chapter 2.

Nancy Maples. 2003. *Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourse Analysis, and Activist Research*. New York: Routledge. Chapters 3, 5.

Stuart, Alan. 1984. *The Ideas of Sampling*. High Wycombe: Charles Griffin and Company Ltd. Sections 1-15.

Becker, Howard S. 1998. "Tricks" and "Sampling." Pp. 1-9, 67-108. *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about your Research While You're Doing It*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press.

Cohen, Jacob. 1994. "The earth is round ( $p < .05$ )." *American Psychologist* 49: 997-1003.

Okamoto, Dina G. 2003. "Toward a Theory of Panethnicity: Explaining Asian American Collective Action." *American Sociological Review* 68:811-842.

Week 4 (April 26<sup>th</sup>) Ethnographic Methods

Katz, Jack. 1997. "Ethnography's Warrants." *Sociological Methods and Research* 25: 391-421.

Burawoy, Michael 1991. "The Extended Case Method. Pp. 271-300 in *Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Goldthorpe, John H. 2000. "Sociological Ethnography Today: Problems and Possibilities." Pp. 65-93 in *On Sociology: Numbers, Narratives, and the Integration of Research and Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wacquant, Loic. 2002. "Scrutinizing the Street: Poverty, Morality, and the Pitfalls of Urban Ethnography." *American Journal of Sociology* 107: 1468-1532. (esp. pp. 1471-86).

Duneier, Mitchell. 2002. "What Kind of Combat Sport is Sociology?" *American Journal of Sociology* 107: 1551-1576.

Week 5 (April 19<sup>th</sup>) Surveys

Schaeffer, Nora Cate and Stanley Presser. 2003. "The Science of Asking Questions." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29:65-88.

Sniderman, Paul M. and Douglas B. Grob. 1996. "Innovations in Experimental Design in Attitude Surveys." *Annual Review of Sociology* 22:377-399.

Lewontin, Richard. [1995] 2000. "Sex, Lies, and Social Science." Pp. 229-269 in *It Ain't Necessarily So: The Dream of the Human Genome and Other Illusions*. New York: New York Review Books. [Including responses from Laumann et al. and Richard Sennette and a rejoinder from Lewontin.]

Pager, Devah, and Lincoln Quillian. 2005. "Walking the Talk? What Employers Say vs. What They Do." *American Sociological Review* 70(3): 355-380.

Michael O. Emerson; Karen J. Chai; George Yancey. 2001. "Does Race Matter for Residential Segregation? Exploring the Preferences of White Americans." *American Sociological Review* 66(6): 922-935.

Week 6 (May 3<sup>rd</sup>) Causal Inference: Concepts

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. "Causality and Causal Inference." Pp. 75-114 in *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Holland, Paul. 1986. "Statistics and Causal Inference." *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 81: 945-60.

Stinchcombe, Arthur. 1968. "The Structure of Causal Theories." Pp. 28-38 in *Constructing Social Theories*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World.

Phillips, David. 1982. "The Impact of Fictional Television Stories on U.S. Adult Fatalities: New Evidence on the Effect of the Mass Media on Violence." *American Journal of Sociology* 87(6): 1340-1359.

Week 7 (May 10<sup>th</sup>) Experiments and Causal Inference

Campbell, Donald T. and Julian Stanley. 1964. "Factors Jeopardizing Validity..." Pp. 5-16 in *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Oakley, Ann. 2000. *Experiments in Knowing: Gender and Methods in the Social Sciences*. New York: The New Press. Selections.

Zelditch, Morris, Jr. 1969. "Can you Really Study an Army in the Laboratory?" Pp. 528-539 in *A Sociological Reader on Complex Organization*, edited by A. Etzioni. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Sears, David O. 1986. "College Sophomores in the Laboratory: The Influence of a Narrow Data Base on Social Psychology's View of Human Nature." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 51: 515-30.

Correll, Shelley. 2004. "Constraints into Preferences: Gender, Status, and Emerging Career Aspirations." *American Sociological Review* 69: 93-113.

Pager, Devah. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108(5): 937-75.

Week 8 (May 17<sup>th</sup>) Causal Inference in Observational Studies

Gray-Donald, Katherin and Michael Kramer. 1988. "Causality inference in observation vs. experimental studies." *American Journal of Epidemiology* 127: 885-92.

LaLonde, Robert J. 1986. "Evaluating the Econometric Evaluations of Training Programs with Experimental Data." *American Economic Review* 76: 923-937.

Mayer, Susan E. 1997. Selection in *What Money Can't Buy: Family Income and Children's Life Chances*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lauderdale, Diane S. 2006. "Birth Outcomes for Arabic-Named Women in California Before and After September 11." *Demography* 43(1): 185-201.

Freeman, Richard B. and James L. Medoff. 1984. *What Do Unions Do?* New York: Basic Books. Chapter 5 ("Labor's Elite: The Effect of Unionism on Wage Inequality.")

Week 9 (May 24<sup>th</sup>) Alternative Strategies in Casual Inference

Lutfey, Karen and Jeremy Freese. 2005. "Toward some Fundamentals of Fundamental Causality: Socioeconomic Status and Health in the Routine Clinic Visit for Diabetes." *American Journal of Sociology* 110(5): 1326-72.

Lieberson, Stanley. 1991. "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on Small Number of Cases." *Social Forces* 70: 307-320.

Mahoney, James. 1999. "Nominal, Ordinal, and Narrative Appraisal in Macrocausal Analysis." *American Journal of Sociology* 104: 1154-1196.

Smith, Herbert L. 1997. "Matching with Multiple Controls to Estimate Treatment Effects in Observational Studies." *Sociological Methodology* 27: 325-353.

Angrist, Joshua and Alan B. Krueger. 2001. "Instrumental Variables and the Search for Identification: From Supply and Demand to Natural Experiments." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 15: 68-95.

Golden, Claudia and Cecilia Rouse. 2000. "Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of Blind Auditions on Female Musicians." *American Economic Review* 90(4): 715-741.

Week 10 (May 31<sup>st</sup>) Conclusion