COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal of this course is to introduce you to the rewards and challenges of conducting social scientific research. You will have the opportunity to develop a wide range of basic research skills and learn how to think critically, carefully, creatively about how to investigate the social world.

Specifically this course offers you the opportunity to:

Learn how to design and carry out basic social scientific research. This means being able to: formulate interesting questions about the world we live in; develop a well-designed and doable research project; make appropriate and creative use of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to collect relevant data; organize, analyze, and interpret the data; and effectively present the research results to various audiences. An essential component of this process is developing a clear understanding of ethical considerations.

Develop basic skills in a range of research methodologies. Approaches we will cover include: observation and content analysis; ethnographic fieldwork and participant observation; semi-structured and open-ended interviewing; focus groups; and survey questionnaires. The emphasis will be on understanding the strengths and weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative approaches and learning how to effectively integrate multiple strategies into a research design.

Develop competence in analyzing research data. This includes learning how to organize, discover patterns, and draw conclusions from complex qualitative data; developing basic skills in analyzing and presenting quantitative data; and becoming a knowledgeable and critical consumer of social scientific research.

Develop a critical understanding of the research process. This entails developing a sophisticated understanding of how “facts” and “knowledge” are produced and what social scientists think about the nature of “truth” and “objectivity.” A key question is how our theoretical perspectives, cultural and political assumptions, and personal experiences shape the questions we ask, the methodologies we choose, the data we collect, the interpretations and conclusions we reach, and the audiences we can authoritatively engage.

Develop skill in effectively communicating ideas and research results in written and oral venues. Effective communication with different audiences is an essential part of the research process – and is a focus of course expectations.

READINGS

The following required text is available at the bookstore. Used copies are also available.

Neuman, The Basics of Social Research Methods, Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, Third Edition

Additional readings (ie. everything that is not Neuman) will be handed out in class.
COURSE EXPECTATIONS

**Class Assignments:**  
20 points  
Assignments are designed to facilitate your mastery of the material as well as lay the groundwork for class discussion and project work. We will be moving quickly, so it is essential for you to complete assignments in a thoughtful and timely manner. **Lateness will result in a significantly lower grade.**

**Exam**  
20 points  
A two-part exam – in-class section (10 points) and take-home section (10 points) – will help you consolidate your understanding of the material. Test dates in the syllabus are subject to change depending upon our progress.

**Research Project Portfolio**  
55 points  
The best way to learn about research is to actually do it. Much of your understanding of the research process will be gained through designing and carrying out a team research project on some aspect of university life. This will entail developing a research question and designing and carrying out a project using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Qualitative: Observation, Content Analysis, Interviews or Focus Group</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(20)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase II</td>
<td>Quantitative: Survey Questionnaire</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(20)</td>
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<td>Final Report</td>
<td>Final Report</td>
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As you will be working as part of a research team, other people depend on you doing your work carefully and on time. **Lateness will thus result in a significantly lower grade.**

**Research Project Presentation**  
10 points  
A crucial part of conducting effective research is communicating the results to relevant audiences. Each team will present their findings during the scheduled final exam period. As this course meets the General Education "O" requirement, participation in the final presentation is mandatory (ie. no-shows will not pass the course).

100 points

A range: 90-100 points  
B range: 89-80 points  
C range: 79-70 points  
(lowest grade for course to count for major is C-)
Class Attendance & Participation
We are going to explore social science research TOGETHER and your active engagement is an essential component of this class. This means you are expected to come to class on time; have carefully thought about the assigned readings and completed assignments in a thoughtful and timely manner; and actively participate in class activities and discussions.

Attendance is thus required. You may have 3 absences without penalty – regardless of the reason (ie. no notes or excuses required); 4 absences will result in a 15 point deduction from the final grade; and 5 or more absences will result in a grade of “F.” Professor Klimt reserves the right to adjust this policy in case of extenuating circumstances. Please note that repeated or extensive lateness will count as an absence. If you are physically present, but do not actively and productively participate in class, Professor Klimt reserves the right to deduct up to 10 points from the final course grade.

Team Work
The Team Research Project is a central component of this course and you are expected to collaborate effectively and professionally with your fellow team-members. This means: interacting with team members in a respectful and helpful manner; contributing your fair share to project tasks; participating in team meetings both in and outside of class; completing tasks thoughtfully and carefully; submitting assignments by the agreed-upon due dates. You will periodically have the opportunity to evaluate each other’s contribution to the collective effort. Failure to contribute effectively to the team project will result in up to a 30 point deduction from the final grade.

Due Dates
This class is a group effort – if you haven’t done your part ON TIME, you won’t learn very much and the class as a whole will suffer. Late assignments will thus be subject to a grade penalty. If you have a valid reason for needing an extension, you need to talk with me beforehand (ie. NO after-the-fact extensions).

Communication
Some group and class work will be through on-line interaction and e-mail, some will be through face-to-face meetings outside of class. You will be expected to be familiar with and use e-mail, the class website, and on-line communication and attend the out-of-class meetings of your research team. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what happened.

Professor Klimt can best be reached via e-mail or phone. Feel free to call her at home, just make sure it’s BEFORE 9PM!! She can also be reached via office phone – but please note she may not check messages there every day. In all e-mail communications, be sure to put “Methods” in the subject line – otherwise she won’t open your attachment. Announcements, assignments and other class-related information will be posted on the class website.

Professor Klimt has regular office hours and she would welcome the chance to talk with you. If the times are not convenient for you, ask her to schedule an appointment. If you can’t make your appointment, be sure to let her know ahead of time.
Academic Honesty
Everyone is responsible for understanding and following the guidelines for academic honesty. This includes properly citing other people’s work (published and unpublished), not passing off other people’s work as your own, collecting your own data, and doing your own work on exams. Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty will result in an “F” for the course as well as possible disciplinary action. A useful explanation of plagiarism can be found in the Student Handbook and at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/research/r_plagiar.html.

Special Accommodations
In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please meet with Professor Klimt at the beginning of the semester and provide the appropriate paperwork from the Center for Access and Success (phone: 999-8711).

Schedule
Unless you have been notified, the schedule below holds – which means you are responsible for having completed the readings and assignments on the days they are due. Professor Klimt may adjust the schedule depending on how much time we need on the various topics and assignments – regardless of changes, the overall workload will remain the same. Any changes will be announced well ahead of time in class and on the course website. Please make sure to keep track of any changes!!

Incompletes
If you are considering taking an incomplete in the course, please discuss this with Professor Klimt before the end of the semester. She will discuss the options with you as well as the deadlines for completing outstanding assignments. You need to make the request in writing by December 15th.
### SCHEDULE

| 1A-Thurs | 9/8 | Topics: | What is social science research?  
Why does good research entail creativity, curiosity AND careful planning and systematic thinking? |
| 2A- Tues | 9/13 | Reading: | Neuman, chp 1 – Doing Social Research  
Becker, chp 1 – Telling about Society  
Becker, chp 2 – Representations of Society as Organizational Products |
| Topics: | What are the different ways of knowing and communicating about the nature of our social world?  
What makes social science different from other ways of knowing? |
| 2B- Thurs | 9/15 | Reading: | Gladwell, Outliers: The Story of Success, chp. 1  
Bohannan, Unseen community: the natural history of a research project |
| Topics: | What are “good” research questions and how do researchers develop them?  
How do researchers develop effective research designs? |
| 3A- Tues | 9/20 | Reading: | Neuman, chp 4 – Reviewing the Scholarly Literature & Planning a Study (pp 72-94) |
| Topics: | How do social scientists build on other people’s research?  
What are concepts and why are they essential for good research? |
| 3B- Thurs | 9/22 | Reading: | Bloemraad, Of Puzzles and Serendipity: Doing Cross-National, Mixed Method Immigration Research |
| Topics: | How do researchers transform research question into doable projects?  
How do researchers effectively integrate the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches? |
| 4A- Tues | 9/27 | Reading: | Neuman chp 6 Sampling (146-151) |
| Topics: | How do researchers define a research population? |
| 4B- Thurs | 9/29 | Reading: | Neuman chp 5 Quantitative and Qualitative Measurement (113-120)  
Neuman, chp 9 (238-249) – Nonreactive Research and Secondary Analysis  
Neuman, chp 11 – Field Research |
| Topics: | How do researchers collect data through qualitative methods such as field observation, interviews, focus groups, and content analysis?  
What are the strengths and weaknesses of each of these approaches? |
5A- Tues  10/4
Reading:  Neuman, chp 3 – *Ethics in Social Research*
American Anthropological Association code of ethics
Bosk, *The Fieldworker and the Surgeon*
Hersker & Leap, *Representation, Subjectivity and Ethics in Urban Gay Ethnography*
Horowitz, Ruth. *Getting In*
Topics:  *What ethical principals guide social scientific research?*
         *How do researchers address real-life ethical dilemmas?*

5B- Thurs  10/6
Topics:  *Review of Phase I of Research Design*

6A- Tues  10/11  NO CLASS – follow Monday’s schedule

6B- Thurs  10/13
Reading:  Neuman, chp 13 – *Analysis of Qualitative Data*
Topics:  *How do researchers discover patterns and draw conclusions from extensive qualitative data (coding and identification of themes)?*

7A- Tues  10/18
Reading:  Neuman, chp 2 – *Theory and Social Research*
Topics:  *How do different theoretical paradigms shape research strategies?*
         *What do researchers of different theoretical orientations think about “facts,” “evidence,” “truth,” and “objectivity”?*

7B- Thurs  10/20
Reading:  Light & Kleiber, *Interactive research in a feminist setting: The Vancouver Women’s Health Collective*
Topics:  *How does a researcher’s background and theoretical orientation shape the research process?*
         *What are underlying assumptions about the goals and process of research?*

8A- Tues  10/25
Topics:  *Review drafts of Draft I analysis*

8B- Thurs  10/27
Reading:  Neuman, chp 4 – *Reviewing the Scholarly Literature & Planning a Study* (pp 95-111)
Topics:  *What is a hypotheses and how do researchers develop them?*
         *How do social scientists think through research questions in terms of independent and dependent variables?*
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>9A- Tues</td>
<td>11/1</td>
<td>What are some common errors of thinking in social scientific research?</td>
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<td>1/3</td>
<td>9B- Thurs</td>
<td>11/3</td>
<td>Sample Research proposal</td>
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<td>1/8</td>
<td>10A- Tues</td>
<td>11/8</td>
<td>What are the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative research?</td>
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<td>1/10</td>
<td>10B- Thurs</td>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>Neuman, chp 7 – Survey Research</td>
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<td>How do researchers develop surveys that provide high-quality data?</td>
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<td>1/15</td>
<td>11A- Tues</td>
<td>11/15</td>
<td>Developing survey, con’t Review for exam (outside of class)</td>
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<td>1/17</td>
<td>11B- Thurs</td>
<td>11/17</td>
<td>Exam – in-class</td>
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<td>1/22</td>
<td>12A- Tues</td>
<td>11/22</td>
<td>Developing survey, con’t</td>
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<td>1/24</td>
<td>Thurs</td>
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<td>Thanksgiving – NO CLASS</td>
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<td>1/29</td>
<td>13A- Tues</td>
<td>11/29</td>
<td>Take-home exam due</td>
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<td>1/30</td>
<td>13B- Thurs</td>
<td>12/1</td>
<td>Neuman, chp 10 – Analysis of Quantitative Data</td>
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<td>How do researchers make sense of extensive quantitative data?</td>
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<td>12/6</td>
<td>14A- Tues</td>
<td>12/6</td>
<td>Neuman, chp 14 – Writing a Research Report</td>
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<td>How can research results be effectively communicated to different audiences</td>
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<td>12/8</td>
<td>14B- Thurs</td>
<td>12/8</td>
<td>Work on project reports</td>
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15A- Tues 12/13  
Topics: Work on project reports

15B- Thurs 12/15  
Topics: Work on project reports

Mon 12/19  
Research Portfolios Due

Fri 12/23  
Project Presentations  
8-11:30 This is the scheduled exam period. Please note that participation in project results is REQUIRED as this class fulfills the Gen Ed Tier II Oral requirement.

Course Readings

Becker, Howard S.  

Bloemraad, Irene.  

Bohannan, Paul.  

Bosk, Charles.  

Gladwell, Malcolm.  

Hersker & Leap, Representation, Subjectivity and Ethics in Urban Gay Ethnography, _City and Society_ 8(1): 142-147, 2008.

Horowitz, Ruth.  

Light, Linda & Nancy Kleiber.  

Minocha, Aneeta.  