

SOC 532W: APPLIED RESEARCH METHODS

FALL, 2007

Mon 2:00pm - 4:50pm

University Center

Instructor : Dr. Jin Young Choi

Office : AB1, Room 311G

Office Hours : MO 1:00pm-2:00pm (UC); TU/TH 11:00am-12:30pm(AB1); or by appointment

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Required Text:

Kenneth S. Bordens & Bruce B. Abbott. 2005. Research Design and Methods: A Process Approach. 6th Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Floyd J. Fowler, Jr. 2002 Survey Research Methods. 3rd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Course Description:

This course is designed to provide graduate students with the advanced knowledge of research methods and its applications to social research. It includes research logic, principles and procedures involving techniques of research design, data collection and organization, and analyses and interpretation for qualitative and quantitative sociological research. Through lecture, reading, hand-on experiences, discussion, and conducting real research in class, students will walk away from this course with an in-depth understanding of the research process and competencies of application of research knowledge and skills.

This course does not require a statistics course as a prerequisite, but students are presumed to have taken an undergraduate statistics course.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To learn advanced principles and knowledge of social research.
- 2) To develop ability to apply research method techniques and competencies of conducting social research.

Course Requirements

1) Written Assignments

This class is a graduate writing enhanced course. Students in this course are expected to participate actively and be prepared to discuss the weekly readings in depth. To accomplish this goal, **each student is required to prepare and submit written assignments addressing the questions relevant to textbook chapters indicated in the course schedule** (Detail instructions will be provided during the first day of the class). The each assignment should be submitted **at the outset of class**. Students are expected to submit a total of **10 written-assignments** during the semester (**2 pages double space 12-font**). Each assignment is worth **10 points** (**Total of 100 points**). **No late assignments will be accepted.**

2) Exam

There will be one exam consisting of essay questions designed to measure the student's **comprehensive understanding of, and ability to apply the course material**. The exam is **worth 100 points** and will cover the assigned chapters in the textbook AND the material discussed in class.

3) Research Project

The research project accounts for **total of 200 points** in the final grade. The research project is composed of three sections: **mid-term progress report (outline) (50 points), project presentation (50 points), and final paper (100 points)**. Each student will be assigned to one of the two groups. Each group is **expected to produce a publishable quality of research paper**. At the beginning of the semester, the research topics and data with detail instructions will be provided to students. **All students in the group must participate in the research project**. Group research projects will be graded based on two components. One is the professor's evaluation, while the second is that of the group members. Each group member will evaluate the other. To evaluate contribution of each student, the average of the evaluations from the other students will be multiplied by the points given by the professor. Students will grade their group members using a 0 to 1 scale in which A = 1; B = .85; C = .75; D = .65; and F = .55.

- (1) **Mid-term Progress Report (outline):** Students will be required to submit outlines of their research projects **by October 15**. This outline should include specific research questions and hypothesis, literature review, methods (data & variables), and analytical framework and plan.
- (2) **Project Presentation:** On the final week of the class (**December 3**), each group will present the findings of their project. Each student is expected to participate in the group presentation.
- (3) **Final Paper:** Each group is required to submit a final paper by **December 10 (Before 5pm)**. The final paper should include: 1) abstract; 2) introduction (clear statements of the problem and its social significance); 3) literature review (theoretical context of the problem & other relevant research); 4) methods (design, subjects, measurement, & analytical techniques); 5) findings; 6) discussion & conclusions; and 7) references. To produce the finest product, students are encouraged to closely collaborate and communicate with each other throughout the process. The final paper should be typewritten and **at least 3,000 words in length (about 12 double-spaced pages)**, excluding title, abstract, tables, and references. **No late paper will be accepted.**

Attendance

Regular class attendance is expected. A student may be penalized for excessive unexcused absences (20% of the final grade).

Grading

The final grade for the course will be based on the course requirements presented above. **A total of 400 possible points** will be available. Final grades will be assigned as follows:

400- 360 = A
359- 320 = B
319- 280 = C
279- 240 = D
239- 0 = F

Instructor Evaluations: Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

Academic Dishonesty: All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students caught cheating will receive an F for that assignment with more severe sanctions as appropriate.

Americans with Disabilities Act: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities must register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center and then arrange a conference with the instructor in order that accommodations can be made to assure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

Religious Holidays: The Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious Holy Day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20 of the Tax Code. Students should contact the instructor as soon as possible regarding any missed classes due to "Religious Holy Days".

Classroom Rules of Conduct: Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students shall arrive to class on time and be respectful to their other students. If a student needs to arrive to class late or leave class early the student will make the professor aware of these needs prior to class time. All cell phones, iPods, and beepers must be turned off and stowed away while in the classroom. Students who disrupt the class will be contacted by the professor to adjust their behaviors. In extreme cases students who cannot comply to these requirements can be removed and resigned from the class.

Visitors to the Classroom: Unannounced visitors to the class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor is allowed to remain in the classroom.

COURSE OUTLINE

****During the semester, additional required readings will be distributed by the professor.**

Aug. 20	Introduction
Aug. 27	Developing Ideas for Research and Hypothesis Bordens & Abbott: CH1-CH2
Sept. 3	Labor Day Holiday
Sept. 10	Reviewing the Scientific Literature & Ethical Considerations Bordens & Abbott: CH3; CH6 Fowler: CH9
Sept. 17	Choosing Research Design Bordens & Abbott: CH4; CH7-CH11 Fowler: CH1; CH11
Sept. 24	Sampling Bordens & Abbott: CH4 Fowler: CH2-CH3
Oct. 1	Measurement Bordens & Abbott: CH5 Fowler: CH5-CH6
Oct. 8	Data Collection, Analysis & Report Bordens & Abbott: CH12-CH15 Fowler: CH4; CH7-CH8
Oct. 15	Application of Research Methods I Submission of Mid-term Progress Report (outline)
Oct. 22	Application of Research Methods II
Oct. 29	Exam
Nov. 5	Group Project I
Nov. 12	Group Project II
Nov. 19	THANKSGIVING
Nov. 26	Group Project III
Dec. 3	Student Presentation
Dec. 10	Term Paper Submission (Before 5pm)