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Office hours: TT 3-4:15

## **METHODS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH**

This research methods course is designed:

1. To acquaint students with the range of research methods used in sociological investigations and to discuss their strengths and weaknesses.
2. To discuss some of the basic problems involved in the collection and analysis of sociological data.
3. To provide a more in-depth treatment of field research techniques.
4. To provide students first-hand experience in carrying out a research project in a setting of their choice.

### **REQUIRED READING:**

1. Neuman, *Social Research Methods*
2. Two studies from a list provided by the instructor

### **GRADING:**

1. Three tests given during the semester as indicated on this syllabus. Together these three tests, based on both readings and lectures, will count for 60% of the final grade.
2. Classroom participation, including discussion of term research project, will be taken into account in deciding on final grades.
2. The final research report will count for 40% of the final grade.

## **COURSE QUESTIONS**

### **Why study research methods?**

- \*course goals and requirements
- \*method and methodology
- \*information and everyday life
- \*intellectual craftsmanship

Reading: Neuman, chs. 1-2

### **What are the obstacles to clear knowledge of social life?**

- \*information and error
- \*subject related errors
- \*researcher related errors
- \*setting related errors
- \*questions of ethics

Reading: Neuman, ch. 3; ethnography 1, first half

### **How does one prepare to do fieldwork?**

- \*constructing an in-depth interview guide
- \*the content of field notes
- \*first days in the field

Reading: Neuman, chs. 6, 13; ethnography 1, second half

## **EXAM # 1**

### **What is the logic of inductive inquiry?**

- \*history of fieldwork in the United States
- \*the goals of ethnography
- \*theoretical assumptions and field research

Reading: Neuman, ch. 4

### **What is the role of dialogue in doing research?**

- \*discussion of student research

Reading: Neuman, ch. 10; ethnography 2, first third

**Is science the best way to learn about human behavior?**

- \*criteria of scientific investigation
- \*reliability and validity
- \*contemporary debates about positivism
- \*truth in trouble?

Reading: Neuman, chs. 7, 8; ethnography 2, second third

**How difficult is it to prove that one thing causes another?**

- \*the logic of survey research
- \*tabular analysis
- \*experimental research

Reading: Neuman, ch. 9; complete ethnography 2

**TEST # 2**

**How is understanding of social life advanced by strategic comparison?**

- \*the uses of history
- \*seeing things cross culturally
- \*looking at aggregate trends

Reading: Neuman, chs, 11, 14

**What are useful approaches for analyzing collected data?**

- \*the idea of analysis
- \*coding the data
- \*being interesting
- \*typological analysis
- \*writing up the data

Reading: Neuman, chs.12, 15

**What are the limits of social science knowledge?**

- \*review of key issues over the semester
- \*the limits to social science knowledge
- \*future directions

Reading: Neuman, ch. 16

**TEST #3**

