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>8 in-class pop quizzes and attendance @ 2 pts each out of 10 (two lowest grades get dropped):</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in discussion sections:</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework assignments (9 @ 2 points each out of 10; the lowest grade gets dropped):</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review Assignment</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam:</td>
<td>27%</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 16 percent is based on a
randomly-spaced series of pop quizzes and attendance checks, worth two points each. There will be 10 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, 18% of your grade will be based on a series of 2-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 Canvas 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 29 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.

The PowerPoint slides from lecture will be posted on Canvas. Be aware, however, that not all the content of lecture notes is contained on the slides—in other words, you need to pay attention and take notes if you want to do well on the final exam.

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/offices/stserv/academic/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.

Computers and Hand-held Devices

I do not allow computers, tablets, or cell-phones to be used during lecture, unless you have a documented disability that requires the use of such a device. However, I do encourage the use of these devices in discussion section, where we will often be using them in class exercises.
CLASS SCHEDULE:

I. Introduction

Monday, August 31—Introduction.

Wednesday, September 2
Required Reading: excerpts from Oreskes and Conway, Merchants of Doubt (online).

Friday, September 4—Discussion sections.

Monday, September 7—***NO CLASS, LABOR DAY***

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

Friday, September 11—Discussion sections.

Monday, September 14
Required readings: Bryant, “Changes in Attitudes toward Gender Roles” and Hamilton, “The Revised MRS.”
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch. 2.

II. Designing Research

Wednesday, September 16—Homework #2 due by 8 a.m.

Friday, September 18—Discussion sections.

Monday, September 21
Required readings: Sieber, “Laud Humphreys and the Tearoom Sex Study” and Babbie, “Laud Humphreys and Research Ethics” (online).

Wednesday, September 23—Homework #3 due by 8 a.m.
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch 3.

Friday, September 25: Discussion sections.

Monday, September 28
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Ch. 4.

Wednesday, September 30
Required reading: Pellow and Brehm, “An Environmental Sociology for the Twenty-First Century” (online).

Friday, October 2—Discussion sections.

III. Surveys, Measurement, and Sampling

Monday, October 5
Required reading: CQ Researcher, “Census Controversy” (online).
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Chapter 5.
Wednesday, October 7— Homework #4 due by 8 a.m.

Friday, October 9—Discussion sections.

Monday, October 12—***NO CLASS--COLUMBUS DAY***

Wednesday, October 14
Required reading: Martin, “Normalizing Heterosexuality” (online).
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Chapter 6.

Friday, October 16—Discussion sections.

Monday, October 19—Homework #5 due by 8 a.m.

Wednesday, October 21
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Chapter 9.

Friday, October 23—Discussion sections.

Monday, October 26
Required reading: Gauchat, “Politicization of Science” (online).
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, pp. 159-78.

IV. Experimental Research

Wednesday, October 28— Homework #6 due by 8 a.m
Recommended reading, Adler and Clark, Ch 8.

Friday, October 30: Discussion Sections.

Monday, November 2
Required reading: Bushman and Anderson, “Comfortably Numb” (online).

V. Quantitative Data Analysis and Presentation

Wednesday, November 4:
Required Reading: Warren et al., “Driving while Black” (online).
Recommended Reading: Adler and Clark, pp. 412-41 and pp. 327-45.

Friday, November 6: Discussion sections.

Monday, November 9: Literature Review Assignment due by 8 a.m.

VI. Qualitative Interviews, Observation, and Analysis

Wednesday, November 11: Required reading: Khan, Privilege: pp. 201-205; pp. 1-76.
Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Chapter 10.

Friday, November 13: Discussion sections.
Monday, November 16: Homework #7 due by 8 a.m.

Wednesday, November 18: Required reading: Khan, pp. 77-150. Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, Chapter 11.

Friday, November 20: Discussion sections.

Monday, November 23: Required reading: Khan, pp. 151-199.

***THANKSGIVING BREAK***

VII. Using Existing Qualitative Data and Doing Content Analysis

Monday, November 30: Homework #8 due by 8 a.m.

Wednesday, December 2: Required Reading: Green and Van Oort, “‘We Wear No Pants’: Selling the Crisis of Masculinity in the 2010 Super Bowl Commercials” (online). Recommended reading: Adler and Clark, pp. 345-48; Chapter 13

Friday, December 4: Discussion sections.

VIII. Historical Sociology

Monday, December 7: Homework #9 due by 8 a.m.

Wednesday, December 9: Review session

Monday, December 14: Homework #10 due by 8 a.m.
ONLINE ARTICLES:


