Title
Syllabus for PhD Seminar on Research Methods and Design, Winter 2014, UCLA Information Studies

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Course overview

This is the core course in social science research methods and research design for PhD students in information studies. It follows 291A, Theoretical Traditions In Information Studies. Graduate students in Information Studies or related fields (education, communication, public policy, management, psychology, etc.) who have not taken 291A but who have extensive background in epistemology or research methods may enroll with instructor’s permission. Also prerequisite is at least one course in descriptive and inferential statistics.

The course is conducted as a workshop, drawing upon students’ research projects as cases. We will survey quantitative and qualitative research designs and address research ethics and the protection of human subjects. The first week of the course will provide a
brief review of epistemological issues, basic concepts of research design, and a refresher in statistical concepts. The course is intended to prepare students for further study on specific methods and to assist in preparation for the PhD qualifying exams.

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

Students will develop a research project and will present an analysis of research reported in a journal article in class.

**Learning outcomes:**

1. Students will become conversant with a range of research methods used in social settings, including experimental, quasi-experimental, and qualitative methods.

2. Students will identify and describe the elements of reliable and valid research and means to reduce bias in research.

3. Students will present critiques of published research using appropriate concepts in research design.

4. Students will develop a research design on a topic of their choosing, using an appropriate method.

**Assignments and Grading**

- Reading assignments weekly, to be completed prior to class sessions
- Major project 50%
- Short assignment: selection, analysis, and presentation of a research article 25%
- Class participation and mastery of readings 25%
- 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 hour time is essential for developing your term papers and for selecting journal articles for the article critique assignment. Students are expected to meet individually with the instructor at least twice during the term.

Office hours are Mondays and Wednesdays, 5-6pm and by appointment. Please sign up in advance by Doodle. While you are welcome to stop by during office hours, most slots
fill up in advance. If you are not able to keep an appointment, please cancel it on the Doodle as early as possible so that someone else may have the slot.

**Course Materials**

One of the objectives of this course is to assist students in building a personal library on research methods and design. The texts are classics that will assist you in your research career (and in writing your seminar paper). Other assigned readings will be available via CCLE, the course management system. Bring your texts and other readings to class with you (in print or digital form) on days they are assigned, as we will be referring to them.

As discussed in the CCLE forum prior to the start of term, the Babbie 13th ed, APA manual, and Shadish, Cook, and Campbell are available in LuValle bookstore. You are welcome to acquire these elsewhere, but be sure you get the correct editions. The Lofland book is available free online.

*Required:*


*Recommended:*


Schedule of Course Topics and Activities

This is the revised final set of course topics and meeting times, based on January 6 discussion in class. 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). Bring your assigned reading to class (books and articles; latter can be in print or on your laptop/pad). The assignments are explained in documents separate from this syllabus.

Course Activities

Week 1 (January 6): Topic 1: Course introduction and overview; Discuss scheduling of topics

Week 2 (January 13): Topic 2: Ethics in research; human subjects protection Make journal article topic assignments

Week 3 (January 20): Week 3 (January 20): holiday; Term project proposal due

Week 4 (January 27): Topic 3: Reliability, validity, bias; Workshop 1 or 2 student term paper topics; 1 or 2 students present journal articles; others introduce next articles

Week 5 (Feb 3): No class meeting: Prof. Borgman in Australia

Week 6 (Feb 10): Topic 4: Research designs; operationalization Workshop 1 or 2 student term paper topics; 1 or 2 students present journal articles; others introduce next articles

Week 7 (Feb 17): Holiday

Week 8 (Feb 24): Meet 9am-noon; room TBD. Topic 5: Experimental and quasi-experimental research. Workshop 1 or 2 student term paper topics; 1 or 2 students present journal articles; others introduce next articles

Week 9 (March 3): Topic 6: Randomization and sampling; Workshop 1 or 2 student term paper topics; 1 or 2 students present journal articles; others introduce next articles

Week 9 (March 7): Friday, 1:30-5pm, room TBD. Topic 7: Survey research; Workshop 1 or 2 student term paper topics; 1 or 2 students present journal articles; others introduce next articles
Week 10 (March 10): Topic 8: Qualitative field research; Workshop 1 or 2 student term paper topics; 1 or 2 students present journal articles; others introduce next articles

Exam week (March 17): Topic 9: Data analysis; Workshop 1 or 2 student term paper topics; 1 or 2 students present journal articles; Term papers due Monday, March 17, 5pm (on paper to instructor’s mailbox and by PDF upload to CCLE site)

Jan 6, Topic 1: Course introduction, overview and review

The course will begin with a general overview of topics and a review of basic statistics.

Readings:

Babbie:
  Preface, xv-xxi
  Part 1, An introduction to inquiry
    1: Human inquiry and science
    2: Paradigms, theory, and social research
  Ch 16: Statistical analyses

Jan 13, Topic 2: Ethics in research; human subjects protection

Prior to class: take CITI course on Social and Behavioral Research: (allow at least 2 hours): http://training.arc.ucla.edu/ucla/ (bring your certificate to class)

Babbie, Ch 3: The ethics and politics of social research

Shadish, Cook and Campbell, Chap. 9, Practical Problems 1: Ethics, participant recruitment, and random assignment


UCR OHRPP (Office of Human Subjects Research Protection Program) Guidance, Procedures, and Policies (Read intro, skim through rest)
http://ohrpp.research.ucla.edu/pages/policies-guidance

Recommended:

http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=18383

Jan 27, Topic 3: Reliability, Validity, and Bias

Babbie, Part 2: The structuring of inquiry, overview
  4: Research design (discussions of causality)
  5: Conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement

Shadish, Cook and Campbell,
  Chap 1, Experiments and generalized causal inference
  Chap 2, Statistical conclusion validity and internal validity
  Chap 3, Construct validity and internal validity
  Chap. 9, Practical Problems 1: Ethics, participant recruitment, and random assignment


Recommended:

Feb 10, Topic 4: Research design and operationalization of concepts

Babbie (continuing discussion from topic 3)
  Part 2, The structuring of inquiry, overview
  4: Research design
  5: Conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement

Shadish, Cook and Campbell
  Chap 2, Statistical conclusion validity and internal validity
  Chap 3, Construct validity and internal validity

Feb 24, 9-12, Topic 5: Experimental and quasi-experimental research

Babbie
  Part 3, Modes of observation, overview
  8: Experiments

Shadish, Cook and Campbell,
  Chap. 4, Quasi-experimental designs that either lack a control group or lack pretest observations on the outcome
  Chap 5, Quasi-experimental designs that use both control groups and pretests
  Chap 6, Quasi-experiments: interrupted time-series designs


Mar 3, Topic 6: Randomization and sampling

Note: 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 structuring of inquiry
  6: Indexes, scales, and typologies
  7: The logic of sampling

Shadish, Cook and Campbell, Chap. 8, Randomized experiments: Rationale, designs, and conditions conducive to doing them

Recommended:


http://www.psych.upenn.edu/history/orne/orne1962amerpsychol776783.html

Mar 7, Friday, Topic 7: Survey research

Babbie
  Part 2, The structure of inquiry
  6: Indexes, scales, and typologies (continued)
  Part 3, Modes of observation, overview
  9: Survey research

Mar 10, Topic 8: Qualitative field research

Lofland & Lofland, Introduction, Part I, Part II (p1-178)


Recommended
Babbie
  Part 3, Modes of observation
  10: Qualitative field research

http://www.jstor.org/stable/678455

Mar 17, Topic 9: Data analysis

Babbie
  Part 3, Modes of observation
  11: Unobtrusive research
  15: The elaboration model
Shadish, Cook and Campbell, Chap. 11, Generalized Causal Inference: A Grounded Theory

Lofland & Lofland, Part II (p179-230)

Recommended:
Babbie: Ch 13: Qualitative data analysis