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 (can be accessed through the course Canvas site).

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>
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<tbody>
<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>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review Assignment</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam:</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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. 10 percent of your final grade is based on participation in discussion sections. Another 13 percent is based on a
randomly-spaced series of pop quizzes and attendance checks, worth one point each. There will be 15 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, 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 is also a more extensive class assignment, worth 25 percent of your grade, which is designed to give you experience with building a scholarly literature review. As with the homeworks, this assignment 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 the professor.

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 12—Introduction.

Wednesday, January 14
Required Reading: Pigliucci, “Science and Politics” (online).
Thursday, January 15 and Friday, January 16—Discussion sections.

Monday, January 19—***NO CLASSES, MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY***

Wednesday, January 21—Homework #1 due by 8 a.m.
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch. 1.

Thursday, January 22 and Friday, January 23—Discussion sections

Monday, January 26
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 28—Homework #2 due by 8 a.m.

Thursday, January 29 and Friday, January 30—Discussion sections.

Monday, February 2
Required readings: Sieber, “Laud Humphreys and the Tearoom Sex Study” and Babbie, “Laud Humphreys and Research Ethics.”

Wednesday, February 4—Homework #3 due by 8 a.m.
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch 3.

Thursday, February 5 and Friday, February 6: Discussion sections.

Monday, February 9
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch. 4.

Wednesday, February 11

Thursday, February 12 and Friday, February 13—Discussion sections.

III. Surveys, Measurement, and Sampling

Monday, February 16

Wednesday, February 18—Homework #4 due by 8 a.m.
Required reading: Bagley and Tremblay, “Kinsey Corroborated”

Thursday, February 19 and Friday, February 20—Discussion sections.

Monday, February 23
Required reading: Martin, “Normalizing Heterosexuality.”
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Chapter 6.
Wednesday, February 25—Homework #5 due by 8 a.m.

Thursday, February 26 and Friday, February 27—Discussion sections.

***SPRING BREAK***

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

Wednesday, March 11
Required reading: Gauchat, “Politicization of Science.”
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, pp. 159-78.

Thursday, March 12 and Friday, March 13—Discussion sections.

IV. Experimental Research

Monday, March 16: Recommended reading, Adler and Clark, Ch 8.

Wednesday, March 18
Required reading: Bushman and Anderson, “Comfortably Numb.”

Thursday, March 19 and Friday, March 20: Discussion Sections.

V. Quantitative Data Analysis and Presentation

Monday, March 23: Required Reading: Warren et al., “Driving while Black.”
Recommended Reading: Adler and Clark, pp. 412-41 and pp. 327-45.

Wednesday, March 25: Homework #6 due by 8 a.m.

Thursday, March 26 and Friday, March 27: Discussion sections.

VI. Qualitative Interviews, Observation, and Analysis

Monday, March 30: Literature Review Assignment due by 8 a.m.

Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Chapter 10.

***EASTER BREAK***

Wednesday, April 8: Homework #7 due by 8 a.m.

Thursday, April 9 and Friday, April 10: Discussion sections.

Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Chapter 11.
VII. Using Existing Qualitative Data and Doing Content Analysis

Wednesday, April 15: Homework #8 due by 8 a.m

Thursday, April 16 and Friday, April 17: Discussion sections.

Monday, April 20: ***NO CLASS—PATRIOT’S DAY AND BOSTON MARATHON***

Wednesday, April 22: Required Reading: Green and Van Oort, “‘We Wear No Pants’: Selling the Crisis of Masculinity in the 2010 Super Bowl Commercials.” Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, pp. 345-48; Chapter 13

Thursday, April 23 and Friday, April 24: Discussion sections.

VIII. Historical Sociology

Monday, April 27: Homework #9, due 8 a.m

Wednesday, April 29: Review session

Monday, May 4: Homework #10 due by 8 a.m.

ONLINE ARTICLES:


