

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

POLS 3379.01 RESEARCH & WRITING IN POLITICAL SCIENCE - FALL 2017



Course Description

We are consumers of research in our daily lives. Election polls, medical news, economic indicators are products of some research efforts. We usually strive finding simple explanations and solutions for complex problems, which usually leads to unintended outcomes (see [When Youth Violence Spurred “Superpredator” Fear](#)). How can we differentiate a good research from a poorly conducted one? This course is designed to

address this question. It is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of research methods in social sciences.

The course has two primary objectives.

- First, you will gain the factual knowledge and theories of basic social science research methods, and be able to differentiate a good from poor research

Professor Information

Dr. Fatih Demiroz

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Office: CHSS 476

Office Hours: Wed 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Course Location & Time

Tuesdays & Thursdays

9:30 - 10:50

CHSS 495

Prerequisites: 6 Hours in POLS

Credits: 3

No Textbook Required

Recommended

Earl Babbie. 2014. *Basics of Social Research* (6th Edition). Cengage Learning. ISBN: 9781133594147



- www.socialresearchmethods.net
- <http://ccnmtl.columbia.edu/projects/qmss/>

- Second, you will gain the skills for designing and conducting your own research.

Course Objectives

By the end of this semester students will be able to

- Explain the core concepts of research design
- Make a research design
- Design and conduct an experiment
- Design and conduct a basic survey
- Analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view through the lens of research design and methodology

Course Requirements

Weekly Readings

No specific textbook is required in this class. I will provide you reading materials. I suggest you reading the materials before and after the class.

If you would like to follow a textbook, you can use Babbie's *Basics of Social Research* (6e). It's a good textbook and I suggest you to buy the sixth edition or earlier (and cheaper) versions of this book.

Assignments (20 % each)

You will write two (2) assignments throughout the semester. Each assignment will account for 20% of your total grade. I will provide you detailed instructions for each assignment.

Midterm Exam (30%)

You will have a midterm exam. The first half of the course will be dedicated to theories of research methods. In the midterm exam, you will be tested on the theory part. After the

midterm, most of the course will be dedicated to the practice of research. So, there will be no final exam. The research paper assignment will help you learn both the theory and practice.

Research Paper (25%)

You will write a 10-page (double-spaced) research paper throughout the semester. I will guide you in your writing effort. In this assignment, you will write a paper that will cover the theory and practice of research methods. You will do conceptualization and operationalization of a concept, explain data collection methodology, and develop a data collection tool.

Paper Proposal (5%)

You will write a one-page (single-spaced) paper proposal. The proposal will be the foundation of your research paper. After you submit your paper proposal, I will provide you feedback and you will improve it until it meets my expectations. Then, you will use your proposal for writing the rest of your research paper.

Course Requirements & Grade

Assignments	40%
Midterm	30%
Research Paper	25%
Paper Proposal	5%

100-90 points	A
80 - 89	B
70 - 79	C
60 - 69	D
< 60	F

< 60	E
60 - 69	D
70 - 79	C

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance to class is mandatory. You are allowed to miss three (3) classes during the semester. I recommend not missing any class unless you have a medical condition or some other serious situation. If you miss 4-5 classes, your grade will automatically be lowered to a lower grade (e.g. from B to C). If you miss more than 5 classes you will automatically fail the class. If you come late or leave early, you will be considered partially absent.

Communication with the professor

Email is the preferred mean of communication. I will reply your emails within 24-48 hours. You can send a reminder after 48 hours of no reply.

You can call the office number when necessary, however reaching me via email would be more effective than the phone.

Deadlines and Late work

All the assignments must be submitted by the due date. Emails/submissions without attachments, wrong attachments, corrupt files etc. are NOT excuses for late work. If an assignment is not submitted on time, maximum grade for the assignment will be 90/100 for the first 24 hours after the due date, and this will decline 20 points for every additional day.

Late Submission Penalty

1 minute - 24 hours	10%
24 - 48 hours	30%
48-72 hours	50%
72-96 hours	75%
96+ hours	100%

96+ hours	100%
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Make-up Exams

There will be no make-up exam in this class. ONLY documented emergency situations can be exemption.

Mobile device use in the class

Cellphones and other mobile devices are not allowed to use during class. Please silence your mobile devices during the class. Laptops and tablets are allowed only for course related use (e.g. note taking) and have to be silenced as well.

Eating and drinking in the class

Eating and drinking that may disturb the classmates and the professor (strong smell, disturbing sound, spill) is prohibited. You can bring food or drinks only if they are in spill free containers and do not disturb the class.

Absences on Religious Holy Days

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20....” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The

instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

Disability Services

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SSD and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until



you register with the SSD. Please see SSD website for further information.

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/>

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

Dean of Student's Office

Visitors in the Classroom

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

Tips for Success

1. Come to class

This course will not go well for you if you do not attend regularly

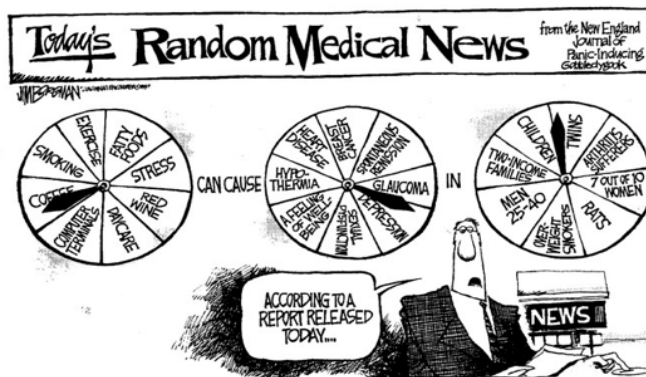
2. Start your assignments early

You will write multiple papers (i.e. assignments) throughout the semester. Start your papers early and do not procrastinate

3. Be proactive

If you have an issue that is affecting you (or will affect) your performance, contact me as soon as possible. I am more than happy to help students in the middle of the semester than at the end of it.

4. Have any issues? See me at CHSS 476



Course Schedule

Week	Due	Date	Topic	Read
1		Aug 23	Introduction & Syllabus	
2		Aug 29 Aug 31	Human Inquiry & Science Human Inquiry & Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading 1: Language of Research • Reading 2: Deductive and Inductive • Eye of the Beholder • Rashomon • Recommended: Babbie (2014) Ch 1
3		Sept 5 Sept 7	Paradigms, Theory, & Research How to design a research?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Booth et al. The Uses of Research • Booth et al. From Topics to Questions • Visit Library Website
4		Sept 12 Sept 14	How to design a research? How to design a research?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Design • Learn How to Write a Literature Review, • Write a Literature Review, • The Literature Review: A Few Tips On Conducting It • Recommended: Babbie (2014) Ch 4
5	Research Proposal	Sept 19 Sept 21	Basics of measurement Basics of measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About Measurement • Conceptualization and Operationaliaztion • Recommended: Babbie (2014). Ch 5
6		Sept 26 Sept 28	Measurement error Measurement error	Trochim -Measurement Error
7		Oct 3 Oct 5	Indexes & Scales Indexes & Scales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scales, • How to Construct and Index, • The Differences between Indexes and Scales • Recommended: Babbie (2014). Ch 6
8		Oct 10 Oct 12	Midterm Review Midterm Exam	

Week	Due	Date	Topic	Read
9	Assignment 1	Oct 17 Oct 19	Introduction to Sampling Introduction to Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sampling Introduction • Why Sample? • Types of Sampling • Recommended: Babbie (2014). Ch 7
10		Oct 24 Oct 26	Basics of Experimental Research Basics of Experimental Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiments • Design • Types of Designs • Recommended: Babbie (2014). Ch 8
11		Oct 31 Nov 2	Designing & conducting your own experiment Designing & conducting your own experiment	In class exercise
12	Assignment 2	Nov 7 Nov 9	Basics of survey research Basics of survey research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey Research • Recommended: Babbie (2014). Ch 9
13		Nov 14 Nov 16	Designing & administering your survey Designing & administering your survey	In class exercise
14		Nov 21 Nov 23	Designing & administering your survey No Class - Thanksgiving Day	In class exercise
15	Research Paper	Nov 28 Nov 30	Concluding the Class	
16		Dec 6 Dec 8	Final Exam Week (No Final Exam)	