

## SOC 204 – Research Methods

### COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Understand the concept of critical thinking in the research process.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of objectivity, reliability, and validity concepts in the social sciences.
3. Demonstrate an ability to distinguish a variety of social science methods, theories, (quantitative and qualitative), research designs, and appropriate application.
4. Develop an inquisitive and curious attitude toward research in the social sciences and apply that curiosity to scientific problems.
5. Recognize the complexity of the behavior of individuals; understand the implications of that complexity for research.
6. Recognize the function of formal norms, group process, and social facts that contribute to the regularity or pattern of behaviors.
7. Understand and practice the use of basic statistical concepts and methods of data analysis, such as measures of central tendency including descriptive and simple inferential methods of data analysis.
8. Recognize and state the value of diversity of various cultural groups and understand how diversity affects research.
9. Understand ethical concerns in scientific research.
1. 10. Develop and write a research proposal for a social scientific project based on a question or problem relevant to one's life and/or career interests.

### COURSE OUTLINE

- I. An Introduction to Inquiry
  - A. Human Inquiry and Science
    - i. Agreement on Reality
    - ii. Foundations of Social Science
    - iii. Dialectics of Social Research
    - iv. Ethics of Social Research
  - B. Paradigms, Theory, and Social Research
    - i. Social Science Paradigms
    - ii. Elements of Social Theory
    - iii. Deductive and Inductive Theory Construction
  - C. Ethics and Politics of Social Research – Ethical
    - i. Issues in Social Research
    - ii. Politics of Social Research
- II. The Structuring of Inquiry
  - A. Research Design – Three Purposes of Social Research
    - i. Homothetic Explanations
    - ii. How to Identify and Use Units of Analysis
    - iii. How to Design a Research Project, and Parts of Classical Research Reports
  - B. Students will begin group-based research at this time. Concurrent with course curriculum, the instructor will facilitate student groups to work together to create a complete 'Informed Consent Form' for research subjects, select an appropriate topic to research, review and summarize past and current research about their selected topic, select their group's type and method of research, identify or create their measurement

tools, complete ethical and competent research with no chance of harm to subjects (conducted via questionnaires, surveys, natural or classical experimentation, or unobtrusive field research), analyze and present data from research, and report results to their cohort)

- i. Conceptualization
    - ii. Operationalization
    - iii. Measurement
  - C. The Logic of Sampling
    - i. History of Sampling, Logic and
    - ii. Theory of Nonprobability Sampling
    - iii. Type of Samples
    - iv. Populations and
    - v. Sampling Designs
- III. Modes of Observation
  - A. Experiments
    - i. Classical Experimentation
    - ii. Selecting Subjects
    - iii. Variations of Experimental Design
    - iv. Strengths and Weaknesses of Experimental Design
  - B. Survey Research
    - i. How to Identify Topics Appropriate for Survey Research
    - ii. Guidelines and Applications for Asking Questions to Respondents
    - iii. Questionnaire Construction
    - iv. Giving and Receiving Surveys
    - v. Types of Surveys
      - a. Face to Face, Mail, Telephone, etc.
      - b. Strengths and Weaknesses of Different Types of Surveys
  - C. Qualitative Field Research
    - i. How to Identify Topics Appropriate to Field Research
    - ii. Special Consideration for Field Research
    - iii. Qualitative Field Research
    - iv. Research Ethics Specific to Field Research and
    - v. Strengths and Weaknesses of Field Research
  - D. Unobtrusive Research
    - i. How to Perform Content Analysis
    - ii. How to Analyze Existing Statistics and
    - iii. How to Complete a Historical and Comparative Analysis
  - E. Evaluation Research (Also Called Program Evaluation)
    - i. How to Identify Topics Appropriate for Evaluation Research
    - ii. Issues of Measurement
    - iii. Types of Evaluation Research
    - iv. Social Context of Evaluation Research and
    - v. Social Indicators Research
- IV. Analysis of Data
  - A. Qualitative Data Analysis
    - i. How to Connect Theory and Analysis
    - ii. How to Process Qualitative Data
  - B. Quantitative Data Analysis

- i. Subgroup Comparisons
  - ii. Univariate Analysis
  - iii. Bivariate Analysis
  - iv. Multivariate Analysis
- C. Social Statistics
  - i. Descriptive Statistics
  - ii. Inferential Statistics and
  - iii. Multivariate Statistics
- D. Reading and Writing in Social Research
  - i. Reading Social Research
  - ii. Wise Use of Internet for Reference Data
  - iii. Writing Social Research