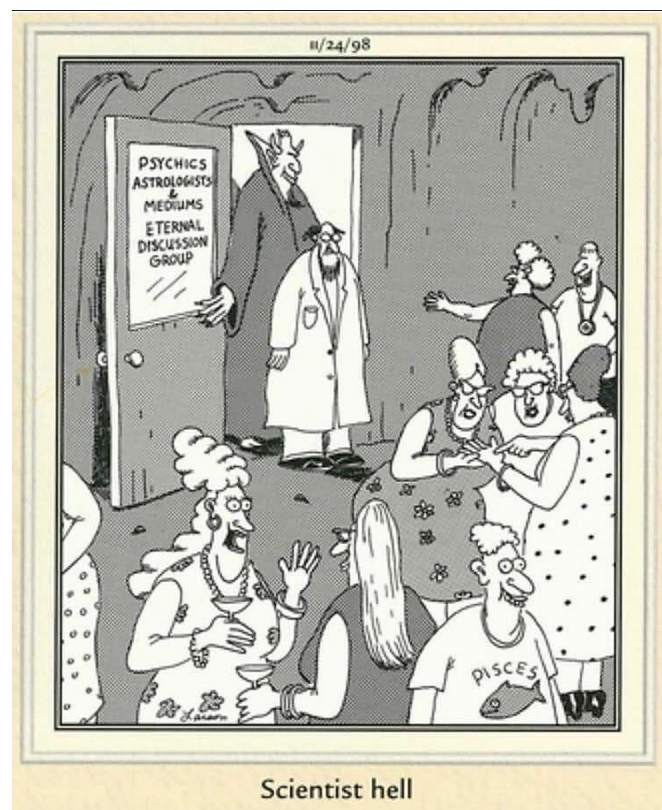


INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH METHODS

Code: P-112
Semester: Fall 2020
ECTS Credits: 6
Hours/week: 90 + 90 min
Language: English
Instructor: Mgr. Dagmar Kusá, PhD
Meeting: Mon: 13:00-14:30 Tatarka Room
Wed 10:30 – 12:00 Tatarka Room



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Link: <https://classroom.google.com/> code: rop24ea

Invite link: <https://classroom.google.com/c/Njl4MjQzODQ1NDFa?cjc=rop24ea>

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Prerequisites

- None

CONTENT

This course will walk students through the initial stages of an academic research project—from pondering a suitable topic, through deciding on a suitable methodology and techniques of data acquisition and interpretation, towards a completion of a thorough research proposal. Along the way, we will go through the basic approaches in scientific inquiry, learn to evaluate and search for academic sources in libraries and online, format and reference papers using automated functions in MS Word, and of testing the waters of practical research by designing and carrying out a simple survey or interviews.

The course is practically oriented. Through short assignments, you will gradually build up a full research proposal, which will be the final product of this course. The course has a workshop format, content will get created, analyzed, and edited during the classes, utilizing peer review, brainstorming, mind mapping, free writing, structured writing, and much more.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

<i>Learning objective</i>	<i>Assessment</i>
Student will be able to choose a researchable topic and hypothesis	Class discussions and work in the classroom Assignment on research focus-topic-hypothesis
Student will be able to find and evaluate academic sources and integrate them in writing	Article review Annotated bibliography Literature review
Discern facts from judgment and inference	In-class assignment
Student will be able to identify appropriate methodology and technique for the research of their hypothesis	Class discussions and work in the classroom Research proposal portion on methodology
Student will be able to construct a simple survey, utilizing different types of questions	Design of an interview or survey
Familiarity with ethical concerns and conduct	Design of an interview or survey
Familiarity with formatting and referencing functions in MSWord	Completion of a full research proposal
Ability to organize research planning in a thorough proposal	Completion of a full research proposal

ASSIGNMENTS

All written assignments are a part of the semester-long research project and are utilized towards the final Research Proposal. Therefore, it is no possible to skip or delay submission of individual assignments.

Assignment components:

- Short written assignments in class or at home (250-300 words) (20%)

- Article evaluation and annotated bibliography 10%
- Literature review 10%
- Hypothesis 10%
- Full Research Proposal (25%)
- Presentation of the research project (15%).
- Active and *informed* participation in class--Preparation for seminars, reading background materials, taking part in class activities and peer review (10%)

A final letter grade will reflect the weighted percentage of points you earn for assignments.

Timeliness is of essence in this course.

Assignments have to be uploaded via Google Classroom by the due date. **Late submissions will incur grade penalty.**

Within 24 hours -10%,

1 to 3 days - 20%

4 to 7 days - 50%

More than a week late - 0%

Self-Assessment

From the second semester on, you will be evaluating your own progress in my courses yourself. The “un-grading,” or in other words self-assessment, takes attention away from the letter grades and promotes awareness of own progress, skills development, retention of concepts and ideas, and ability to apply them in writing. I will provide you with ample feedback on your writing in order to improve your work constantly.

This semester, we will arrive at your final grade together. In mid-semester and at the end of the semester, we will have a consultation reviewing your work and progress, utilizing a structured reflection survey you will be asked to fill out. These reviews look at how you are fulfilling the learning objectives and reaching the learning standards, how familiar you are with the vocabulary of concepts of this course. The learning objectives are stated on page 3, and the learning standards and vocabulary of concepts are listed in the Appendices of this syllabus.

Grading scale

A – 100-93%,

B – 92-84%,

C – 83-74%,

D – 73-63%,

E – 62-51%,

Fx – 50-0%.

Four or more absences result automatically in Fx.

Regular attendance of all classes is of crucial importance in this course. Much of the explanation and implementation of what we learn towards your research project will take place in the seminars and skipping them will have impact on the quality of your research proposal. As per BISLA policy, four absences are permitted during the semester (these are to be reserved for cases of illness or family emergency). Any more absences result in failing the course. Do inform me prior to missing a class.

During this semester, it is essential that we remain safe. Thus, you are expected to stay at home and inform me when you have a raised temperature, feel short of breath, exhausted,

experience upset stomach, etc. Contact the NCIZ hotline to arrange for testing. Check <https://korona.gov.sk/en/> for latest information and contact numbers.

Plagiarism policy

Plagiarism will automatically result in an Fx and may be subject to disciplinary proceeding and penalties stipulated in Disciplinary Code (up to expulsion).

All assignments at BISLA should be: (a) based on *your* reading of the sources, (b) based on *your analysis* of the sources, and (c) written by you. All used sources have to be properly referenced in the text as well as in the bibliography of your papers. You may also reference lectures and class discussions—there is a way to reference everything.

Definition of plagiarism: If you use a statement, argument or idea from someone without giving them credit, you are guilty of plagiarism. You can avoid plagiarism by citing your source(s). You must cite a source in two cases: first, whenever you are using the exact wording of the source (in this case, enclose the words in quotation marks; if you add words to the quotation, use square brackets) and, second, whenever you are summarizing or paraphrasing a statement, argument, idea or narrative from the source. If you do not do this, you are guilty of plagiarism. BISLA is using an APA style of referencing—you will find an APA manual on your Google Classroom page. Also, you can consult OWL Purdue Writing lab online or the APA blog for excellent tips and guidance.

APA formatting and style guide:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

Required literature

READER which includes excerpts from:

Baglione, L. (2020). *Writing a research paper in political science. A practical guide to inquiry, structure, and methods. 4th*, London, UK : CQ Press, an imprint of SAGE.

Cooper, S. and Patton, R. (2020). *Writing Logically, Thinking Critically. 8th Ed.* New York: Pearson/Longman.

Johnson, J. B., Reynolds, H. T., & Mycoff, J. T. (2020) *Political Science Research Methods, 9th ed.* SAGE Publishing.

Recommended readings

Kirby, S. L., Greaves, L. & Reid, C. 2010. *Experience Research Social Change. Methods Beyond the Mainstream.* Toronto: Toronto Press Inc.

Leonhard, B. H. 2002. *Discoveries in Academic Writing.* Boston, MA: Heinle, Cengage Learning.

Plichtová, J. 2002. *Metódy sociálnej psychológie zblízka. Kvalitatívne a kvantitatívne skúmanie sociálnych reprezentácií.* Bratislava: Média.

Scott, G. M. and Garrison, S.M. 2006. *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual, 5th ed.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Schutt, R. K. (2019). *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research* (9th edition). Los Angeles: Sage.

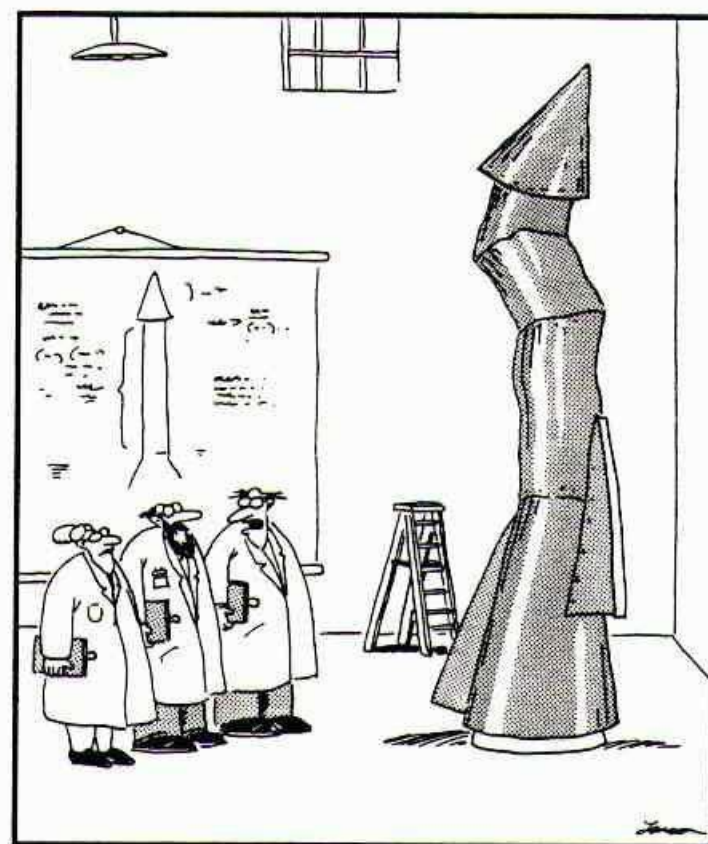
Silverman, D. 2017. *Doing Qualitative Research.* Fifth Edition. Los Angeles, London, and Delhi : SAGE.

Single, P.B. (2010) *Demystifying Dissertation Writing: Streamlined Process from Choice of Topic to Final Text.* Sterling, Virginia: Stylus.

TOPICS and SCHEDULE SUMMARY

	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT	READING (to be read <i>before</i> class on that week)
Week 1 Sept 14	Intro to Social Science research	Brainstorming themes for research project	1.C. W. Mills: <i>On Intellectual Craftsmanship</i>
Week 2 Sept 21	Evaluating information: discerning inference from judgment	Facts, Inference, Judgment workshop in class SUBMIT: GENERAL TOPIC IDEA	2. Cooper & Patton: Inference: Critical Thought
Week 3 Sept 28	What can you do with qualitative and quantitative research?	Research focus exercise in class	3. PSRM: Empirical Approach to Political Science
Week 4 Oct 5	Finding academic sources: Offline and online quest	SUBMIT: Article review [start in class—BRING LAPTOPS] Pre-register for the UK SAV library online	4.PSRM: Beginning the Research Process Identifying a Research Topic, Developing Research Questions, and Reviewing the Literature Baglione: Finding the Scholarly Debate, and Summarizing and Classifying Arguments: The Annotated Bibliography BISLA Guide to Digital Research [separate handout]
Week 5 Oct 12	Literature Review	SUBMIT: Annotated bibliography	5. PSRM: Writing Literature Review
Week 6 Oct 19	From theory to findings	SUBMIT: literature review with own research question	6. PSRM: The Building Blocks of Social Scientific Research Hypotheses, Concepts, Variables, and Measurement
Week 7 Oct 26	Research Design: establishing a causation	In class: Research question→Hypothesis [bring for consultation appointment] SUBMIT: Thesis statement paragraph	7. PSRM: Sampling PSRM: Research Design: Establishing causation
Week 8 Nov 2	READING WEEK		
Week 9 Nov 9	Qualitative Approaches: Interviews, surveys	SUBMIT: Design survey or interview	8. PSRM: Making Empirical Observations Qualitative Analysis
Week 10 Nov 16	Quantitative Approaches	SUBMIT: Finalize survey or interview design: Produce intro + informed consent	9. PSRM: Quantitative Research Designs
Week 11 Nov 23	Content analysis	SUBMIT: Methodology description (start in class)	10: PSRM: Quantitative Methods

Week 12 Nov 30	Developing a research proposal	Formatting and referencing workshop [in class]	11: Baglione: Bringing the Paper Together in Essential Ways: The Conclusion, Introduction, Title, Abstract, and the Utility of a Presentation
Week 13 Dec 7	Presentations: How to present research	Present your research to the class	
Week 14 Dec 14	Presentations	Present your research to the class SUBMIT: full research proposal	



"It's time we face reality, my friends. ...
We're not exactly rocket scientists."

TOPICS Week by Week

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are always due on Saturday by 8pm.

WEEK 1: Sept 14 and 16

Introduction, overview of the course, expectations

- Intro, expectations, group exercise

What is Social Science Research

- How to get organized:
 - The research file
 - The research journal
 - System KFP -- keep, file, protect
 - Active reading and citable notes
- Public issues and private troubles
- Brainstorming themes for your own research

READING: C.W. Mills: *On Intellectual Craftsmanship* [Reader]

(Recommended: Baglione: chapters 1 and 2)

WEEK 2: Sept. 21 and 23

Evaluating information: discerning inference from judgment

- Distinguishing fact, inference, and judgment
- Evaluating academic texts
- Inferences drawn from images, fiction

WED

- *Group work in class*
- Prep for Annotated Bibliography

READING: Cooper & Patton: *Inference: Critical Thought* [READER]

SUBMIT: general topic idea(s) via Google Classroom

WEEK 3: Sept. 28 and 30

What can you do with qualitative and quantitative research?

- Components of social science research
- Empirical, theoretical, applied research
- Essentials of empirical research

WED: Writing out the research focus-in class

READING: 3. PSRM: *Empirical Approach to Political Science* [READER]

WEEK 4: Oct. 5 and 7

Finding academic sources: Offline and online quest

- Recognizing quality of information in texts
- Which sources are suitable for research?
- Where to find them?

WED: BRING NOTEBOOKS TO CLASS

- Digital research
- Databases of scholarly journals and books
- Organizing online research

READING: 4. PSRM: *Beginning the Research Process Identifying a Research Topic, Developing Research Questions, and Reviewing the Literature* and Baglione: *Finding the Scholarly Debate, and Summarizing and Classifying Arguments: The Annotated Bibliography* [READER]

SUBMIT Article Review via Google Classroom

WEEK 5: Oct. 12 and 14

Literature Review

- What is the purpose of a literature review?

- Which components should it include?
- Which texts should be covered in lit review?
- Finding key concepts and schools of thought

WED: Outline of your lit review in class

READING: 5. PSRM: Writing Literature Review [READER]

SUBMIT: Annotated Bibliography via Google Classroom

WEEK 6: Oct. 19 and 21

From Theory to Findings: Themes, key concepts, finding relations.

Tony Buzan and mind mapping

- Circling back from lit review to research question
- Ensuring logical consistency of your work
- What does a sound theoretical chapter look like?
- Using mind mapping to develop theory and chisel out a hypothesis

Wed: Conceptual mapping – in class

BRING LAPTOPS INTO CLASS

READING: 6. PSRM: The Building Blocks of Social Scientific Research Hypotheses, Concepts, Variables, and Measurement [READER]

SUBMIT: Literature review with own research question

WEEK 7: Oct. 26 and 28

Research Design: Establishing Causation

- Sampling population for a survey
- Representative and non-representative samples
- Sample size

WED: In class: Research question → Hypothesis workshop

READING: 7. PSRM: Sampling & PSRM: Research Design: Establishing causation [READER]

SUBMIT: Thesis statement paragraph via Google Classroom

WEEK 8: Nov. 2 and 4

READING WEEK

MID-SEMESTER CONSULTATIONS OF YOUR PROGRESS AND RESEARCH PRIOR TO OR DURING THE READING WEEK—ARRANGE A MEETING WITH ME.

WEEK 9: Nov. 9 and 11

Qualitative Research: Interviews and Surveys

READING: 8. PSRM: Making Empirical Observations Qualitative Analysis Data collection, interpretation, incorporation [READER]

- Field research and methods
- Ethical standards in research
- Level of conclusions

READ: L. Baglione, ch. 8: Evaluating the Argument...

WEEK 10: Nov. 16 and 18

Quantitative Research

- Simple quantitative tools for beginners
- Chi-square

- Regression
- Time series
- Finding data online for secondary analysis

WED: looking through online databases of quantitative data

BRING NOTEBOOK TO CLASS

READING: 10. Quantitative Research Designs [READER]

SUBMIT: Finalize survey or interview design: Produce intro + informed consent (upload the complete survey or interview design with introduction, informed consent form and release agreement)

WEEK 11: Nov. 23 and 25

Content Analysis

GUEST: prof. Adam Silver

- How to analyze texts, speeches, documents qualitatively and quantitatively
- Coding documents for analysis

READING: 11. Quantitative Methods [READER]

Submit Methodology Description

WEEK 12: Nov. 30 and Dec. 2

First pages of the Thesis: Abstract, Acknowledgments, Preface, Introduction

- What purpose do Abstract and Intro serve?
- What goes into which part?
- What length?
- What info should they contain?

WED: CITATION STYLE and FORMATTING

- Formatting the thesis
- British vs. American punctuation and style
- BSLA House Style
- Sections, headings, numbering
- DOING THE LAYOUT OF THE PROPOSAL IN CLASS: stitching things together

BRING LAPTOPS TO CLASS

READING: 12: Baglione: Bringing the Paper Together in Essential Ways: The Conclusion, Introduction, Title, Abstract, and the Utility of a Presentation [READER]

WEEK 13: Dec. 7 and 9

Preparing for research presentation

- Organization of argument
- PPT presentations
- Research posters

WED: Presentations of research projects and feedback

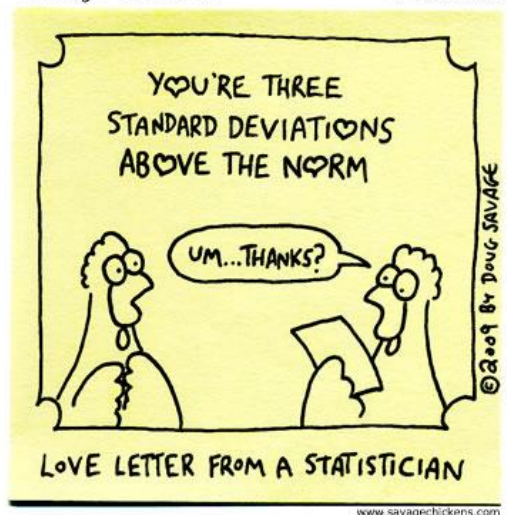
WEEK 14 Dec 15 and 17

MON: Presentations of research projects and feedback

End-of-semester consultations: arrange a meeting with me.

Savage Chickens

by Doug Savage



Savage Chickens

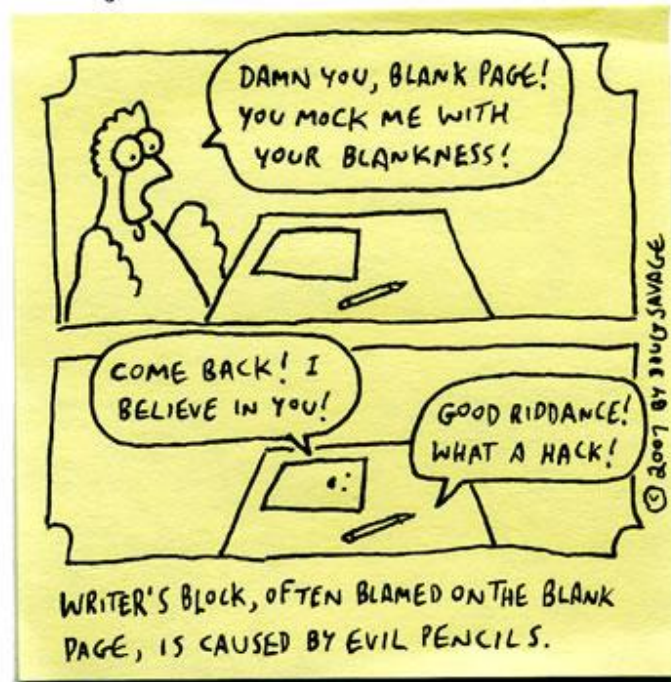
by Doug Savage



www.savagechickens.com

Savage Chickens

by Doug Savage



www.savagechickens.com

Learning Standards

You should think of placing yourself in a four-point scale:

- Mastery of the standard: you can demonstrate this standard consistently and do so well or very well. (In other words, your rock at x.)
- Meeting or nearly meeting the standard: you can demonstrate competence at this standard all or most of the time. (In other words, you occasionally rock at x.)
- Approaching the standard: you cannot do what is listed consistently, but you are closing in on being able to. (In other words, you do not quite rock at x, but with a little more hard work, you will in the future.)
- Not meeting the standard: you cannot demonstrate any or much mastery of this learning standard. (In other words, sadly, your skills with x cannot be described as rocking.)

Textual Analysis Skills:

- Students should be able to read with understanding various texts in political science. They should be able to make an argument about the main topics citing specific evidence from the text and evaluate the text from methodological point of view,
- Students should be able to extract the main ideas and concepts from the texts and subsequently apply them in different situations,
- Students should be able to understand and remember the concepts even after some time after reading the texts (keep track of the vocabulary ongoingly).

Writing Skills:

- Students should be able to compose an analytical paper on political science topics that successfully argues a thesis that is connected to an assigned topic. Students should be able to remain focused on that argument throughout the paper.
- Students should be able to write with awareness of audience, including in their introductions and conclusions.
- Students should structure paragraphs around clear claims of arguments, supported by specific evidence from assigned texts, and followed through with an analysis.
- Students should be able to appropriately cite primary and secondary sources read in the course and complement them with academic sources found through own research.
- Students should be able to write in a clear way, which is easy to follow by a reader.
- Students should learn to revise their work in response to the feedback.

Content and Method:

- Students should have a vocabulary appropriate for political science study (you will find a list of terms below).
- Students should be able to match the appropriate research method and techniques to the selected topic.
- Students should have an understanding of the main concepts from the assigned texts and be able to apply them critically to their research
- Students should demonstrate understanding and application of research ethical standards to their research design

Habits of learning:

1. Reading/class preparation

- Reading thoughtfully and carefully with understanding
- Taking notes/marking texts
- Keeping a research journal with ideas, reflections, questions, observations
- Finishing the reading before class
- Being able to find help when struggling with understanding of the texts/assignments

2. Class engagement

- Participating in discussion
 - Listening to and engaging with classmates
 - Coming to class prepared
 - Staying focused on the tasks assigned in class
 - Attendance and punctuality
 - Being active in team-work

Assignments

- Completing assignments thoughtfully and carefully
- Assignments follow directions and meet minimum requirements
- Assignments turned in on time
- Constant improvement of the research project based on peer review and feedback

Vocabulary

Research Process	- Literature review	- Value neutrality
- Public issue	- Research design	- Causality, causal explanation
- Private trouble		- Association
- Research file	Empirical Research	- Dependence
- Research journal	- Fact	- Covariation
- Citable notes	- Data	- Necessary/sufficient condition
- Research focus	- Inference	- Theory
- Research question	- Judgment	- Deduction
- Hypothesis	- Implication	- Induction
- Thesis statement	- Empirical research	- Grand theory
- Concept	- Theoretical research	- Middle-range theory
- Conceptual/mind map	- Applied research	- Ontology
- Conclusion	- Empiricism	- Epistemology
- Abstract	- Verification	- Generality
- Introduction	- Falsifiability	- Plausibility
	- Regularity	- Specificity
Working with Sources	- Normative knowledge	- Testability
- Scholarly text, journal	- Non-normative knowledge	- Tautology
- Peer review	- Replicability	
- Remote access	- Transparency	
- Annotation	- Parsimony	
- Article/book review		

Research Methods

- Independent variable
- Dependent variable
- Antecedent variable
- Intervening variable
- Units of analysis
- Population
- Case study
- Cross/level analysis
- Chronological comparison
- Diachronic comparison
- Ecological inference
- Ecological fallacy
- Operationalization
- Directional hypothesis
- Measurement
- Validity
- Reliability
- Nominal level of measurement
- Ordinal level of measurement
- Categorical level of measurement
- Dichotomous variable
- Population parameters
- Sampling distribution
- Sampling error
- Sample size
- Margin of error
- Probability sample
- Nonprobability sample

- Experiment
- Control group
- Experimental group
- Pre-test
- Post-test

Qualitative methods

- Causes-of-effects approach
- Small N studies
- Interview
- Document analysis
- Running record
- Observation
- Ethnomethodology
- Participatory Action Research
- Oral history
- Life story
- Primary data
- Secondary data
- Reactivity
- Selection bias
- Informed consent
- Release form
- Ethical standards

Quantitative methods

- -Effects-of-causes approach
- Large N studies

- Randomized field experiment
- Natural experiment
- Quasi-experiment
- Cross-sectional design
- Time-series
- Cohort
- Intervention analysis
- Trend analysis
- Surveys
- Open-ended questions
- Closed questions
- Leading questions
- Double-barrel questions
- Single-sided question
- Double-sided question
- Multiple choice question
- Filter question
- Verifying question
- Question order effect
- Response rate
- Content analysis
- Coding
- SPSS
- STATA
- R program

ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

In this course, assignments are designed to stack up gradually towards one final product—the research proposal. Below are the assignments that will form the components of your final research proposal. There will also be smaller assignments, mostly done in the classroom.

1. Article Review and Annotated Bibliography

Article Review c. 500-750 words

To start off the journey towards academic research, you will be asked to evaluate the arguments of a scholarly paper that you will find using the processes and databases introduced in class related to your research topic. Remember, that an academic paper is a peer-reviewed paper from a scholarly journal. A thorough review contains both a fair summary of author's arguments, as well as your own input on the text's contribution to the field in which this text is positioned.

Include a full bibliographical reference at the top of the review. Check the nature of the journal, author's credential, and that the research is recent enough and not outdated. Consider the author's research question, hypothesis, key arguments. Is the hypothesis specific and testable? Does the article offer a clear research design and transparent walk through the process of testing the hypothesis? Is related literature sufficiently reviewed?

First, offer a fair summary of the overall argument, methods, findings. Then proceed with your own evaluation of the level of success in delivering the proof of stated claims, soundness of methodology, utilization of literature, etc.

Lastly, consider the article from the point of view of how it answers or does not answer your own research question. What does it contribute? What remains unanswered? Why is this article interesting or valuable from the point of view of your own research topic?

Annotated Bibliography (each annotation 1-2 paragraphs)

Add much shorter reviews (annotations) of four more various academic sources related to your topic following the same basic structure. Organize these sources into different key concepts or schools of thoughts or different methodological approaches (whichever is most applicable to your case) that represent the major divisions in the field related to your research topic.

2. Literature Review

c. 1500-2000 words

Literature review will be the third step after the article review and annotated bibliography. In this step, you are producing an essay about the state of the literature in relation to your research question. It is an essential part of any serious research project.

Use the same organization (into concepts, methods, or schools of thought) as in annotated bibliography and rely on the same sources, adding on to them. Literature review maps what other authors had to say about your research question, what major controversies and agreements are there among scholars on questions related to your subject of interest. LR offers an overview of these concepts /methods/ schools of thoughts and then evaluates what gaps there are in the research by others on your topic—what remains puzzling and unanswered?

Once you identify this, you can come forward with your own research question and formulate it and explain it at the end of your literature review.

LR is structured as an essay: with its own introduction, including the statement on the main finding about the state of literature on your research topic, overview, analysis, and conclusion.

As an incentive to use the syllabus in preparation for the class, I always hide a small task in the instructions which can gain you an extra point. If you are actually reading this, email me a Radio Yerevan joke (Google it if you have never heard of it...or ask your parents or grandparents). You will receive two valuable points towards your final grade.

3. Hypothesis

Thesis statement consists of one paragraph—several sentences that include:

1. An opening –a lead-in to bring the reader into the picture, to let them understand the problem, the puzzle
2. The actual statement—the claim about the causal relation between the dependent and independent variables that your research is claiming and proposing to explore
3. Specification of the independent variables – which represent the individual arguments explored in relation to your dependent variables. If you were writing the full paper, they would represent the individual chapters.

When the thesis statement includes all these components, it should serve the purpose of outlining the entire argument in the paper—short, but very specific in terms of specifying causes or effects explored within and anticipating HOW they are related (e.g. the more of something leading to the more of something else, or opposite, to less of something else, or presence of something precluding the presence of some outcome, etc...)

4. Survey / Interview design

The interview or survey design will consist of two parts:

- 1. The actual content of the survey or interview design.**
 - Utilize a variety of types of questions
 - Consider reliability and validity of your questionnaire
 - Pay attention to the order of the questions
 - Avoid misleading, ambiguous questions
 - Include verifying questions and /or filter questions if relevant
 - Design your survey or interview either via Google Forms or Survey Monkey or just on paper, depending on your target sample
- 2. Week after that, complete your interview/survey by adding**
 - Introduction
 - Informed consent
 - Release form

5. Research Proposal

Research proposal is a project you will be working on from the very beginning of the semester until the very end and it will be the final output in this course. It will be created by putting together various components that you were working on before

- Abstract
- Literature Review
- Research question
- Hypothesis
- Methodology

- Outline
- Preliminary conclusion
- Bibliography
- Appendices (e.g. survey or interview questionnaire)

6. Research Presentation

The final task is to share your research project with the audience of your fellow classmates. Presentations should be up to 15 minutes long, and should follow a similar structure as the research proposal (problem statement, thesis, key findings from existing literature, research design -- methods and data, preliminary findings, conclusion)

It can be presented simply orally, or utilizing a PowerPoint (or other presentation software) or by producing a research poster.

You will receive feedback from your colleagues that you are expected to incorporate into the final version of your research proposal before you submit it at the end of the semester.