

Syllabus
Social Science Research Methods (IS 280)

Dr. Leah A. Lievrouw
Winter 2002 / Tuesday 1-4:30 p.m. / 111 GSE&IS Bldg.
Department of Information Studies
Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, UCLA
Office Hours: Wed 1 to 4 p.m. or by appointment
Office: 216 GSE&IS Bldg., 5-1840
Email: llievrou@ucla.edu

Course Information

In this course students are introduced to the basic concepts and techniques that are used in social science research. The course is divided into three sections, which cover social scientific inquiry and research design, quantitative data gathering and analysis, and qualitative data gathering and analysis, respectively. As a result of taking the course, students should be able to: (a) demonstrate their understanding of the basic principles and procedures of research methodology; and (b) critically evaluate both quantitative and qualitative research studies.

Students enrolling in the course are expected to have already completed the statistics prerequisite for the MLIS degree, but they do not need to have prior experience with conducting social science research.

There are two required texts in the course: *The Practice of Social Research*, 9th edition, by Earl Babbie (Wadsworth, 2001); and *Analyzing Social Settings*, 3rd edition, by John and Lyn Lofland (Wadsworth, 1995). Students are expected to come to class having already read the material assigned for that day (see "Weekly Topics and Readings," below).

A one-hour exam will be given at the end of the first two sections; a third, more comprehensive final exam will be administered during the final exam period. Makeup exams will not be taken except in extraordinary cases (e.g., severe illness, documented by a physician's note; family emergency). In these cases students are expected to contact the professor **before** the scheduled exam time to arrange a makeup time.

Because the course is structured principally as lectures, grading in the course will be based on students' performance on examinations: 25% for each of the first two examinations, and 50% for the final examination.

Research Participation Option

Interested students will be given the option of participating in a research project being conducted by the instructor and Prof. Jeong Suk Kim, a post-doctoral researcher who is visiting in the Department of Information Studies. In this project, each student will administer a questionnaire to a sample of subjects. Students who participate in the project will receive credit equivalent to a grade of "A" in lieu of their grade on one of the two hourly examinations.

More information about exams, the research project, and all other course policies will be provided in class.

Weekly Topics and Readings

Social Science Inquiry

Week 1 / January 8

Babbie:

- Chapter 1, "Human Inquiry and Science"
- Chapter 2, "Paradigms, Theory and Social Research"
- Chapter 3, "The Idea of Causation in Social Research"

Week 2 / January 15

Babbie:

- Chapter 4, "Research Design"
- Chapter 5, "Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement"

Week 3 / January 22

Babbie:

- Chapter 18, "The Ethics and Politics of Social Research"

Students must also complete the UCLA human subjects training course offered online by the UCLA Office for Protection of Research Subjects. URL: <http://training.arc.ucla.edu/>

Quantitative Methods

Week 4 / January 29

First hour exam, 1-2 p.m.

Babbie:

- Chapter 7, "The Logic of Sampling"
- Chapter 8, "Experiments"

Week 5 / February 5

Babbie:

- Chapter 6, "Indexes, Scales and Typologies"
- Chapter 9, "Survey Research"
- Chapter 11, "Unobtrusive Measures"

Week 6 / February 12

Babbie:

- Chapter 14, "Quantifying Data"
- Chapter 15, "Elementary Quantitative Analyses"

Week 7 / February 19

Babbie:

- Chapter 17, "Social Statistics"
- Chapter 12, "Evaluation Research"

Qualitative Methods

Week 8 / February 26 Second hour exam, 1-2 p.m.

Lofland & Lofland:

Chapter 1, "Starting Where You Are"

Chapter 2, "Evaluating Data Sites"

Chapter 3, "Getting In"

Chapter 4, "Getting Along"

Babbie:

Chapter 10, "Qualitative Field Research"

Week 9 / March 5

Lofland & Lofland:

Chapter 5, "Logging Data"

Chapter 6, "Thinking Topics"

Chapter 7, "Asking Questions"

Babbie:

Chapter 13, "Qualitative Data Analysis"

Week 10 / March 12

Lofland & Lofland:

Chapter 8, "Arousing Interest"

Chapter 9, "Developing Analysis"

Chapter 19, "Writing Reports"

Final Exam / March 19

For Review:

Babbie:

Chapter 19, "The Uses of Social Research"

Lofland & Lofland:

Appendix, "Dissecting Fieldstudy Reports"