Every day, important decisions are made on the basis of social research. Citizens vote, governments make policy, corporations invest, advertisers design campaigns, parents choose schools for their children—all based on claims about social reality, some of which are better founded than others. This course is designed to give you a sense of the different ways that social researchers (particularly sociologists), find out about society, some hands-on experience with doing social research, and some tools for thinking critically about competing claims about social reality.

Readings

Required:


A series of online articles available on the course website.

Recommended:


Both books are available for purchase at the BC bookstore and are also on 2-hour reserve at O’Neill Library.

Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class pop quizzes and attendance (10 @ 1 point each, out of 12; the two lowest grades get dropped):</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in discussion sections:</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework assignments (8 @ 5 points each out of 10; the two lowest grades get dropped):</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two essay assignments @ 10 points each:</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam:</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This course requires a relatively small amount of reading. However, I expect you (1) to complete the required readings by the day they are listed on the syllabus; and (2) attend both lectures and discussion sections. 10 percent of your final grade is based on participation in discussion sections. Another 10 percent is based on a randomly-spaced series of pop quizzes and attendance checks, worth one point each. There will be 12 quizzes or attendance checks over the course of the semester, and your two lowest grades will be dropped. Attendance checks will be conducted at the end of lectures. Pop quizzes, which will cover required readings listed on the syllabus for the lecture in question, will be held at the beginning of lectures to ensure that you come to class having completed the readings (and that you come on time). There are no makeups for missed pop quizzes: if you miss class the day of a quiz, or if you arrive too late to take it, you will receive a “zero” for that quiz, and that “zero” will be one of your lowest grades that gets dropped. I will make no exceptions to this rule.

This course is designed to give you “hands-on” experience with how social science researchers do their work. Therefore, 40 percent of your grade will be based on a series of 5-point homework assignments given over the course of the semester. There will be 10 such assignments over the course of the semester and your two lowest grades get dropped. Homework assignments should be posted to the course website by 8 a.m. the day they are due. Late homework assignments will be penalized ½ point for being posted after 8 a.m., and ½ point per day thereafter. I will make no exceptions to this rule.

The two essays are due before most of your midterm and final papers should be due to ensure that you have time to work on them. As with the homework assignments, late essay assignments will be penalized ½ point for being posted after 8 a.m. on the day they are due, and ½ point per day thereafter.

The final exam will cover only material that was covered in class lectures: you will not be tested on material from readings that was not covered in lecture.

**Wed, September 8**—Introduction.

**Thurs, September 9 and Fri September 10**—Discussion sections.

### I. Epistemology and Methods

**Mon, September 13**
Required readings: Kiecolt and Acock, “The Long-Term Effects of Family Structure on Gender Role Attitudes” and Boyle et al, “Gender at Play” (both available on the course website). Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch. 1.

**Wed, September 15**—Homework #1 due by 8 a.m.
Required readings: same as above
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch. 2.

**Thurs, September 16 and Fri, September 17**—Discussion sections.
II. Designing Research

Mon, September 20
Required readings: [http://web.missouri.edu/~bondeson/Laud.html](http://web.missouri.edu/~bondeson/Laud.html) and Babbie, “Laud Humphreys and Research Ethics.”
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch 3.

Wed, September 22—Homework #2 due by 8 a.m.
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch. 4.

Thurs, September 23 and Fri, September 24: Discussion sections.

Mon, September 27
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch. 7.

Wed, Sept 29—No reading. Homework #3 due by 8 a.m.
Recommended reading: same as above.

Thurs, Sept 30 and Fri, Sept 31—Discussion sections.

Mon, Oct 4—No reading. Homework #4 due by 8 a.m.

III. Surveys, Measurement, and Sampling

Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Chapters 5 and 6.

Thurs, Oct 7 and Fri, October 8—Discussion sections.

Mon, Oct 11—NO CLASS.


Thus, Oct 14 and Fri, Oct 15—Discussion sections. Essay #1 due by 8 a.m. on Thursday.

Mon, Oct 18—Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Chapter 9.

Wed, Oct 19—No reading. Homework #5 due by 8 a.m.

Thurs, Oct 20 and Fri, Oct 21—Discussion sections.

IV. Experimental Research

Monday, October 25—Required reading: Bushman and Anderson, “Comfortably Numb.”
Wednesday, October 27— Recommended reading, Adler and Clark, Ch 8. **Homework #6 due by 8 a.m.**

**Thursday, October 28** and **Friday, October 29**—Discussion Sections.

V. Quantitative Data Analysis and Presentation

**Monday, November 1**— Required Reading: Warren et al., “Driving while Black.”

**Wednesday, November 3**— Recommended Reading: Adler and Clark, pp. 412-41 and pp. 327-45.

**Thursday, November 4** and **Friday, November 5**—Discussion sections.

VI. Qualitative Interviews, Observation, and Analysis

**Monday, November 8**— Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Chapters 10 and 11. **Homework #7 due by 8 a.m.**

**Wednesday, November 10**— Required reading: first 1/3 of Ferguson, *Bad Boys.*

**Thursday, November 11** and **Friday, November 12**—Discussion sections.

**Monday, November 15**— Required reading: second 1/3 of Ferguson, *Bad Boys.* **Homework #8 due by 8 a.m.**

**Wednesday, November 17**— Required reading: last 1/3 of Ferguson, *Bad Boys.*

**Thursday, November 18** and **Friday, November 19**—Discussion sections.

VII. Using Existing Qualitative Data and Doing Content Analysis

**Monday, November 22**—Essay #2 due by 8 a.m.

**THANKSGIVING**


**Wednesday, December 1**—Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch 13. **Homework #9 due by 8 a.m.**

**Thursday, December 2** and **Friday, December 3**—Discussion sections.

VIII. Comparative and Historical Analysis
Monday, December 6—No reading; no homework.

IX: Review Session

Wednesday, December 8—Homework #10 due by 8 a.m. In-class review session. Come prepared to ask questions!

Online Articles:


