

This course will prepare you to evaluate and design research projects to answer social science questions. Step by step, we will walk through how to find and read research articles quickly and efficiently, how to assess existing research, how to formulate your own research questions and hypotheses, and how to design research that answers questions that interest you. Each week, we will discuss short readings about core concepts and methods in social science research. Classes will include lecture and a wide variety of hands-on, ungraded individual and group activities to help you apply what you learn to real scenarios. By the end of this course, you will be able to formulate your own research question and produce a short research proposal to answer it.

The primary project for this class is a research proposal, divided into four manageable parts (500-750 words each), so you have the time and feedback you need to create a final proposal (2500 words) that you feel confident in. Your final grade will include the final proposal, four drafts of different proposal sections (one draft per section), four short memos (250 words), and in-class participation. No pop quizzes, no exams.

Students of any social science discipline who plan to eventually propose research for their thesis or capstone work will find this course especially helpful, but it is also designed to be accessible to anyone who simply wants to learn a little more about social science research and decide what to think of research findings reported in the media or elsewhere.

No Textbook Required.