

IS 291B, UCLA  
Research Methods and Design  
Spring, 2007  
Class: Mon, 1:30-4:50pm, 245 GSEIS

**IS 291B**  
**PhD SEMINAR ON RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN**

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**Course overview**

This is the second course in research methods and design for PhD students in information studies, building upon 291A, Theoretical Traditions In Information Studies. The theoretical and epistemological issues in 291A provide the background to address “practical” research design. Also pre-requisite to 291B is at least one course in descriptive and inferential statistics. We shifted this course from winter to spring to allow students time to take additional statistics coursework in winter. Master’s students who have taken the pre-requisites are eligible to enroll. Graduate students without all of the pre-requisites but with extensive background in epistemology or research methods may enroll with instructor’s permission. Graduate students from related fields (education, communication, public policy, management, psychology, etc.) are welcome to enroll if they meet these requirements.

The course is conducted as a workshop, drawing upon students’ research projects to study research methods. We will survey quantitative, qualitative, and historical research designs in this course, also touching upon related issues such as ethics and human subjects protection. The first week of the course will provide a brief review of epistemological issues and basic concepts of research design. The course is intended to prepare students for further study on specific methods that they will pursue in their own research and for further study of statistics, and to assist in preparation for PhD qualifying exams.

Students will begin to build their personal libraries on research methods via the course readings. Materials include two popular textbooks on social science research methods and the primary publication manual for social science research.

Students will write a research paper following scholarly guidelines, and will present an analysis of a journal article in class.

## Assignments and Grading

- Reading assignments weekly
- Major paper 50%
- Short assignment: selection, analysis, and presentation of a research article 20%
- Class participation and mastery of readings 30%
- Grading policy: Late papers will be accepted only with instructor permission *in advance*. They will be marked down 2 points per day late.

## Office Hours

Office hours are [time and day to be announced] and by appointment. Please sign up in advance on my door at GSEIS 235 for office hours. While you are welcome to stop by during office hours if no one is signed up, most slots do fill up in advance.

## Course Materials

One of the objectives of this course is to assist students in building a core personal library on research methods and design. The three required texts are classics that will assist you in your research career (and in writing your seminar paper). A few additional course materials are available online or will be distributed or put on reserve. Other materials are recommended, as student interests will vary. Bring your texts to class with you on days they are assigned, as we will be referring to them.

### REQUIRED:

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Manual of the APA, 5th ed.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Babbie, E. (2007). *The Practice of Social Research, 11th ed.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. *NB: This edition is required; used copies of previous editions are not acceptable.*

Lofland, J., Snow, D., Anderson, L. & Lofland, L. H. (2006). *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis* Belmont, CA, Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. *NB: This edition is required; used copies of previous editions are not acceptable.*

RECOMMENDED:

The course texts will provide a high level overview of methods, but you will need more materials specific to the methods selected for your paper. One of the best sources are the Sage University papers (<http://www.sagepub.com>), which are inexpensive paperbacks on specific topics such as focus groups, factor analysis, sampling, significance testing. They have a qualitative series and a quantitative series. Sage is also an excellent source for more extensive books on various social science research methods. A list of suggested sources is included at the end of this syllabus.

**Topical course outline**

*Note that the 10<sup>th</sup> class session is held exam week due to the Memorial Day holiday.*

<u>Week 1 (April 2):</u>	Course introduction and overview; Ethics in research; human subjects protection
<u>Week 2 (April 9):</u>	Research design, conceptualization, measurement
<u>Week 3 (April 16):</u>	Indexes & scales; sampling
<u>Week 4 (April 23):</u>	Experimental and survey research
<u>Week 5 (April 30):</u>	Qualitative field research
<u>Week 6 (May 7):</u>	Unobtrusive measurement; evaluation research
<u>Week 7 (May 14):</u>	Qualitative data analysis –part 1
<u>Week 8 (May 21):</u>	Qualitative data analysis –part 2
<u>Week 9 (May 28):</u>	Memorial Day holiday
<u>Week 10 (June 4):</u>	Quantitative data analysis
<u>Exam week (June 11):</u>	Reading and writing social research
<u>June 12:</u>	Papers due

## Schedule of Course Tasks

All readings are to be completed in advance of the class meeting. Students are graded on class participation and mastery of readings (see assignments and grading).

Week 1 (April 2): Course introduction and overview; Ethics in research; human subjects protection

The course will begin with a general overview of topics plus a review of concepts covered in 291A and of basic statistics. We will spend the second half of the session on ethics and human subjects issues.

Prior to class: take “Protecting Human Subjects” exam on website (allow at least 2 hours): <http://training.arc.ucla.edu/>

Readings:

Babbie:

Preface, xv-xxi

Part 1, An introduction to inquiry, p. 3-84

1: Human inquiry and science

2: Paradigms, theory, and social research

3: The ethics and politics of social research

Ch 16: Statistical analyses, 449-487 (use as refresher – you should be familiar with most of this material from prior statistics courses)

The Belmont Report, Office of the Secretary, Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research, The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, April 18, 1979.

<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.htm>

Shea, C. (2000). Don't Talk to the Humans: The Crackdown on Social Science Research. *Lingua Franca*, 10(6). <http://www.linguafranca.com/print/0009/humans.html> <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~roos/Courses/grstat502/shea.pdf>. The original link is dead but the second one works (or use Google Scholar to look elsewhere).

Ess, C. (2002). *Ethical decision-making and Internet research*. AoIR Ethics Working Group. Visited [www.aoir.org/reports/ethics.pdf](http://www.aoir.org/reports/ethics.pdf) on 2 March 2007.

UCLA Investigator's Manual for the Protection of Human Subjects (Read intro, skim through rest) <http://www.oprs.ucla.edu/human/TOC.htm>

Week 2 (April 9): Research design, conceptualization, measurement

This topic will frame the course. Read these chapters very closely and be prepared to explain the notion of “causality” and to identify your choice of research method for your journal article assignment. Time at the end of the class session will be reserved for discussing your term paper topics.

Journal article assignments to be made today.

Babbie

Part 2, The structuring of inquiry, 85

4: Research design, 86-117

5: Conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement, 118-149

Week 3 (April 16): Indexes, scales, and typologies; Sampling

These are complex issues. Be prepared to explain the differences among indexes, scales, and typologies, and to outline a sampling plan for your research project.

Babbie

Part 2, The structure of inquiry

6: Indexes, scales, and typologies, 150-177

7: The logic of sampling, 178-218

Week 4 (April 23): Experimental and survey research

This is the first week in which we will focus on specific research designs, and we will begin student presentations to match the “design of the week.”

Babbie

Part 3, Modes of observation, 219

8: Experiments, 220-242

9: Survey research, 243-284

APA Manual

1: Content and organization of a manuscript, 1-22

One or two journal articles to be assigned. One or two students will present their analysis of the assigned journal articles today.

Week 5 (April 30): Qualitative field research

Babbie

Part 3, Modes of observation

10: Qualitative field research, 281-317

Lofland, et. al

Introduction, 1-6

Part 1, Gathering data, 7-118

1: Starting where you are

2: Evaluating data sites

3: Getting in

4: Getting along

5: Logging data

One or two journal articles to be assigned. One or two students will present their analysis of the assigned journal articles today.

Week 6 (May 7): Unobtrusive measurement; evaluation research

Babbie

Part 3, Modes of observation

11: Unobtrusive research, 318-347

12: Evaluation research, 348-374

Borgman, C.L., & Furner, J. (2002). Scholarly communication and bibliometrics. *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*. B. Cronin and D. Shaw (eds.). ON RESERVE IN MIT LAB.

Borgman, C.L., Hirsh, S.G., & Hiller, J. (1996). Rethinking Online Monitoring Methods For Information Retrieval Systems: From Search Product To Search Process. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 47(7), 568-583. (obtain online or in print)

One or two journal articles to be assigned. One or two students will present their analysis of the assigned journal articles today.

Week 7 (May 14): Qualitative data analysis, part 1

Plan ahead – this is a large amount of reading for one week. We will use this class session to lay the ground work for qualitative field research, and will continue the discussion in the next session. No student reports will be assigned for today.

Babbie

13: Qualitative data analysis, 377-403

Lofland, et al

Part 2, Focusing data, 119-192

6: Thinking topics

7: Asking questions

8: Arousing interest

Lofland, et al

Part 3, Analyzing data, 193-195

9: Developing analysis, 195-219

Week 8 (May 21): Qualitative data analysis, part 2

We will continue the discussion of qualitative methods from Week 7 and set these readings on historical methods in that context.

Gottschalk, L. (1969). Understanding history: a primer of historical method. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. Chapter 2: "The relation of historical method to life and learning", pp. 26-37 Chapter 3, "What are 'history' and 'historical sources'?", pp. 41-61

Traweek, S. 2004. "Keizu to Nendaiki: Making History in Tsukuba Science City" to be published in *Social Study of Science: An Interdisciplinary Context*. Edited by Jesus Valero Matas [Cambridge University Press, summer 2004]. ***To be distributed electronically to enrolled students.***

Tuchman, B.W. (1981). Practicing history. New York: Alfred A. Knopf "The historian as artist," pp. 45-50 "The historian's opportunity," pp. 51-64

One or two journal articles to be assigned. One or two students will present their analysis of the assigned journal articles today.

Week 9 (May 28): memorial day holiday, no class -- work on your term papers!!!

Week 10 (June 4): Quantitative data analysis

Today's topic will review and extend your statistics courses. We will focus on the interaction between research design and data analysis.

Babbie

14: Quantitative data analysis, 404-429

15: The elaboration model, 430-448

16: Statistical analyses, 449-487

One or two journal articles to be assigned. One or two students will present their analysis of the assigned journal articles today.

Exam Week (June 11): Reading and writing social research; wrapup

Our final topic will be the relationship between research design, data analysis, and reporting of research. We will use the last part of the session to review the goals and outcomes of the course.

Babbie

17: Reading and writing social research, 488-511

Lofland & Lofland

10: Writing reports, 220-240

One or two journal articles to be assigned. One or two students will present their analysis of the assigned journal articles today.

NOTE: PAPERS DUE June 12 (Tuesday).

FURTHER READING;

Sage publications – book series in research methods, especially the small handbooks for individual research methods.

Tony Dunbar recommends this book highly:

Dictionary of Statistics & Methodology: A Nontechnical Guide for the Social Sciences,  
by W. Paul Vogt

Format: Paperback, 318pp

Pub. Date: January 1998 Publisher: SAGE Publications

Second Edition

Popular in its first edition, Dictionary of Statistics and methodology will help students get through a difficult journal article or passage. This useful dictionary has been revised with 600 additional new terms and definitions compiled from readers' requests and suggestions! As you've come to appreciate in the first edition, the second edition of the Dictionary of Statistics and Methodology contains many examples and definitions written in ordinary English. Author W. Paul Vogt pays special attention to terms that most often prevent educated general readers from understanding journal articles and books by emphasizing concepts over calculations. The level of explanation varies with the simplicity or complexity of the term defined so that more detail is offered for basic terms

(for more introductory readers) while less is used to explain more advanced concepts for readers who have more background. In those instances in which it is necessary to use another methodological or statistical term in a definition, that term is cross-referenced and indicated by an asterisk.

The following list was provided by Nadia Caidi, who found these materials on qualitative methods particularly helpful in her dissertation research and writing.

General:

Norman Denzin & Yvonna Lincoln (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Covers the essential, and the chapters are well structured, with good examples.

Other useful works for different stages of the research include:

Weiss, R.S. (1994). *Learning from Strangers*. New York, NY: Free Press. (Easy to read. A must for everyone getting ready to go to the field. Mostly interviewing techniques).

For data analysis:

Miles, M.B., & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (A very good reference and lots of suggestions about how to translate your massive amount of data into helpful charts and tables and reduce it to manageable chunks).

Altheide, D.L.; Johnson, J.M. (1994). Criteria for assessing interpretive validity in qualitative research. In Norman K.; Denzin, Y.; & Lincoln, S. (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (485- 499). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (Says it all. I found it useful)

Dey, I. (1993). *Qualitative data analysis : a user-friendly guide for social scientists*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Silverman, D. (1997). *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative research : Analysis types and software tools*. New York: Falmer Press.

Useful sources for the writing part:

James Clifford & George Marcus. (Eds). (1986). *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley : University of California Press. (Focus is on ethnography, but I really liked their perspective on how to write qualitative research, and how to be aware of your biases).

Another interesting work on writing qualitative research is by:

Linda Brodkey. (1987). *Academic Writing as Social Practice* (especially Chapter 4: Narrative Perspectives in Ethnographies: Writers and Texts). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.