Methods of Social Inquiry

Faculty Name: Dr. Michelle M. Camacho
Affiliation: University of San Diego, Full Professor
Discipline: SOCIOLOGY
Course Title: SOC 3595-102: Methods of Social Inquiry
TERM: Spring 2015
Division: Upper
Prerequisites: Lower Division Sociology class (Introduction to Sociology OR Social Problems)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This upper division research methods course provides students with a comprehensive overview of the sociological research process, along with hands-on practice. Students learn concepts of research design including conceptualization, operationalization, sampling methods, and data analysis/processing. With an emphasis on undergraduate research projects, this course will engage methods including ethnographic research, individual and focus group interviewing, and survey research. We will also cover research ethics and dilemmas of field research.

We will learn the role of theory in research design, as well as when to use which type of research method. We will have opportunities for “hands-on” research, and we will apply systematic research methods in our own projects. We will also examine research questions, methods and findings of other social researchers in the context of each of our ports of call. Throughout the course, we will talk about the scientific method, the complexities of applying methods to social research, ethics and bias, and research design. By the end of the course, you will be able to differentiate between the major "quantitative" and "qualitative" methodologies and you will have had multiple opportunities to try out these methods.
COURSE OBJECTIVES

Learning Goal 1: Students will understand the scientific method to answer social science research questions.
Learning Outcome: Students will be able to describe and apply the steps of the scientific method: develop research hypotheses, frame the research question within a literature review, gather and analyze data, and write a research report.

Learning Goal 2: To understand modes of investigation and observation: surveys, interviews, focus groups, and field research, including participant observation.
Learning Outcome: Students will be able to design a research project using the best mode of investigation to answer a specific research question.

Learning Goal 3: To understand cross cultural research approaches and ethical standards.
Learning Outcome: Students will engage in hands-on research using methodologies for cross-cultural research. Students will identify and deal with ethical questions that may arise in international settings.

Learning Goal 4: To develop an understanding of the basic approaches to qualitative and quantitative data analysis.
Learning Outcome: Students will experience quantitative data analysis by working in the computer lab to input and analyze data using statistical software. They will generate frequency distributions and measures of central tendency and variation. They will apply qualitative data analysis to interviews.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: Chambliss, Daniel F. and Schutt, Russell
TITLE: Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation Fourth Edition
PUBLISHER: SAGE Publications, Inc
ISBN 9781452217710
DATE/EDITION: 2013/4th

AUTHOR: Booth, Colomb, Williams
TITLE: The Craft of Research
PUBLISHER: University of Chicago Press
ISBN 978-0226065663
DATE/EDITION: 2008/3rd
TOPOCAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Depart Ensenada- January 7:

A1- January 9: Welcome & Syllabus Review

Overview & introductions

A2- January 11: Social Research Methods: How do we know what we know?

Reading for today:
Read Chapter one: Science, Society, and Social Research in Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation


Discussion:
Research journey—selecting a research topic
The mission of research and science in advancing knowledge

A3- January 13: Approaches in social science research methods.

Read Chapter 2 for today: The Process and Problems of Social Research in Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation

Group Exercise: Qualitative vs. quantitative measurement of “love” (adapted from American Sociological Association TRAILS)

Hilo: January 14

A4- January 16: Research Design and the Role of Theory

Read these articles and identify use of theory for in class discussion:


Due today: WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1-- Research Question and Rationale. Compose two social research questions that can be answered this semester using social science research methods. Explain in your own words the 1) feasibility of this proposed research topic; 2) social importance of each question; 3) scientific relevance. Finally, identify your “dream data”-- that is, if you were to answer each question by conducting research and collecting data, what would your ideal finding be? 500-1000 words. Typed.
A5- January 19: Literature Reviews

Read: The Craft of Research, Chapters 5, 6

Study Day: January 21

A6- January 22:

The Craft of Research, Chapter 7
Due today: WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2: Literature Review

A7- January 24: Qualitative Research Part I: Modes of Observation

Read Chapter 9: Qualitative Methods: Observing, Participating, Listening (pp. 223-235) for today, in Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation

Read about ethnography of a market and documenting space:


FIELD LAB PROJECT ASSIGNED
FIELD ASSIGNMENT 1: JAPAN--Writing ethnographic field notes based on Field Lab.

Yokohama: January 26-27
In-Transit: January 28
Kobe: January 29-31

A8- February 1: Conceptualization and Measurement

Read Chapter 4 for today: Conceptualization and Measurement in Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation

FIELD ASSIGNMENT 2: Content Analysis. Buy a Chinese popular magazine of your choice and bring it to class on February 9. Complete handout and tally sheet, distributed in class.
A9- February 9: Content Analysis


In class activity: We will attempt to replicate Huang and Lowry’s study using our magazine selections. Discussion: Limitations of our sample and method. Review of literature review. Examination of content analysis as a method. Practice using content analysis, in teams. Thematic analysis.

Ho Chi Minh: February 11-16

A10- February 17: Research Ethics

Read: Chapter 3 for today: Ethics in Research in *Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation*


A11-February 22: Research Ethics in Practice


Film: *Deadly Deception*.


Singapore: February 19-20

Study Day: February 21

Rangoon: February 24-March 1

A12-March 2 Qualitative Research, Part II: Interviews

Read Chapter 9: Qualitative Methods: Observing, Participating, Listening for today, in *Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation*
A13- March 4: Qualitative Research: Discussion and practicum

FIELD ASSIGNMENT 3: Interview tourists. Assignment to be discussed in class.

Cochin: March 6-11

Study Day: March 12

A14-March 13 Sampling

Read for today: Chapter 5: Sampling in *Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation*

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 3: Research Protocol

A15-March 15: Survey Research

Read for today: Chapter 7: Survey Research in *Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation*

Discussion: Survey Research – How to make sense of it; writing questions; designing questionnaires; organizing surveys; ethical issues

In class, group activity: Designing a survey.

Study Day: March 17

Port Louis: March 18

A16- March 19: Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis -- techniques

In class workshop: SPSS (Statistical software program)

A17-March 21: Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis -- practicum

In class workshop: SPSS (Statistical software program)

A18- March 23: Reporting Sociological Research

Read Chapter 12 for today: Reviewing, Proposing, and Reporting Research in: *Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation*
Preparing for our sociological research conference
Essential elements of a presentation; design options for presentations; improving clarity and efficiency in reporting data findings. Samples of successful projects.

Cape Town: March 25-30

Study Day: March 31

A19-April 1: Researcher Subjectivity: Reflexivity, Positionality & Danger


A20-April 3: Trouble shooting research problems

In class workshop
For today, review: The Craft of Research, Chapters 12-17

A21- April 5: Research Conference Expo – Quantitative projects

Project presentations

A22-April 12 Research Conference Expo – Quantitative projects

Project presentations

A23: April 14 Research Conference Expo – Qualitative projects

Project presentations
Study Day: April 16

**A24: April 17: Research Conference Expo – Qualitative projects**

  **Project presentations**

April 19: Arrive in Casablanca

Casablanca: April 19-23

April 24: Study Day

**A25: Final**

April 29: Arrive in Southampton
FIELD WORK
Field lab attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Please do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field lab.

FIELD LAB (At least 20 percent of the contact hours for each course, to be led by the instructor.)

The Sociological Art of Observation: Zen Lessons in Kamakura
In this field lab, “The Sociological Art of Observation: Zen Lessons in Kamakura” we will practice qualitative research skills, and contrast readings of the concept of a “Zen Mind” with traditional sociological methods. In visiting a Zen Buddhist temple, Kencho-ji in the city of Kamakura, we will adopt practices used by monks living in this monastery. Students will participate in a session of zazen sitting and walking meditation for approximately three hours. Through these experiences we will engage in participant-observation, a qualitative research method technique. We will use “jottings” a method for producing field notes, to record our observations. Students will reflect on issues of subjectivity and challenges of qualitative research. Learning goals include using participant-observation as an inductive method to design research questions; writing field notes; interpreting observation data. An effective goal includes demonstrating cultural sensitivity.

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS

FIELD ASSIGNMENT 1: JAPAN-- Writing ethnographic field notes based on Field Lab.

GOAL: This will give you practice conducting ethnographic observation, writing field notes, and interpreting observation data.

ASSIGNMENT:
Make jottings throughout our Field Lab. Observe the following characteristics of the people and setting:

1. dress
2. behavior (actions, their duration and sequence)
3. positioning (where people stand or move in the setting)
4. demographic characteristics (age, gender)
5. conversations (if audible)
6. physical features of the setting (lighting, decorations, layout, paths for movement)

Either during the observation, or immediately afterward, write down detailed notes about everything you observed. After the observation, type out your notes in longhand form — in complete sentences and paragraphs. Your completed fieldnotes should be as detailed as possible and should include your interpretations of what you observed. Your interpretation can draw on our readings.
FIELD ASSIGNMENT 2: CHINA --Content Analysis.

GOAL: This will give you practice conducting content analysis and coding.

ASSIGNMENT: Buy a Chinese popular magazine of your choice and bring it to class on February 9. Choose any recent issue of a popular magazine to analyze. Thumb through the whole magazine once; peruse the content, but pay careful attention to the advertisements, noting the total number of advertisements included in the magazine on the tally sheet provided at the end of this assignment. Then, write a brief description of the magazine’s focus and content, making sure to identify the magazine’s intended audience. (Don’t forget to mention the title and issue of your magazine!) Suggested sample magazines can be found in Appendix A of the journal article reading.

Go back through the magazine a second time and carefully examine each of the ads, making sure to look not only at the images, but also the advertising copy (i.e., any written text). First, categorize all of the advertisements in the magazine into about 5-7 main categories. Fill-in those categories and tally the number of ads in each category on the tally sheet provided. Then, count the number of advertisements that feature people whose gender and race are apparent to the reader and record this number on the tally sheet. For each of those ads, record the gender and race of the people in the advertisement on the tally sheet. Once you have tallied all of the information and calculated the percentages, write a brief summary of your results, discussing any surprising or unexpected findings.

Once you have tallied your results, go back through the magazine for a third and final time. Using our reading, choose two or three advertisements to analyze in-depth by answering the following questions: How are gender and race constructed in these ads? What is the overall message about gender and race that is being portrayed in these ads? How are the gender and race hierarchies reconstituted through these ads?

As you are analyzing each advertisement, remember to pay attention to the relationships among individuals in the ads. Why is their unique placement on the gender and race hierarchies important in understanding this advertisement? How does it affect their interaction? Do your findings replicate those of our reading?

*Please attach the tally sheet and the original ads (or a photocopy of them) to the end of this assignment. I must have these in order to grade your assignment.

GRADING CRITERIA
Completion of tally sheets: 50 %
Coding and analysis: 50 %
FIELD ASSIGNMENT 3: INDIA-- Qualitative Research: Interviews

GOAL: This will give you practice conducting semi-structured interviews and transcribing them.

ASSIGNMENT:
Interview a tourist (non-SAS student) in India. Take detailed notes on the interview but do not tape record it. The questions should be open-ended and allow the interviewee to guide the discussion, but should focus on their experience of India. You must write up questions before the interview, but should allow the interviewee to deviate from your questions if they desire. Some sample questions to get you started (you may pick and choose and add your own):

1. What is different about India than they expected?
2. What do they hope to get out of the experience?
3. What have they purchased and why?
4. What has been a negative experience for them in India?

During the interview, write down as close to verbatim notes of the discussion as you can. After the interview, type out your notes in longhand form – in complete sentences and paragraphs, including your questions. Note any body language or voice tone/volume shifts that you think are important. Also include your own impressions of the objects. Your completed notes should be as detailed as possible and should include (at the end) your interpretations of important points from the interview/further questions.

GRADING CRITERIA
Level of detail of notes: 50%
Level of depth of interview: 50%

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE REQUIREMENTS</th>
<th>Grade percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment 1: Research Question And Rationale 500-100 words</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment 2: Literature Review, 5-7 pages</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment 3: Research Protocol, 3-5 pages</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Lab Participation: Participant Observation Of Monastery Traditions</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Assignment 1: Writing Ethnographic Field Notes Based On Field Lab &amp; reflection 7-10 pages</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Assignment 2: Content Analysis 3 pages</td>
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<td>Field Assignment 3: Qualitative Research: Interviews 3-5 pages</td>
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<td>SPSS Lab Exercises:</td>
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<td>Research Presentation: 10 minutes MAX</td>
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<td>Final Exam:</td>
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<td>Total:</td>
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RESERVE LIBRARY LIST
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ISBN 978-0226065663
DATE/EDITION: 2008/3rd

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS


**FILM:** *Deadly Deception.*

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

1) Statistical software: SPSS (student version, ok)
2) To be purchased in port: Chinese popular magazine. Expected cost: $4-10 USD

**HONOR CODE**

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University’s honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager’s Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: “On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment.” The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed “[signed].”