

SOCY 11 Research Methods
Winter Quarter 2014

Class Meets in 107 Thornton Hall, 10A: TuTh 10:00–11:50pm (X-hour: W 3:00-3:50pm)

**X-hour may be used in the event of snow cancellations

Professor Piper Coutinho-Sledge

Office: 012 Silsby Hall

Email: piper.coutinho-sledge@dartmouth.edu

Phone: 603-646-2556

Office hours: Tuesday 12-2 or by appointment

Course Description:

Socy 11 is a required course for Sociology Majors 2015s and later. This course is designed to provide students with the practical tools of doing social science research and the theoretical background for critiquing and designing research on social issues. We focus specifically on qualitative methods, engaging in a wide range of methods throughout the term—including interviewing, content analysis, and ethnographic observations—and enabling students to design a research project addressing specific and testable questions. Like Socy 10, this course focuses on developing the skills necessary to interpret, critique, and conduct social science research.

Course Goals and Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Read, interpret, and critically evaluate social research.
2. Identify, explain, and apply the basic concepts of research, such as variables, operationalization, causality, and hypotheses.
3. Recognize the ethical issues involved in research, and practice ethical research standards.
4. Identify and explain the difference between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research and what types of research questions can be answered with each method.
5. Use theory and previous research to create research questions and hypotheses and to identify and analyze the appropriate method and variables needed for research questions.
6. Use a variety of research methods through hands-on experience.
7. Construct a coherent research proposal that includes an abstract, introduction, literature review, research questions, ethical considerations, and methodology.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

READINGS: The following required books are available at the Dartmouth Bookstore and Wheelock Books. They also are on 2-hour reserve at Baker Berry library, links to this information is on our course Canvas site, under “Library Reserves”

Khan, Shamus, and Dana R. Risher. 2014. *The Practice of Research: How Social Scientists Answer Their Questions*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Weiss, Robert S. 1994. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: The Free Press.

Optional Reading (any edition): Babbie, Earl. 2014. *The Basics of Social Research*, 6th Ed. Belmont, California: Cengage.

- On Canvas under “Course Materials,” I have posted a list of learning objectives for each of these chapters, which should help guide your reading.

Additional readings are available on our course Canvas site, under “Additional Readings.” As you’re completing the readings, pay special attention to the “methods” sections in articles.

****Readings are subject to change. All changes will be announced in class and on Canvas****

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE: This is absolutely necessary if a seminar is to be successful. Participation will help you better process and understand the material we cover while also increasing our collective understanding. Attendance and involvement in class discussions and activities also make up 10% of our course grade. You should come to class prepared to ask questions, generate ideas, and discuss the assigned readings. If I sense that students are not completing the readings carefully, I may institute pop quizzes, which will factor into your participation grade.

You can miss up to **three** classes without penalty, no questions asked. If you use them all up and then get sick, I cannot excuse you. Only hospitalization, serious illness, and serious family emergencies will qualify as excused after you miss three classes.

In the event that you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for getting class notes for that class from another student. As a general policy, I do not make my notes available. After you review your classmate’s notes, I would be happy to meet with you to talk about the material or answer questions about anything that is unclear. If you miss more than three days of class, your course grade will decrease by one whole letter grade, and decrease by one step (e.g., B to B-) for each additional absence. If you attend all class sessions (this means that you arrive on time), I will add two points to your final grade. This could be the difference between the grade you earn and the grade you want.

LAB ASSIGNMENTS: Because this is a hands-on course, you will be engaged in “doing sociology” throughout the term. One way that you’ll be doing this is through a series of lab assignments. Parts of these assignments will be done in class and other parts will be outside of class (note that there is not a separate “lab” section to the course). I will provide detailed feedback on some of the assignments, and more limited feedback on others. I will not announce ahead of time how in-depth a particular assignment will be graded, so you should complete all of them in detail. Please ask if you have questions about my comments or expectations.

You may need additional resources to complete some of the labs; for example, you will need audio recorders to complete the interviews, and transcription software will make transcribing the interview easier. Audio recorders are available for check out at Jones Media Center. Express scribe, which is free to download, will help with transcriptions.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: The culminating experience in this course is a research proposal on a topic of your choice. You will complete drafts of portions of this proposal through the lab

assignments (i.e., the abstract is Lab #3 and the literature review is Lab #4). I will hand out more details about the research proposal, but here is an outline of the sections that it will include:

1. Title Page
2. Abstract
3. Introduction
4. Literature Review
5. Research Questions
6. Methods
7. Ethical Considerations
8. Significance
9. Works Cited (References)

This proposal may be for research that you intend to complete (for example, through an honor's thesis in the major or an independent study) or not. It is not necessary that you follow-up by actually doing the research. Carefully planning, thinking through, and documenting the design of the project are the focus of this assignment.

Percentage of Final Grade

Participation and Attendance	10%
Lab Assignments	60%
Research Proposal	30%

Final Course Grade

A = 93.0-100	C+ = 77.0-79.99
A- = 90.0-92.99	C = 73.0-76.99
B+ = 87.0-89.99	C- = 70.0-72.99
B = 83.0-86.99	D = 60.0-69.99
B- = 80.0-82.99	E < 60.0

Course Guidelines and Policies:

Honor Principle: Examinations and assignments will be conducted in accord with the principles of academic honor detailed in the Dartmouth Organization, Regulations and Courses. I encourage you to discuss ideas from class with your classmates. However, unless otherwise noted, assignments should be completed independently and all work turned in should be your own. I also encourage students to read Dartmouth's statement on Sources and Citations: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/sources/>

Religious Holidays: Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me ASAP to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities enrolled in this course and who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible, and no later than the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Accessibility Services office may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested. Information about Student Accessibility Services is available at: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~accessibility/>

Late Submissions: The submission of assignments is expected on the indicated "due date" during that day's class meeting (unless otherwise stated). I do not grant extensions. Any work turned in

more than 10 minutes after the start of class is considered late and the grade will be reduced by one step (for example, from a B to a B-). The grade will be reduced by an additional step for each day it is late. Work turned in after class begins is considered one day late. Work turned in the day after class is considered two days late.

Classroom Etiquette: Disruptions to class negatively affect everyone's ability to learn. If you must arrive late or leave early, please notify the instructor in advance and sit by the door to minimize disruptions. It is inappropriate to use cell phones or use laptops for activities outside of taking notes (such as email or facebook). Disruptions will reduce your participation grade.

Class Schedule:

Readings that are not from Khan & Fisher or Weiss are available online at our class Canvas site.

Date	Topic	Readings	Due
BEGINNING YOUR RESEARCH			
1/8	Introduction: Why use qualitative methods?	Gray, Mary. 2009. "Preface" <i>Out in the Country</i> . New York: NYU Press (xi-xiv) Small, Mario. 2004. "Preface." <i>Villa Victoria</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (xi-xviii).	
1/13	Research Design	Maxwell, Joseph. 2005. "A model for qualitative research design." <i>Qualitative Research Design</i> . Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. Pages 1-10. Weiss Chapter 1 SSRC, "The Art of Writing Proposals"	
1/15	Measurement and Causality	Khan & Fisher "Introduction" Malcolm Gladwell, "The Order of Things"	
1/20	Sampling	Weiss Chapter 2 Mario Small, "How Many Cases Do I Need?"	Lab #1 Measurement & Causality
1/22	Topics to Questions	Re-read Khan & Fisher pages 3-4 & 11-14. Abbott, Andrew. 2014. selections	Lab #2 Sampling

		from "The Preliminary Phase." <i>Digital Paper</i> .	
1/27	Reviewing the Literature <i>Amy Witzel, Sociology Research Librarian at Baker, guest speaker, 11:00-11:50</i>	Maxwell, Joseph. 2005. "Conceptual Framework." <i>Qualitative Research Design</i> . Pages 33-48. Abbott, Andrew. 2014. selections from "Fundamentals" and "Midphase Scanning Browsing, and Brute Force." <i>Digital Paper</i> Pages 36-64, 110-129	Lab #3 Abstract
1/29	Ethics	Khan & Fisher pages 20-22 ASA, "Code of Ethics" Allen, Charlotte. 1997. "Spies like us: When sociologists deceive their subjects." <i>Lingua Franca</i> 7(8): 31-39. Erikson, Kai. 1967. "A comment on disguised observation in sociology." <i>Social Problems</i> . 14 (4): 366-373	
2/3	Human Subjects <i>Lorri Wettemann, Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, guest speaker, 10:00-11:00</i>	"Belmont Report" "IRB Fieldwork" "Student Researcher Information" C. J. Pascoe, "Appendix: What If a Guy Hits on You?"	Lab #4 Lit Review
2/3	Insider/outsider debate	Schilt, Kristen and Christine Williams. 2008. "Access Denied." <i>Men & Masculinities</i> 11(2): 219-226 Brandes, Stephen. 2008. "The things we carry." <i>Men & Masculinities</i> 11(2): 145-153 Weiss Chapter 5 (136-141)	
CHOOSING A METHOD			
2/5	Content Analysis	Khan & Fisher Chapter 8 Hsieh, Hsiu-Fang and Sarah Shannon. 2005. "Three approaches to qualitative content analysis." <i>Qualitative Health Research</i> . 15(9): 1277-1288 Janice McCabe, "Who are the	Lab #5 Ethics

		Experts? Medicalization in Teen Magazine Advice Columns”	
2/10	Historical Research	Khan & Fisher Chapter 7 Sears, Clare. 2008. Electric brilliance: cross-dressing law and freak show displays in 19 th century San Francisco. <i>Women’s Studies Quarterly</i> . 36 (3): 170-187.	
2/12	Ethnography	Khan & Fisher Chapter 4 Jay MacLeod, Appendix in <i>Ain’t No Makin’ It</i> , Third Edition	Lab #6 Content Analysis
2/17	Interviews	Weiss Chapter 3 (39-42, 45-59), Chapter 4, Chapter 5 (121-133, 141-150)	
2/19	Focus Groups	David Morgan, “Focus Groups as Qualitative Research”	Lab #8 Ethnography
2/24	Social Networks	Bernice Pescosolido, “The Sociology of Social Networks” Khan & Fisher Chapter 3	
2/26	Mixed Methods	Khan & Fisher Chapter 9 Mario Small, “How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study”	Lab #9 Interviews
MAKING SENSE OF YOUR FINDINGS			
3/3	Analysis	Weiss Chapter 6 Strauss and Corbin, “Open Coding”	OUTLINE of paper (bring 3 copies)
3/5	Interpretation	Weiss Chapter 7	
3/13, 3pm - FINAL PROJECT DUE (Hard copy to Prof. Sledge by 3pm)			