

SOCIOLOGY 710. SURVEY OF RESEARCH METHODS

Dr. Paul S. Gray

McGuinn 437

Wed 12:30 - 2:50 p.m.

My office is 507 McGuinn. Office Hours, Mon 11:30 - 12 :30 p.m. Wed 11 a.m. – noon,
or by appointment. Phone ext. 24140. E-Mail: < gray@bc.edu >

Course Description

This course is a preparation for the real world of social research. You will be introduced to a wide range of research methods, including survey work, fieldwork, content analysis, secondary data analysis, experimentation, and evaluation research. We shall also debate the core issues of measurement and conceptualization, inference, reliability and validity. In behavioral terms, this course is designed to prepare doctoral and master's students by focusing on the relative strengths and weaknesses of various data collection techniques from which they will be choosing. In addition, the end product of the semester's work is a research proposal that is similar in format to proposals for master's and doctoral theses.

Course Requirements

1. Three class assignments (on conceptualization, question writing, and interviewing). Each of these counts 10% of your final grade.
2. A take home mid-term examination (counting 20% of your final grade).
3. A preliminary research proposal (ungraded) and a final research proposal (counting 40% of your final grade).
4. Class participation (10% of your final grade). Expectations are that you will attend regularly and come prepared to discuss the issues raised by the readings. Formal student presentations may be requested, depending on enrollment.

Required Readings:

THE RESEARCH IMAGINATION, by Paul S. Gray et al. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

One oral report on a book selected from the chapter bibliographies in the text.

Handouts that will be distributed from time to time.

CALENDAR

Please have readings and assignments completed by the dates indicated. I reserve the right to make changes in the calendar, with due notice.

| date | topic/activity | assignment |
|-----------------|--|--|
| 1/16 | Introduction, Inquiry & Science | Gray et al., chs. 1, 2 |
| 1/23 | Research Design | Gray et al., ch. 3 |
| 1/30 | Conceptualization & Operationalization | Gray et al., chs. 4, 17 |
| 2/6 | Proposal Writing | Gray et al., pp. 49-54 PAPER #1 IS DUE. |
| 2/13 | Questions & Questionnaires | Gray et al., pp. 130-138 |
| 2/20 | Sampling, Surveys | PAPER #2 IS DUE. Gray et al., ch. 6, 7 |
| 2/27 | Surveys, Quantitative Analysis | Gray et al., chs. 18-19 |
| V A C A T I O N | | |
| 3/12 | Interviewing | Gray et al., ch 8 HAND OUT MID-TERM |
| 3/19 | Fieldwork, Qualitative Analysis | MID TERM IS DUE. |
| 3/26 | Fieldwork II | Gray et al., ch. 9 |
| 4/2 | Content Analysis, Experimentation Aggregate Data Analysis | Gray et al., chs. 12, 13, 14 |
| 4/9 | Comparative and Historical Research | Gray et al., chs. 11, 15 PAPER #3 IS DUE. |
| 4/16 | Feminist Methodology | Gray et al., ch. 10 |
| 4/23 | Evaluation Research, Action Research | Gray et al., ch. 16 |
| 4/3 | Establishing Professional Identity Research Ethics | <i>American Sociologist</i> Handouts Gray et al., ch. 5; Epilog |
| 5/7 | FIRST (UNGRADED) PROPOSAL DRAFT | by 12 noon in MY BOX, 426 McGuinn |
| 5/12 | FINAL DRAFT OF PROPOSAL DUE | [12 noon, MY BOX, 426 MCGUINN] |