

**Bachelor of Liberal Studies**  
**SOC 235      Research Design in Behavioral Research**  
**Mondays      6:00 – 9:00 p.m.      Hyde Hall 105**  
**June 16 – July 21      Summer 2008**

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**Text:** Stangor, C. (2007). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

**Course Description:** SOC 235 is designed to expose students to research methods and design. This course will start with the basics of the scientific method and build upon that knowledge by using hypothetical and applied examples. The course will cover several areas of social research; history of research and the scientific method, theory, ethics, research designs, types of measurement, sampling techniques, analysis and dissemination of research. One of the main goals of the course is for students to learn how research affects them on a day-to-day basis, and to gain the ability to analyze the research conducted by others to make informed decisions. Another goal, is to develop a basic understanding of the research process, that would provide students with a firm foundation on which to build should they decide to pursue more advanced degrees. Students are strongly encouraged to read the chapters before class and bring to the lecture examples from their work experience or personal lives and any assigned homework.

**Course Objectives:** On completion of this course, students should know how to interpret research and how to analyze the quality of a research design. In groups, students will also need to generate a research project with a clear hypothesis or statement of interest, consider the ethics of your question or hypothesis, use critical thinking skills to design a test of that hypothesis, clearly write a research proposal to carry out the project and finally, propose and defend the expectations of the research proposal. This project will then be conducted (pending ethical review and approval) throughout the following school year. Furthermore, students are expected to have the ability to evaluate the research work of other students.

**Class Attendance:** Due to the accelerated format of this course it is expected that you will attend each session. In the event that you are late to class, please enter the classroom quietly upon your arrival, being considerate to your other classmates. ***Do not miss class due to tardiness!*** Please be courteous and turn off all cell phones, pagers, PDA alarms and other disruptive technology. Should there be a reason why you will be unable to attend a class, please speak with me to assure that you will be able to get the information from class.

**Reading Assignments and Homework 30%:** This course will require a lot of reading but it will never exceed 60 pages in one week. To be sure that you have a basic understanding of the course topics and are ready to participate in class, make sure to read the chapter(s) and answer the hands-on experiences (aka homework assignments) prior to coming to class each week. These questions are due at the lecture in which the topics are discussed. Handwritten answers are perfectly acceptable. Grammar is never graded – bulleted lists are fine!

**Class Participation 30%:** Student input during class time will account for 30% of the course grade. Sharing your answers to the assigned homework questions will help facilitate the class discussion. Furthermore, input from your job (and/or life) experiences will aid the class in discovering applications for the course material. Please note that “participation” can include asking questions as well as providing

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answers to the professor's questions. Also, please note that participation is *not* the same as attendance. Merely being present is *not* sufficient to earn full credit for class participation.

**Research Design 40%:** The major project in this course will consist of a group research study of your own design (with guidance from your instructor). The design requires a research study with a clear question and set of hypotheses, defending your proposal with evidence from previously published research, reviewing the ethics of your proposal, writing-up your design, discussing the potential outcomes of your design and presenting the material to your classmates for critique. **This is a large project that will be addressed throughout the summer.** There will be a 20 minute presentation and final paper/outline that will count for 40% of the course grade.

**Course Grades**

93-100	A	90-92.9	A-	87-89.9	B+	83 - 86	B	80-82.9	B-
77-79.9	C+	73-76.9	C	70-72.9	C-	67-69.9	D+	60-66.9	D

**Incomplete Grade Policy:** All coursework is to be completed within the semester it is attempted. The grade report of "I" will be given only when justified by personal crisis or legitimate sickness; otherwise, the missing scores will be entered as zeroes. As outlined in the catalog, the following circumstances must exist as well for the receipt of an "I": (1) the student's other work in the course would earn a passing grade, and (2) the outstanding task can be completed without further class attendance. A request for an "I" must be presented in writing by either you or the Dean of Students. If granted, an "Incomplete Grade Contract" will then be drawn up and signed by both the instructor and the student. The catalog continues:

Outstanding course work normally should be completed within six weeks of the class ending, but the instructor may allow up to one year from the end of the term for which the "I" grade is granted. It is the student's responsibility to have this deficiency removed within the contractually agreed upon time or within one year, whichever is less. If no grade change has been submitted by the instructor after the maximum one-year grace period, the registrar is authorized to change all grades of "I" to "F".

**Academic Honor Code:** University of Evansville Academic Honor Code. "I understand that any work which I submit for course credit will imply that I have adhered to the Academic Honor Code: I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid nor will I tolerate an environment which condones the use of unauthorized aid." Failure to adhere to this code will result in receiving an "F" for the course.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities** It is the policy of the University of Evansville to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. Written notification to faculty from the Office of Counseling and Health Education is required for any academic accommodations. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for this course, please discuss it with me. . If you have questions about services for students with disabilities or procedures for requesting services, you may contact the Office of Counseling and Health Education at 488-2663.

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**Course Calendar**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic (chapter)</u>	<u>Pages</u>
June 16	Introduction to the course	
	Introduction to research (1)	2-21
	Developing the Research Hypothesis (2)	24-38

**No homework due**

**We will discuss the questions on pages 22, 37, & 38 in class**

*Homework assignment for 6/23: think of research topics of interest – email at least 3 options to me by midnight on Sunday (6/22); complete “hands-on experience” question #1, a-c (pp 60-61) and #1 (p 84 – any 3)*

June 23	Ethics in Research (3)	39-61
	Measures (4)	64-84

**Homework: research topics of interest (due Sunday night) ; hands-on experience questions**

**We will separate into research groups and discuss your projects**

*Homework assignment for 6/30: hands-on experience question #3 (p 120); meet with your group and discuss possible research topics for your project; begin literature search on possible topics*

June 30	Reliability and Validity (5)	85-101
	Surveys and Sampling (6)	102-120
	Naturalistic Methods (7)	121-132

**Homework: hands-on experience questions; refining your research topic**

*Homework assignment for 7/7: hands-on experience questions #2 (pg 149), #3 (pg 171 – try to come up with 2 common-causal variables for each), and #1 (pp 190-191); come prepared to answer hands-on experience question #3, part a (pg 191) in class (ie, sort out how many sporting events you attended last year, how many restaurants you’ve eaten at in the past month, and how many hours per week do you normally study during the fall/spring/summer semesters)*

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July 7	Hypothesis Testing and Inferential Statistics (8)	134-149
	Correlational Research Designs (9)	150-171
	Experimental Research: One-way designs (10)	172-191

**Homework: hands-on experience questions (including personal answers for the one for in-class)**

***Homework assignment for 7/14: hands-on experience questions #3 (pg 212) and #1 (pp 236-237; pick any 3); meet with your group and discuss your project***

July 14	Experimental research: Factorial Designs (11)	194-212
	Experimental Control and Internal Validity (12)	213-237
	External validity (13)	238-253

**Homework: hands-on experience questions; refinement of group projects**

***Homework assignment for 7/21: hands-on experience questions #2 (pg 269); preparation of group presentations; outline of group research proposal (one due per group)***

July 21	Quasi-Experimental research designs (14)	254-269
	<b><u>Group presentations of research ideas/proposals</u></b>	

**Homework: hands-on experience question; outline of research proposal**

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**Research Design Outline**

**\*\*\* see appendix A for more details**

Page 1:                      Cover Page

- Title
- Authors
- School affiliation

Page 2 (and on):      Introduction (can be in paragraph or outline form)

- State problem or objective
- Support rationale with literature review: What has been done, why is it worthy of study, argue why previous research is not complete or precise or conclusive
- This should include references/citations in APA format
- Describe your research – what will you be doing (should be clear how this fits with your literature review)
- What is your hypothesis/what are your hypotheses

Methods (can be in paragraph or outline form)

- Describe the participants and any pertinent characteristics (SES, age, gender, background) – that is, who will you INclude, and who will you EXclude
- Describe the measurements
- Describe the data-collection methods
- Describe the procedure of the study (what happens when)
- Describe your planned analysis of the data
- Budget the research – how will you pay for any costs?

Results (can be in paragraph or outline form)

- Proposed data analysis – how will you statistically test each hypothesis
- Describe the **POTENTIAL** importance of the expected results of the research

References (APA format)

- This section starts on a fresh page and lists the reference material used to write the paper. All material cited, either quoted or paraphrased, within the manuscript should be found on this page.
- Per APA format, references should be listed alphabetically by first author's last name, not in the order cited within the text.
- If you are uncertain how to cite a particular reference according to the APA guidelines, please ask. (see pg 288 in text as well)

Note: For July 21<sup>st</sup>, all you need is one outline per group. By November, you will need the entire paper in paragraph form – i.e., no bullets, no outline, all text... See below for a summary of what to expect in the upcoming year.

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**Planning for the future:**

You will be working on this project for a total of 4 semesters – Summer 2008, Fall 2008, Spring 2009, and Summer 2009. The *final* draft of your paper is due in Summer 2009. To give you a sense of what will be expected when, here is a general plan for the project/class:

**Summer 2008:**

- Divide into groups
- Learn the basics of research methodology
- Develop research topic and methods
- Outline research proposal
- Present basic proposal to class for feedback

**Fall 2008:**

- Make revisions to proposal based upon professor's feedback on outline
- Make revisions to proposal based on fellow students' feedback on presentation
  - Meet as a class in early fall semester (late September/early October) to discuss current state of proposals
- Turn outline of proposal into a full IRB proposal (paragraph form, etc.) following handout
  - By November 30, 2008, provide a hard copy of the IRB proposal to Dr. Hennon (complete with signatures on cover page) for submission to the IRB.

**Spring 2009:**

- Make any revisions requested by the IRB on your proposal (hopefully, none!)
- Meet as a class in early spring semester to review data collection procedures
  - Begin data collection
  - Keep completed data organized and ready for data entry and analysis
- Review introduction and methods sections and make sure any needed revisions have been made

**Summer 2009:**

- May & June:
  - Learn the basics of SPSS (a computer software program)
  - Create a database in SPSS
  - Enter data into SPSS and conduct data analyses
  - Write results section and begin discussion of findings
  - Present research findings (informally) to class
  - Turn in an outline of results and discussion sections
- July:
  - Turn in final draft of research paper
  - Should include:
    - Title page, abstract, introduction, method, results, discussion, references
    - May also include tables, figures, graphs, appendices