
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF CONTINUING STUDIES
SUMMER 2012
TIME AND LOCATION: TUESDAYS, TBA

INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL SCIENCES BLHS 101

Overview

What does it mean to be a member of a particular society? How is it that individuals both form and are formed by a society? Who exercises power and in what ways? While all Core Courses address these questions in some way, it is especially the social sciences that are designed to explore them in depth. This course introduces students to the basic theories, methods, and particular contributions of anthropology, demography, economics, linguistics, political science, psychology, and sociology in attempting to answer such questions. It will provide students with a better understanding of the social and cultural worlds they inhabit and offer needed tools for analyzing the material covered in other Core Courses as well.

Faculty

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Learning Objectives

After completing this course a student should be able to:

1. Compare/evaluate social scientific research and the alternatives
2. Explain the limits/weaknesses of research approaches to knowledge
3. Identify various types of social research and describe their strengths/weaknesses
4. Describe the process of scientific inquiry
5. Describe how theory and research complement one another
6. Able to recognize ethical issues in social scientific research
7. Recognize the purpose of a literature review
8. Formulate a testable hypothesis
9. Compare quantitative and qualitative approaches to measurement
10. Discuss validity and reliability for measurement
11. Explain the basic purpose, strengths and limits of sampling
12. Execute a short survey
13. Propose an effective experimental design
14. Conduct a short content analysis
15. Design a simple field research project
16. Propose a research project using historical-comparative methods
17. Interpret the statistical significance of a finding
18. Identify the conditions of proving causality

Textbook (required)

The Basics of Social Research (Paperback)

Earl R. Babbie (Author)

Wadsworth Publishing; 5 edition (January 1, 2010)

ISBN-10: 0495812242

ISBN-13: 978-0495812241

Grading

The final grade will be determined as follows:

- 93% to 100% = A, 90% to 92% = A-
- 87% to 89% = B+, 83% to 86% = B, 80% to 82% = B-
- 77% to 79% = C+, 73% to 76% = C, 70% to 72% = C-
- 67% to 69% = D+, 60% to 66% = D, Below 60% = F

Work in this course is designed around the idea of you experiencing social science as a direct and hands-on experience. Grades will be based on a combination of assignments, an exam, and a project:

In most weeks there will be in-class exercises or assignments linked to the content of the course. A few of these may require some additional work outside of class. Most are done as individual work; however some will also be done within a group. These assignments represent **30%** of your overall grade. One exam will be given during the semester gauging your grasp of the material. This is **30%** of your grade. The examination is open-book and open-note.

The centerpiece of the course is a research project. These can be done individually (single-investigator) or in groups (i.e., co-investigators). The topic, methods, and area of social science you work in will be determined by you or your group in consultation with your professor. Each project will be summarized in a “research note,” describing your research methods and results. Throughout the semester we will be discussing and developing these projects together as a class. Results will be presented at the end of the semester in an informal presentation session. In-class participation in these discussions will account for **10%** of your grade.

Following the last class each project will be summarized in a final written research note report (including any feedback or changes derived from in-class discussion). The paper should consist of a minimum of 2,400 words.¹ The written research note is worth **30%** of your grade. These reports will be turned in electronically and will be compiled into the class journal, *New Social Scientist Review*, and published online.

Plagiarism & the Georgetown Honor System

The sources for all information and ideas in your papers must be documented using the style followed by the American Psychological Association (APA). In addition, all quotations must be identified as quotations, using quotation marks and documentation of the source of the quotation. Anything less than these standards is plagiarism and will be treated as such. Plagiarized work will be reported to Georgetown’s Honor Council (see below). If the council finds that the work has been plagiarized, the work will receive an F for a first offense; a second plagiarism will earn an F for the course.

¹ The paper should use a 12-point Times New Roman font and be double spaced with standard margins (1” top and bottom and 1.25” left and right). With these parameters a 2,400 word paper will be approximately 8 pages in length

All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at www.georgetown.edu/honor, and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, "What is Plagiarism?", "Sanctioning Guidelines", and "Expedited Sanctioning Process." Papers in this course will be electronically checked for plagiarism. Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 or arc@georgetown.edu.

Attendance, snow and other emergencies

During inclement weather or other emergencies, check <http://preparedness.georgetown.edu> or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open.

We have only 12 meetings together. Attendance is very important. If you are going to be missing a class please let the instructor know ahead of time. You are responsible for obtaining course material missed during any absence. Consistent with the policies of the Liberal Studies program, any student with two absences may be dropped from the class.

Course Schedule

Class and topic

- **May 29:** Introduction to the social sciences, the course, and each other; the social scientific method
- **June 5:** Paradigms & theory; ethical considerations in social scientific research; basic data description
- **June 12:** Research in Economics; research design; conceptualization, operationalization & measurement; the visual display of quantitative data
- **June 19:** Research in Political Science; sampling & survey research; basic inferential statistics and their interpretation
- **June 26:** Research in Sociology; creating indexes, scales, & typologies; patterns of association
- **July 3:** Midterm exam; group research design and proposal
- **July 10:** Research in Linguistics;

Primary readings, assignments, exams

Babbie Ch. 1
Journal Article: Vindicating Anthony Downs [provided by professor]

Babbie Chs. 2-3
Journal Article: No Booze? You May Lose: Why Drinkers Earn More Money Than Nondrinkers [provided by professor]

Babbie Chs. 4-5
Journal Article: Clio and the Economics of Qwerty [provided by professor]

Babbie Chs. 7 & 9
Journal Article: Some Like it Hot: Individual Differences in Responses to Group Feeling Thermometers [provided by professor]

Babbie Ch. 6
Journal Article: International Integration and National Corruption [provided by professor]

Exam

Babbie Ch. 11

- content analysis and unobtrusive research; correlation
- **July 17:** Research in Psychology; experiments; linear estimation; data and library resources Babbie Ch. 8
- **July 24:** Research in Anthropology; qualitative field research; APA citations; plagiarism Babbie Ch. 10
- **July 31:** Historical-Comparative research; evaluation research Babbie Ch. 12
- **Aug. 7:** Qualitative and quantitative research Babbie Chs. 13-14
- **Aug. 14:** Presentations Reports due (electronic submissions suggested)