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 through O’Neill online course reserves, [https://library.bc.edu/F/?func=file&local_base=U-BCL30_CURRENT&file_name=login](https://library.bc.edu/F/?func=file&local_base=U-BCL30_CURRENT&file_name=login) or through the Blackboard Vista 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></th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>In-class pop quizzes and attendance (13 @ 1 point each, out of 15; the two lowest grades get dropped):</td>
<td>13%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation in discussion sections:</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework assignments (9 @ 3 points each out of 10; the lowest grade gets dropped):</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review Assignment #1</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review Assignment #2</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam:</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Total:</td>
<td>100%</td>
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This course requires a relatively modest 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. Another 13 percent is based on participation in discussion sections. There will be 15 quizzes or attendance checks over the course of the semester, and your two lowest grades will be dropped. Attendence 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, 27% of your grade will be based on a series of 3-point homework assignments given over the course of the semester. There will be 10 such assignments over the course of the semester and your lowest grade will get dropped. Homework assignments should be posted to the Blackboard Vista 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.**

There are also two more extensive class assignments worth 10 and 15 percent of your grade, respectively. These assignments are designed to give you experience with building a scholarly literature review about a topic that interests you, and the second assignment builds on the first. As with the homeworks, these 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 is cumulative, and 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. An alternative final exam day and time may be scheduled if there are students who need to take the exam on a different day and time.
And finally—a note on discussion sections: you need to be registered for a discussion session to be in this class and get a grade for it. You also need to attend the discussion section for which you are registered unless you have special permission from me.

**Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to comply with the standards for academic integrity outlined in the Boston College Student Guide (http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity.html). Cheating on quizzes or exams will result in a grade of “0” for the test in question. Plagiarized assignments will also receive a grade of “0.” If I suspect either cheating or plagiarism, I am required to contact your academic dean.

**Documented Disabilities**

If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities and ADHD, or the Disability Services Office regarding all other types of disabilities, including temporary disabilities. Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

I. Introduction

**Monday, January 13**—Introduction.

**Wednesday, January 15**

Required Reading: Pigliucci, “Science and Politics” (online).

**Thursday, January 16** and **Friday, January 17**—Discussion sections.

**Monday, January 20**—***NO CLASSES, MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY***

**Wednesday, January 22**—Homework #1 due by 8 a.m.

Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch. 1.

**Thursday, January 23** and **Friday, January 24**—Discussion sections

**Monday, January 27**

Required readings: Bryant, “Changes in Attitudes toward Gender Roles” and Boyle et al, “Gender at Play” (both available on the course website).

Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch. 2.

II. Designing Research

**Wednesday, January 29**— Homework #2 due by 8 a.m.
Thursday, January 30 and Friday, January 31—Discussion sections.

Monday, February 3
Required readings: Sieber, “Laud Humphreys and the Tearoom Sex Study” and Babbie, “Laud Humphreys and Research Ethics.”

Wednesday, February 5—Homework #3 due by 8 a.m.
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch 3.

Thursday, February 6 and Friday, February 7: Discussion sections.

Monday, February 10
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch. 4.

Wednesday, February 12

Thursday, February 13 and Friday, February 14—Discussion sections.

III. Surveys, Measurement, and Sampling

Monday, February 17

Wednesday, February 19—Homework #4 due by 8 a.m.
Required reading: Bagley and Tremblay, “Kinsey Corroborated”

Thursday, February 20 and Friday, February 21—Discussion sections.

Monday, February 24

Wednesday, February 26—Literature review Assignment #1 due by 8 a.m.

Thursday, February 27 and Friday, February 28—Discussion sections.

***SPRING BREAK***

Monday, March 10
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Chapter 9.

Wednesday, March 12
Required reading: Gauchat, “Politicization of Science.”
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, pp. 159-78.

**Thursday, March 13** and **Friday, March 14**—Discussion sections.

### IV. Experimental Research

**Monday, March 17**
Required reading: Bushman and Anderson, “Comfortably Numb.”
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch 8.

**Wednesday, March 19**: Homework #5 due by 8 a.m.

**Thursday, March 20** and **Friday, March 21**—Discussion Sections.

### V. Quantitative Data Analysis and Presentation

**Monday, March 24**
Required Reading: Warren et al., “Driving while Black.”
Recommended Reading: Adler and Clark, pp. 412-41 and pp. 327-45.

**Wednesday, March 26**—Literature Review Assignment #2 due by 8 a.m.

**Thursday, March 27** and **Friday, March 28**: Discussion sections.

### VI. Qualitative Interviews, Observation, and Analysis

**Monday, March 31**—Homework #6 due by 8 a.m.

**Wednesday, April 2**
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Chapter 10.

**Thursday, April 3** and **Friday, April 4**: Discussion sections.

**Monday, April 7**—Homework #7 due by 8 a.m.

**Wednesday, April 9**
Required reading: Khan, pp. 41-113.
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Chapter 11.

**Thursday, April 10** and **Friday, April 11**—Discussion sections.

**Monday, April 14**—Homework #8 due by 8 a.m.
Required reading: Khan, pp. 114-199.

### VII. Using Existing Qualitative Data and Doing Content Analysis
Wednesday, April 16-- Required Reading: Clawson, “Cowboys and Schoolteachers.” Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, pp. 345-48; Chapter 13.

***EASTER BREAK***

Wednesday, April 23--Homework #9, due 8 a.m.

Thursday, April 24 and Friday, April 25—Discussion sections.

VIII. Comparative and Historical Analysis

Monday, April 28—No homework, no reading

Wednesday, April 30—In-class review session. Come prepared to ask questions! Homework #10 due by 8 a.m.

Thursday, May 1 and Friday, May 2—Discussion sections.
ONLINE ARTICLES:


