Research Methods

Professor: Carla Shirley      ANSO 261
Office: Clough Hall, 103      Fall 2005
Office Phone#: 843-3934      MWF 2:00-2:50pm
E-mail: shirleyc@rhodes.edu      Class: Clough 100
Office Hours: MW 10:00-11:00am, 3:00-4:30pm, or By Appointment

Course Description and Course Objective:

This is the first in the Anthropology-Sociology two-course sequence in Research Methods. This course provides a general introduction to the research process by addressing issues on research design, data collection, basic analysis of data, and interpretation of results. We will cover a wide range of methodological approaches, including surveys, secondary data, content analysis, and in-depth interviews. During this course, students will read materials describing and employing these methods; practice conducting social research using several of the methods; and do presentations and write papers on consuming, conducting, and critiquing social research.

Readings


Selected articles available on Academic Volume

I will ask you to prepare ahead of time for the readings that will be specifically discussed in class, but I expect you always to be prepared to discuss the weekly readings in relation to one another and to the lecture material.

Grading

Participation/Exercises  15%
Presentations  15%
Writing Assignment 1  20%
Writing Assignment 2  20%
Final Writing Assignment  30%

Grading Scale

A+  99-100  B+  87-90  C+  77-79  D+  67-69  F  59 or lower
A  95-98  B  83-86  C  73-76  D  63-66
A-  91-94  B-  80-82  C-  70-72  D-  60-62

Course Requirements
1. **Attendance**: You are expected to attend every class and lab period. However, you can miss up to 3 days of class or lab for emergencies or illnesses with no penalty. For *every class or lab missed after three absences*, you will have 3 points subtracted from your final grade.

2. **Class Participation**: Class discussions are an important element in this course. What you get out of the course is as much dependent upon the preparation and participation of you and your classmates as it is upon my instruction. What you learn from one another can be as valuable as the lecture and reading materials. You will also complete class exercises and connect them to course material. You will be graded on the **level and quality** of your participation in these activities.

3. **Presentations**: Each student will do 2 presentations. The first half of the semester you will choose an article from a newspaper, magazine, or web source that discusses social research. The second half of the semester you will choose a social science research article from the *Sociological Abstracts* database. You will summarize and critique the articles in your presentations. You will sign up for presentation dates; guidelines for the presentations will be handed out in class.

4. **Writing Assignments**: There are three writing assignments that will build upon each other to comprise a research proposal. Guidelines for the assignments will be handed out in class. You will pick your topic by **Friday, September 9th**. The **first assignment** is due in class on **Friday, October 21st**, the **second assignment** is due in class on **Monday, November 11th**, and the **third assignment** is due on **Wednesday, December 14th** by 3:30pm.

**Course Guidelines**

1. Please avoid disrupting class by arriving late or leaving early.

2. You are responsible for all announcements and assignments made in class.

3. You are required to check your e-mail once a day for any updates from me.

4. If anyone has special needs that require modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements, please contact me in the beginning of the semester and provide documentation from disability services, so that suitable accommodations can be made.

5. Make-up exams will only be allowed in the event of a documented emergency. If you cannot take the exam for any reason, you must contact me prior to the exam. Failure to do so may mean that you will not be able to take a make-up exam.

6. Academic misconduct and dishonesty (such as cheating or plagiarism) will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to the Honor Code.

7. The following reading and lecture schedules are subject to revisions, however, the exam dates and the assignment due dates will remain the same.

**Class Schedule**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 24</td>
<td><em>Introduction to the Course</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>August 26, 29</td>
<td><em>Human Inquiry and Science</em></td>
<td>Babbie 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wysocki pp.5-8, #1, # 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 31, September 2</td>
<td><em>Paradigms, Theory, and Research</em></td>
<td>Babbie 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 5</td>
<td>LABOR DAY</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 7, 9</td>
<td><em>Combining Theory with Research Questions</em></td>
<td>Wysocki pp. 19-23, #3, #4, #5</td>
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October 24, 26  
**Indexes, Scales, and Typologies**  
Babbie 6  
Wysocki pp. 133-136, 14, 15

October 28, 31  
**Survey Research**  
Babbie 9  
Wysocki pp. 173-177, #20, #21

November 2, 4  
**Quantitative Data Analysis**  
Babbie 14  
Wysocki pp. 257-261, #27, #28

November 7, 9  
**Unobtrusive Measures:**  
**Content Analysis**  
Babbie 11  
Wysocki pp. 201-205, #23

Coltrane and Messineo: “The Perpetuation of Subtle Prejudice: Race and Gender Imagery in 1990s Television Advertising”

November 11  
WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE

November 11  
**Unobtrusive Measures:**  
**Secondary Data Analysis**  
Wysocki #25

Freese, Powell, and Steelman: “Rebel Without a Cause or Effect: Birth Order and Social Attitudes”

November 14, 16  
**Qualitative Field Research**  
Babbie 10  
Wysocki #22, #24

Esterberg, “Interviews”

November 18, 21  
**Qualitative Data Analysis**  
Babbie 13

Esterberg, “Making Sense of Data”  
Berkowitz and Padavic: “Getting a Man or Getting Ahead”

November 23, 25  
THANKSGIVING BREAK  NO CLASS

November 28, 30,  
December 2  
**Standpoint Methodologies**  
DeVault: “Talking Back to Sociology: Distinctive Contributions of Feminist Methodology”  
Collins: “Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment”

December 5, 7  
**Uses of Social Research**  
Gans: “Sociology in America: The Discipline and the Public”

December 14  
FINAL PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY, BY 3:30PM