

SOC 362/CJC483
Methods of Sociological Research
University of Missouri-Kansas City

Fall 2007

Class room: Royall Hall Room 206

Class Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-1:45 p.m.

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:50-2:50 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Sookhee Oh

Office: 203A Manheim Hall

Phone: 816-235-5848

Email: ohso@umkc.edu

TA: Elisa Shields

Office: 106J Manheim Hall

Phone: 816-235-1602 / Email: es6v8@umkc.edu

Office hours: Wednesdays 10:00-11:00 am or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to introduce social science research methods and issues. The course will focus on how social scientists investigate the social world in a scientific way. Through lectures, readings, discussions, and class project, students will gain a general understanding of social scientific research methods and become critical readers of social scientific research.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

There are two main objectives in this course: to introduce you to different methods of social science research; and to help you become a critical reader of social scientific research. The ultimate goal is to provide you with the sociological tools and skills needed to understand how social scientific research is conducted and to critically evaluate and interpret the findings of social scientific research.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In-class exams: There will be two in-class, closed-book exams near the middle and the end of the semester: Tuesday, October 2 and Tuesday, December 11. Exams can consist of solving problems, giving definitions, answering multiple choice and true/false questions, interpreting graphs and tables, and writing short answers and essays. You are expected to complete the exam independently.

Article analysis: You are expected to write a critical analysis (4-5 pages) of one sociological research article published in a peer-reviewed journal due Thursday, November 1. You will choose from three articles presented later in the semester. You are expected to complete the article analysis independently; this is not a collaborative project. Guidelines for this assignment will be provided later in the semester.

Research proposal: You are expected to write a brief research proposal (4-5 pages) due Tuesday, December 4. This project should be of your own design according to the stated guidelines to be distributed at a later date. You will choose a research topic that interests

you (due Thursday, October 11), raise a research question and describe research methods that you would employ and the rationale for the research methods you selected. You are expected to complete this proposal independently. Detailed instructions and discussion time for this assignment will be provided later in the semester.

COURSE POLICIES AND ETIQUETTE

Attendance and participation: You are expected to attend and be on time for all class sessions. Two absences are permitted without penalty. After two absences, your participation grade will be lowered. If you are consistently late for class, I will mark you absent. I will hand around an attendance sheet at the beginning of each class. You are also required to prepare for class by reading all of the assigned readings, participate in class discussion, and complete all assignments by the due dates.

Due dates: You are required to complete all assignments by the beginning of class on the due dates. Ten percentage points will be deducted from late assignments each day including weekends. Extensions will be considered only under extreme circumstances pertaining to family or medical emergencies. You should bring written excuse from your doctor or family members to prove the circumstances.

Writing assignment format: All the writing assignments should be typed. Documents must be in 12-point Times New Roman or Arial font, have page numbers and 1-inch margins on all sides, and be double-spaced. I will accept only hard copies of assignments.

Incomplete: I will not give incompletes except in extreme circumstances. Incompletes are an option only after 60 percent of the work for the class has been completed.

Etiquette: Cell phones during class sessions are not tolerated. You should respect the views of peers. Come prepared.

Academic honesty: Cheating including plagiarism is not tolerated. Consult the UMKC catalogue for the policy on academic honesty.

<http://www.umkc.edu/umkc/catalog/html/append/policy/0020.html>

Sexual harassment: Sexual harassment, intimidation, or discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Consult the UMKC catalogue for the policy on sexual harassment.

<http://www.umkc.edu/umkc/catalog-grad/html/append/policy/0220.html>.

Disability: If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please let me know and contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities at 816-235-5696.

Course website: The course schedule is subject to change. Please check the course website at Blackboard periodically for updates and announcements.

GRADING

Your final grade is based on the following distribution.

In-class exam1-----	15 %
In-class exam2-----	20 %
Article analysis-----	25 %
Research proposal-----	30 %
Attendance and participation ---	10 %

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Babbie, Earl. (2007). *The Basics of Social Research* (4th edition). Wadsworth Publishing.
Two copies of this textbook are on reserve at Miller Nichols Library.

* Additional required readings are available online through the Blackboard course website or on reserve at Miller Nichols Library.

CLASS TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments
<u>Week 1</u>		
August 21	Course Orientation	
August 23	Social scientific inquiry	Read Ch. 1
<u>Week 2</u>		
August 28	Research ethnics * Guest speaker: Germaine Hughes (IRB administrator)	Read Ch. 3
August 30	Theory and research	Read Ch. 2
<u>Week 3</u>		
September 4	Literature review	Ch.2; Additional reading
September 6	Using the library * Guest speaker: Christine Angolia (social science library specialist)	
<u>Week 4</u>		
September 11	Research design I	Reach Ch. 4
September 13	Research design II	Additional reading
<u>Week 5</u>		
September 18	Conceptualization and measurement	Read Ch. 5
September 20	Measurement/Scales	Read Ch. 6
<u>Week 6</u>		
September 25	Sampling	Read Ch. 7
September 27	Exam review	
<u>Week 7</u>		
October 2	In-class exam	Exam # 1
October 4	Experiments I	Read Ch. 8
<u>Week 8</u>		
October 9	Experiments II	Read Ch. 8
October 11	Reading research articles Instructions for the article analysis project	Topic due for research proposal Handout

Week 9

October 16

Survey research I

Read Ch. 9

October 18

Survey research II

Read Ch. 9

Week 10

October 23

Qualitative approaches

Read Ch. 10

October 25

Qualitative field research and analysis

Read Ch. 13; additional reading

Week 11

October 30

Unobtrusive research

Read Ch. 11

November 1

Instructions for the research proposal project

Article analysis due

Handout

Week 12

November 6

Census data

Handout

November 8

Evaluation research

Read Ch. 12

Week 13

November 13

Quantitative data analysis I

Read Ch. 14

November 15

Quantitative data analysis II

Read Ch. 14

Week 14

November 20

Thanksgiving break

No class

November 22

Thanksgiving break

No class

Week 15

November 27

Spatial approaches

Johnston 2005; Messer et al. 1999

November 29

Mixed methods; Exam review

Additional reading

Week 16

December 4

Exam review

Research proposal due

December 6

Reading day

No class

December 11

In-class exam

Exam # 2