

## **SOCIAL RESEARCH SOC 311**

Professor Michael Blain  
Department of Sociology  
Library 171D  
Office Hours: Varies by Semester  
Phone: 426-1346  
E-Mail: [mblain@boisestate.edu](mailto:mblain@boisestate.edu)

### **GOALS**

This course surveys the methodology of social research. It is designed to increase student knowledge in the following areas:

- goals of research
- process of research
- strategies of research
- methods of data collection
- methods of data analysis
- proposing, presenting, and writing research reports

### **TEXTS**

Babbie, Earl. *The Practice of Social Research*, Eleventh Edition (Boston: Wadsworth, 2007)

Cuba, Lee. *A Short Guide to Writing about Social Science*, Fourth Edition (New York: Longman, 2002)

Ragin, Charles. *Constructing Social Research* (Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press, 1994)

### **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

1) Each student must contribute to the class by attending regularly, completing assigned tasks on time, and by making a paper presentation to the class based on the results of a social research project.

2) Attendance and meeting deadlines matter. Role is taken. No late assignments or absences from class accepted without a verifiable medical excuse. No matter how well you do on assignments, unexcused absences automatically drop your final course grade (4 = B; 6 = C; 8 = D; 10 = F).

3) Assuming there are no problems with attendance, your course grade is determined by how well you do on the following assignments.

a) Research proposal = 20%

b) Midterm #1 = 30%

c) Midterm #2 = 20%

d) Research report 30%

4) Each student must write a research proposal that addresses the following issues:

a) **PROBLEM:** Define the topic of your social research project? Employing ideas discussed in Ragin Chapter 1, discuss why your project is a good example of social research. How is your project different from journalism?

b) **GOALS:** Ragin identifies and discusses seven goals of social research in Chapter 2. How do your goals compare with Ragin's seven goals? Ragin identifies three strategies of social research in Chapter 2. Which strategy are you employing? How is it related to your research goal?

c) **PROCESS:** In Chapter 3 Ragin describes a simple model of the process of social research. Employing that model, describe the social theory and analytic framework you are employing. How are you framing cases and aspects of cases in your study?

d) **STRATEGY:** The goals, logics, and procedures defining each research strategy are discussed in Ragin Part II, Chapters 4-6. Is your study qualitative, comparative, or quantitative? Is your goal to determine the commonalities, diversity, or covariation among cases? In concrete terms, how does your study accomplish your goal?

e) **PROMISE:** According to Ragin and Driscoll, what is the promise of social research? Does your project fulfill this promise? Explain your answer.

5) Each student must make a panel presentation and write a research report. Please use the guidelines in Lee Cuba's Chapter 6 to prepare your oral presentation. The research report should be written according to guidelines in Cuba, Chapters 4 & 7.

## SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>TOPICS</u>	<u>READINGS</u>
--------------	---------------	-----------------

### INTRODUCTION

Aug 22	Defining Social Research	R Pt I
Aug 29	Research Strategies	R Pt II
Sep 5	Promise of Research	R&D Afterword

### COLLECTING EVIDENCE / DATA

Sep 12	Unobtrusive Research	B 11
--------	----------------------	------

*Sep 19: Proposal Due*

Sep 19	Sampling	B 7
Sep 26	Experiments	B 8
Oct 3	Surveys	B 9
Oct 10	Field Research	B 10

*Oct 19: Midterm #1*

### ANALYZING EVIDENCE / DATA

Oct 24-31	Coding	B 13
Nov. 7	Quantifying	B 14

*Nov 16: Midterm #2*

*Nov 20-26: Thanksgiving Holiday*

### RESEARCH REPORTS

Nov 28	Student Sessions	
Dec. 5	Student Sessions	

*Dec 12: Reports Due*

---

**SOCIAL RESEARCH REPORT EVALUATION FORM**  
**Fall 2006**

**NAME**

**GRADE**

---

1. ORGANIZATION (see Cuba Chapter 4)

a. Title

b. Introduction

c. Method

d. Results

e. Conclusions

f. Notes

g. References

h. Tables 1-n

2. MANUSCRIPT FORM (see Cuba Chpt. 7)

a. Title page

b. In-text citations

c. List of Works Cited