

# SOC 201: Introduction to Research Methods

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## Course Description

This course provides a comprehensive introduction to research methods involved in social inquiry. Topics covered include the scientific method, research design, data collection, and data analysis. In addition to focusing on qualitative methods, students will be introduced to the basics of inferential statistics and statistical computing. By the end of the semester, students should be familiar with the process of producing and consuming research in the social and behavioral sciences.

## Course Objectives

1. Acquire research skills.
2. Acquire programming skills
3. Learn basic statistical techniques.
4. Learn basics of empirical analysis and social inquiry.

## Required Materials

- Schutt, Russell K. 2012. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*, 7th ed.
- Computer with access to the Internet: open source language R installed

## Course Philosophy

- Be respectful
- Don't cheat
- Try to learn stuff

## Course Design & Policies

*Design:* This is primarily a lecture based seminar; however, group activities will be a regular feature of our class regiment.

*Attendance:* Students are expected to attend each class. Students will not be penalized for absences in the case of documented illnesses, religious holidays, certain family emergencies, and certain work/academic related activities.

*Lecture Slides:* All lecture slides will be posted to the course website (listed above) no later than 15 minutes before that day's class begins.

*Readings:* Readings posted in the syllabus are subject to change; always check the website for the most up to date information. The readings posted for each day are expected to be completed before the start of class.

*Grades:* All grade disputes must be made in writing no later than two week from the time the assignment was handed back.

## Grading Policy

- 35% Research Design Proposal
- 30% Four assignments (7.5% each)\*
- 25% Final Exam
- 10% Attendance/Participation

\*Optional 5th assignment, results in each assignment worth 6% (cannot harm grade).

## Homework Assignments

Over the course of the semester you are required to complete five homework assignments. Homework assignments are to be handed in person at the beginning of class. Homework will be collected within the first five minutes of class; any homework turned in *after* the initial five minutes of class but *before* the end of class will be docked 10%. Any homework turned in *after* the class period is over will be docked 50%. The due dates of each homework assignment are listed in the syllabus (listed the day they are due). Grading rubrics and prompts will be provided for each assignment a week before the assignment is due (to be posted on website).

## Research Project Proposal

You are required to develop your own research project proposal. The proposal will contain all the principle components of a complete research study (question, theory, literature review, hypotheses, research design, etc.) with the exception of the analysis and conclusion sections. Although the completed proposal will be collected the last week of class, constituent elements of the project will be assigned and evaluated throughout the course of the semester (make sure to check the website for these dates, which I'll post as the semester continues). Late proposals will be docked 50%

5% Extra credit will be given to students who use the open source L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X word processor to write and process their final proposal.

## Statement on Accessibility

In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Office. If you will need to utilize your approved accommodations in this class, please follow the proper notification procedure for informing your professor(s). This notification process must occur more than a week before any accommodation can be utilized. Please contact Disability Services at (714) 516-4520 or visit <https://www.chapman.edu/students/health-and-safety/disability-services/index.aspx> if you have questions regarding this procedure or for information or to make an appointment to discuss and/or request potential accommodations based on documentation of your disability. Once formal approval of your need for an accommodation has been granted, you are encouraged to talk with your professor(s) about your accommodation options. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

## Statement on Equity and Diversity

Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlined in Chapman's Harassment and Discrimination Policy. Please see the full description of this policy at <https://www.chapman.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/eoo.aspx>. Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the dean of students and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy.

## Academic Dishonesty Policy

Chapman University is a community of scholars that emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work and academic dishonesty of any kind will be subject to sanction by the instructor/administrator and referral to the university Academic Integrity Committee, which may impose additional sanctions including expulsion. Please see the full description of Chapman University's policy on Academic Integrity at <https://www.chapman.edu/academics/academic-integrity/>

[index.aspx](#).

Consistent with this expectation, all students should act with personal integrity, respect other student's dignity, rights, and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their labors. Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information, or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty of others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others. Violations of academic integrity will result in a failing grade and will be brought to the attention of the University. Students who commit plagiarism on any of their assignments will receive a course grade of F.

## Student Support at Chapman University

Over the course of the semester, you may experience a range of challenges that interfere with your learning, such as problems with friend, family, and/or significant other relationships; substance use; concerns about personal adequacy; feeling overwhelmed; or feeling sad or anxious without knowing why. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. You can learn more about the resources available through Chapman University's Student Psychological Counseling Services here: <https://www.chapman.edu/students/health-and-safety/psychological-counseling/>.

Fostering a community of care that supports the success of students is essential to the values of Chapman University. Occasionally, you may come across a student whose personal behavior concerns or worries you, either for the student's well-being or yours. In these instances, you are encouraged to contact the Chapman University Student Concern Intervention Team who can respond to these concerns and offer assistance: <https://www.chapman.edu/students/health-and-safety/student-concern/index.aspx>. While it is preferred that you include your contact information so this team can follow up with you, you can submit a report anonymously. 24-hour emergency help is also available through Public Safety at 714-997-6763.

## Course Outline

The readings, viewings, and exercises are NOT listed under the day they are assigned. They are listed under the day they are expected to be completed by. For example, you are expected to have read pages 172-192 of our text book *and* to have read the Goldthorpe (2001) article on causation before class on Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>.

Asterisks (\*) indicate lab days. Make sure to either bring your own laptop or to check one out from the library (weeks 9, 10, 11, and 12).

### Important Due Dates

- Monday, February 12: Homework 1
- Monday, March 5: Homework 2
- Monday, April 11: Homework 3
- Monday, April 25: Homework 4
- Monday, May 9: Homework 5 (optional)
- Monday, May 9: Final Proposal

#### Week 1: What is social science?

**Monday, January 29:** Introduction to Course

**Reading 2:** No Reading

**Wednesday, January 31:** Social Inquiry and the Scientific Method

**Reading 1:** Rittel, Horst W. J., and Melvin M. Webber. "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning." *Policy Sciences*, vol. 4, 1973, pp. 155-169.

**Reading 2:** Schutt, Russell K. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 7th ed., Sage Publications, 2016, pp. 5-19.

**Viewing:** Esther Duflo: Social experiments to fight poverty  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zvrgiPkVcs>)

#### Week 2: Research Literacy

**Monday, February 5:** Lit Reviews and Research Question

**Reading 1:** Schutt, Russell K. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 7th ed., Sage Publications, 2016, pp. 27-37.

**Reading 2:** Denney, Andrew S, and Richard Tewksbury. "How to Write a Literature Review." *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2012, pp. 218-234

**Reading 3:** Research guide to literature reviews (OPTIONAL)  
(<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/literaturereview>)

**Wednesday, February 7:** Library Resources

**Reading:** No Reading

**Week 3: Theory and Research Design**

**Monday, February 12: Theory Construction and Causation**

**Reading :** Schutt, Russell K. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 7th ed., Sage Publications, 2016, pp. 27-58.

**Viewing:** How Ice Cream Kills! Correlation vs. Causation  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMUQSMFGBDo>)

**HOMEWORK 1 DUE**

**Wednesday, February 14: Research Design**

**Reading 1:** Schutt, Russell K. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 7th ed., Sage Publications, 2016, pp. 172-192.

**Reading 2:** Goldthorpe, John H. "Causation, Statistics, and Sociology." *European Sociological Review*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1 Mar. 2001, pp. 1-20.

**Week 4: Concepts and Measurements**

**Monday, February 19: Conceptualization**

**Reading 1:** Schutt, Russell K. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 7th ed., Sage Publications, 2016, pp. 94-106.

**Reading 2:** Pierre Madden: What is poverty exactly?  
(<http://basicincome.org/news/2017/01/what-is-poverty-exactly/>)

**Wednesday, February 21: Measurement**

**Reading 1:** Schutt, Russell K. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 7th ed., Sage Publications, 2016, pp. 106-129.

**Reading 2:** Adcock, Robert, and David Collier. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review*, vol. 95, no. 03, 2001, pp. 529-546

**GROUP MEETING 1: Research Question**

**Week 5: Sampling Methods**

**Monday, February 26: Sampling I**

**Reading:** Schutt, Russell K. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 7th ed., Sage Publications, 2016, pp. 135-158.

**Viewing:** Types of Sampling Methods (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTuj57uXWlk>)

**Wednesday, February 28: Sampling II**

**Reading 1:** Schutt, Russell K. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 7th ed., Sage Publications, 2016, pp. 158-166.

**Reading 2:** Holden, Constance. "America's Uncounted Millions." *Science*, vol. 324, no. 5930, 2009, pp. 1008-1009.

**Week 6: Experiments**

**Monday, March 5: True Experiments**

**Reading 1:** Chapin, F Stuart. "The Experimental Method and Sociology." *The Scientific Monthly*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1917, pp. 133-144.

**Reading 2:** Schutt, Russell K. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 7th ed., Sage Publications, 2016, pp. 198-206.

**HOMEWORK 2 DUE**

**Wednesday, March 7:** Natural and Quasi-Experiments

**Reading 1:** Schutt, Russell K. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 7th ed., Sage Publications, 2016, pp. 206-213.

**Reading 2:** Dunning, Thad. "Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences." *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*, 2012.

**Week 7:** Survey Research

**Monday, March 12:** Survey Experiment I

**Reading:** Schutt, Russell K. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 7th ed., Sage Publications, 2016, pp. 230-253.

**Listening:** Tovia Smith: "Rutgers Survey Underscores Challenges Collecting Sexual Assault Data" (<http://www.npr.org/2015/09/02/436820747/rutgers-survey-underscores-challenges-collecting-sexual-assault-data>)

**Wednesday, March 14:** Survey Experiment II

**Reading 1:** Schutt, Russell K. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 7th ed., Sage Publications, 2016, pp. 253-272.

**Reading 2:** Kate Zernike: Do Polls Lie About Race?

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/12/weekinreview/12zernike.html?mcubz=0>)

**GROUP MEETING 2: Literature Review**

**Week 8:** SPRING BREAK NO CLASS

**Monday, March 19:** NO CLASS

**Wednesday, March 21:** NO CLASS

**Week 9:** Introduction to Statistical Computing\*

**Monday, March 26:** Intro to R Language

**Viewing:** Introduction to R Programming: How to Download, Install and Setup R and RStudio ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cX532N\\_XLIIs\\$](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cX532N_XLIIs$))

**Wednesday, March 28:** Univariate Statistics

**Viewing:** Getting Started With R ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYclmg1\\_KLk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYclmg1_KLk))

**Week 10:** Basics of Data Analysis\*

**Monday, April 2:** Manipulating Data

**Exercise:** Datacamp Free Introductory R Course (Complete *first* 3 sections)  
(<https://www.datacamp.com/courses/free-introduction-to-r>)

**Wednesday, April 4:** Crosstabs

**Exercise:** Datacamp Free Introductory R Course (Complete *last* 3 sections)  
(<https://www.datacamp.com/courses/free-introduction-to-r>)

**GROUP MEETING 3: Theory and Hypotheses**

**Week 11:** Inferential Statistics I\*

**Monday, April 9:** Hypothesis Testing

**Exercise:** NONE

**Reading:** NONE

**Wednesday, April 11:** Difference of means and Linear Regression I

**Exercise:** NONE  
**Reading:** NONE  
**HOMEWORK 3 DUE**

**Week 12: Inferential Statistics II\***

**Monday, April 16:** Difference of Means and Linear Regression II

**Exercise:** NONE

**Reading:** NONE

**Wednesday, April 18:** Difference of Means and Linear Regression III

**Exercise:** NONE

**Reading:** NONE

**Week 13: Qualitative Methods**

**Monday, April 23:** Overview of qualitative methods

**Reading:** Marvasti, Amir B. "What Is Qualitative Research?" *Qualitative Research in Sociology: An Introduction*, SAGE, 2004, pp. 1-13. (Chapter 1)

**GROUP MEETING 4: Research Methods**

**Wednesday, April 25:** Comparative Case Studies

**Reading:** Schutt, Russell K. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 7th ed., Sage Publications, 2016, pp. 402-407.

**HOMEWORK 4 DUE**

**Week 14: Mixed-Methods Approach**

**Monday, April 30:** Mixed-Methods in the Social Sciences

**Reading:** Small, Mario Luis. "How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study: Recent Trends in a Rapidly Growing Literature." *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 37, no. 1, Nov. 2011, pp. 57-86.

**Wednesday, May 2:** TBD

**Reading:** TBD

**Week 15: Last Week**

**Monday, May 7:** Education and Career Advice

**Reading:** NO READING

**Wednesday, May 9:** Review Session

**Reading:** NO READING

**HOMEWORK 5 DUE (optional)**

**FINAL PROPOSAL DUE**

**Week 16: Finals Week**