# Basic Research Methods  
**FALL 2005**

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>PPHAC 318</td>
<td>Office Hours: M &amp; W 9:00-10:10</td>
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<td>and by appointment</td>
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## Course Objectives:

This course provides students with the knowledge necessary to understand and conduct basic social science research. Research methodology is the heart of social sciences; an understanding of experimentation, survey research, field research, and the use of available data are essential in order to make informed decisions in these fields. During the semester, students will become familiar with different research designs, measurement, sampling techniques, and differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods. Research studies and short exercises will highlight different approaches to social science issues.

## Course Requirements:

1. Students are required to attend weekly class sessions that meet on Wednesdays and Fridays 10:10 – 11:20 am. Please note that if you are absent from class or late for class, it is your responsibility to ascertain all announcements and assignments, and to obtain class handouts. Frequent missed classes will result in a lower grade.

2. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and written assignments **prior to each class**. These are identified in the weekly course outline below. It is recommended that students obtain the following book:


   Supplemental readings will be provided in class.
3. a. Computer labs: the labs are designed to reinforce important topics necessary to create a good research proposal. Further discussion of each lab will be provided in class. The labs are the building blocks for your final assignment.

b. Mid-term exam
c. Final exam – non cumulative
d. Research Proposal: students are expected to complete a 15 page (double-spaced) research proposal on a topic of your choice but relevant to the social sciences. The proposal should follow the outline provided in class and address the major elements for successful implementation.

4. Please refer to your student handbook regarding the Student Honesty Policy. It will be enforced during this course.

Student Evaluation:

The overall grade for the course is calculated based on the lab assignments (5% each for a total of 25%), mid-term (20%), research proposal (30%), and final (20%), class participation and preparation (5%). Qualitative evaluation of student work effort will be considered in class participation grade.

Course Outline:

Session 1  
*Introduction*: the session outlines the format and design of course and introduces various research models the theories.

*Readings*: Babbie Chapter 1

Sessions 2/3  
*Basic Social Science Theories and Research Design*: in these classes we discuss and compare the major formal theories of research and identify the basic social science research design.

*Readings*: Babbie Ch. 2 (but skim 33-43), Ch. 4.

*Assignment*: Research Topics

Session 4  
*Measurement*: this discussion focuses on selecting the appropriate elements to measure and how to define and measure them correctly.

*Readings*: Babbie Ch. 5.
Sessions 5/6  
**Literature Reviews:** this week we learn strategies for conducting literature reviews, relying on both library and Internet resources.

*Readings:* Handouts  
*Assignment:* Measurement Exercise

Session 7  
**Ethical Dimensions in Social Science Research:** this session considers the ethical and political dimensions of social science research. We will discuss ways to identify and address ethical dilemmas in research designs, analysis, and reporting.

*Readings:* Babbie Ch. 3.

Session 8  
**Quantitative Measurement:** this class focuses on differences between indexes and scales, their uses and construction.

*Readings:* Babbie Ch. 6, handouts.

Sessions 9/10  
**Sampling Methodology:** during these classes we explore the logic of sampling, different sampling techniques and a basic introduction to classical probability theory.

*Readings:* Babbie Ch. 7.  
*Assignment:* Literature Review due session 10

Sessions 11/12  
**Experimental Design:** this session introduces the basic structure of experiments including subject selection.

*Readings:* Babbie Ch. 8.

Session 13  
**Mid Term**

Session 14  
**Case Study: Elementary and Secondary Education Research**  
*Readings:* Handouts

Session 15  
**Preparing a Research Proposal:** this class ties together various topics discussed above and outline the basic components of a research proposal.

*Readings:* Babbie Ch 17, handouts.  
*Assignment:* Experimental Design
Sessions 16/17  **Survey Research:** this section focuses on the construction of surveys using examples, methods for survey administration, and strengths and weaknesses of this type of research instrument.

*Readings:* Babbie Ch. 9.

Sessions 18/19  **Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods:** these discussions concentrate on the types and uses of qualitative research methods and discusses the usefulness of triangulation of the methodologies.

*Readings:* Babbie Ch. 10, hand-out.
*Assignment:* Survey Development

Session 20  **Case Study: Social Services Research**

*Readings:* Handouts

Sessions 21/22  **Connecting Research Design to Data Analysis:** during this week we discuss how to make the leap from proposal design to implementation. Basic quantitative and qualitative analyses techniques will be introduced as well as SPSS computer software.

*Readings:* Babbie Ch. 14

Sessions 23/24  **Social Statistics:** this week includes an introduction to basic social statistics using SPSS.

*Readings:* Babbie Ch. 16 (skim 15), handouts

Sessions 25/26  **NO CLASS  HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**

Session 27  **Social Statistics Continued**

*Readings:* See 23/24

Sessions 28/29  **Student Presentations of Proposals**
*Assignment:* Hand in Research Proposal

Session 30  **Wrap-Up:** we will revisit major topics discussed during the semester and continue to link the methodology to the next phases of research, data collection and analysis.
FINAL TBA
7/13/05