

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. Conduct a simple field research project
16. Propose a research project using historical-comparative methods
17. Critique a focus group project
18. Interpret a confidence interval
19. Use a p value to interpret the statistical significance of a finding
20. Identify the conditions of proving causality

Textbooks

The Basics of Social Research (Paperback)

by Earl R. Babbie (Author)

Wadsworth Publishing; 4 edition (January 3, 2007)

ISBN-10: 0495094684

ISBN-13: 978-0495094685

The Excel Statistics Companion CD-ROM and Manual, Version 2.0 (Paperback)

by Kenneth M. Rosenberg (Author)

Wadsworth Publishing; 2 edition (February 28, 2006)

ISBN-10: 0495186953

ISBN-13: 978-0495186953

Grading

The final grade will be determined as follows:

- 90% to 100% = A
- 79% to 89% = B
- 68% to 78% = C
- 57% to 67% = D
- Below 57% = F

Grades for this course will be based on your performance on assignments, two exams and a final project:

Assignments

The course includes brief weekly assignments (excluding weeks with exams or the project presentations) including a combination of writing, research, and analysis. Some of these will be done in class while others will require some work outside of class (often using Excel). Most will require individual work; however some will be done within a group. Assignments represent **30%** of your overall grade.

Exams

Two exams will be given during the semester gauging your grasp of the material. Each exam is worth 15% of your final grade (collectively **30%** of your grade).

Final Project

As most social science research is conducted in teams (i.e., co-investigators); you will work with a group of other students in the class to conduct an original social science research project. The topic, methods, and area of social science you work in will be determined by the group in consultation with your professor. Each group will produce a co-authored research paper similar to what a research note in an academic journal would look like, describing your research and results. Additionally, each student will write their own individual report describing their role in the group and offer their own individual comments and analysis of the research conducted. Groups will make a PowerPoint presentation of the results of their research at the final class meeting.

Each group will form and select topics prior to the midterm at which point an outline of the research project will be made. Following the midterm, the project research will be completed. The PowerPoint presentations given on the final day of class should last approximately 10 to 15

minutes per group and would be similar to what a social scientist might present at an academic conference. The presentation is worth **10%** of your grade.

Following the last class each group should complete the final written report (including any feedback or changes derived from the presentations). The paper should consist of a minimum of 3,600 words (you may go over but please limit your paper to no more than 6,000 words). 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 3,600 word paper will be approximately 12 pages in length. All sources in your work should be documented using the style followed by the American Psychological Association (APA). The group report is worth **15%** of your grade.

The individual report on the research should consist of a minimum of 1,000 words and use the same formatting (in terms of font, spacing, and margins) as the group report. The individual report is worth **15%** 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.

Incompletes

Incompletes are not available in this course

Attendance & Late assignments

Attendance is mandatory. If you need to miss class, it is your responsibility to make sure any assignments are submitted on time. It is also your responsibility to get the lecture notes, handouts, etc., from a classmate. If one is unable to submit an assignment before its due date students should seek the prior approval of the instructor. "Prior approval" means that the student must communicate with the instructor before the assignment's deadline. Grades for late work may be reduced by 10 percent for every day it is late.

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.

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.

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. If the university is open, this class will meet.

Course Schedule

<u>Class and topic</u>	<u>Primary readings, assignments, exams</u>
• Class 1: Introduction to the social sciences, the course, and each other; the social scientific method	Babbie Ch. 1
• Class 2: Paradigms & theory; ethical considerations in social scientific research; basic data description	Babbie Chs. 2-3 Rosenberg exercise 1-1
• Class 3: Research in Economics; research design; conceptualization, operationalization & measurement; the visual display of quantitative data	Babbie Chs. 4-5 Rosenberg exercises 1-2 & 1-4
• Class 4: Research in Political Science; sampling & survey research; basic inferential statistics and their interpretation	Babbie Chs. 7 & 9 Rosenberg exercise 2-2
• Class 5: Research in Sociology; creating indexes, scales, & typologies; patterns of association	Babbie Ch. 6 Rosenberg exercise 3-1
• Class 6: Midterm exam; group research design and proposal	Exam 1
• Class 7: Research in Linguistics; content analysis and unobtrusive research; correlation	Babbie Ch. 11 Rosenberg exercise 3-3
• Class 8: Research in Psychology; experiments; linear estimation; data and library resources	Babbie Ch. 8 Rosenberg exercise 3-6
• Class 9: Research in Anthropology; qualitative field research; APA citations; plagiarism	Babbie Ch. 10 Rosenberg exercise 10-1
• Class 10: Historical-Comparative research; evaluation research	Babbie Ch. 12 Rosenberg exercise 6-2
• Class 11: Qualitative and quantitative research	Babbie Chs. 13-14 Rosenberg exercise 6-3
• Class 12: Postmodernism and other challenges to the social sciences	Articles: Sokal (1996a, 1996b), Robbins & Ross (1996) [readings provided by professor]
• Class 13: How social science is published, disseminated, and read; effective presentation of research	Babbie Ch. 15 Statistics and writing workshop
• Class 14: Presentations and final exam	Exam II, Reports due following this class; TBA

Other Resources and Readings (outside of your textbooks)

The following resources and readings may be used, referenced, or linked in class. These are not required and are instead intended as additional resources. Those with a URL denoted with an "*" are only available in hardcopy in the library or electronically online at JSTOR (<http://www.jstor.org>), which can be accessed through any Georgetown University computer or Georgetown NetId connection.

Bradley, M.E. (n.d.). Quiz: Distinguishing independent and dependent variables. Accessed from <http://faculty.frostburg.edu/mbradley/ivdv.html>

Citation game. (n.d.). Accessed from <http://depts.washington.edu/etriouw/gameindex.htm>

David, Paul A. (1985). "Clio and the Economics of QWERTY." *The American Economic Review*, 75 (2): pp. 332-337.

*<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1805621>

Fry, Gerald, Supang Chantavanich, and Amrung Chantavanich. (1981). "Merging Quantitative and Qualitative Research Techniques: Toward a New Research Paradigm." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 12 (2): pp. 145-158.

*<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3219607>

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Georgetown University. (2001). *IRB-c social and behavioral research investigator's manual*. Accessed from http://ora.georgetown.edu/irb/pdf/IRBC_manual.pdf

Gray, Mark M. and A Wuffle. (2005). "Vindicating Anthony Downs." *PS: Political Science & Politics*: 38 (4): pp. 737-740. Accessed from: journals.cambridge.org/production/action/cjoGetFulltext?fulltextid=342326

Kiefer, Nicholas M., Thomas J. Kelly, and Kenneth Burdett. (1994). "Menu Pricing: An Experimental Approach." *Journal of Business & Economic Statistics*, 12 (3): pp. 329-337
*<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1392089>

Morgan, David L. (1996). "Focus Groups." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 22: pp. 129-152.
*<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2083427>

National Health Museum. (n.d.). *Writing hypotheses: A student lesson*. Accessed from <http://www.accessexcellence.org/LC/TL/filson/writhypo.html>

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Pawson, Ray. (1996). "Theorizing the Interview." *The British Journal of Sociology*, 47 (2): pp. 295-314.

*<http://www.jstor.org/stable/591728>

Pew Research Center for People and the Press. (2008). *A Word about Debate Impressions*. Accessed from <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/982/a-word-about-debate-impressions>

Pew Research Center for People and the Press. (2008). *Cell Phones and the 2008 Vote: An Update*. Accessed from <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/901/cell-phones-polling-election-2008>

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Pew Research Center for People and the Press. (2007). *Tracking the Traders*. Accessed from <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/637/tracking-the-traders>

Presser, Stanley and Michael Traugott. (1992). "Little White Lies and Social Science Models: Correlated Response Errors in a Panel Study of Voting." *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 56 (1): pp. 77-86.
*<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2749222>

PsychExperiments. (2003). Accessed from <http://psychexps.olemiss.edu/Exps/start.htm>

Research methods in the social and natural sciences. (n.d.). Accessed from http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/proj/res_meth/

Robbins, Bruce and Andrew Ross. (1996). "Response by Social Text editors." *Lingua Franca*, July/August. Accessed from http://www.physics.nyu.edu/faculty/sokal/SocialText_reply_LF.pdf

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*<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4127621>

Sniderman, Paul M. and Douglas B. Grob. (1996). "Innovations in Experimental Design in Attitude Surveys." *Annual Review of Sociology*, (22): pp. 377-399.
*<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2083436>

Sokal, Alan D. (1996a). "A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies." *Lingua Franca*, May/June: pp. 62-64.

Sokal, Alan D. (1996b) "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity." *Social Text*, 46/47: pp. 217-252. Accessed from http://www.physics.nyu.edu/faculty/sokal/transgress_v2/transgress_v2_singlefile.html

Squire, Peverill. (1988). "Why the 1936 Literary Digest Poll Failed." *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 52 (1): pp. 125-133.
*<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2749114>

Williams, W. & Williams, P. (n.d.). Scientific method. Accessed from https://www.gc.maricopa.edu/biology/glacier/scientific_method/

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*<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2749525>

Wooten, David B. and Americus Reed II. (2000). "A Conceptual Overview of the Self-Presentational Concerns and Response Tendencies of Focus Group Participants." *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 9 (3): pp. 141-153.
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Zimbardo, P.G. (1999-2007). The Stanford prison experiment. Accessed from <http://prisonexp.org>