

Soc 102A: Research Methods Fall, 1999

Instructor:	Dr. Qiaoming Amy Liu	Phone:	278-7572
Class:	TR 10:00 - 11:15pm	Labs:	TR 11:30-12:45pm
Office:	455D AMD Building	Office Hours:	TR 1 -2:00pm Tues 5:00-6:00pm or by appointment

Course Objectives

This course is designed to give students a systematic introduction to research methods in social sciences, especially in sociology. More specifically, it is designed around the following decisions or skills in doing research:

1. Formulate research questions
2. Design research (with a focus on validity)
3. Gather data or use existing data
4. Analyze and interpret data
5. Report research findings

With the help of this course, students are expected to better understand steps and skills involved in doing research so they can evaluate information more critically or participate in social research more actively. These sets of skills are necessary for those who want to do research in graduate schools or job settings. However, they are even more useful for each of us who have to communicate or to make sense of the flood of information that we encounter in news report, on the job, and in journal articles.

Skills are developed through **practice and use**, thus, this class will emphasize **your** ability to apply these skills. This class will combine lectures with in-class exercises and outside-class research activities. This class will use computer labs extensively.

Course Requirement and Grading for Soc 102A

The course evaluation is based on two exams, the first two parts of a research project, labs, and student's attitude and efforts for the class.

1. Two Exams: There will be two exams in this class. The second exam assumes **cumulative knowledge** from earlier portion of the course. The emphasis of the exams is on basic understanding of the process and decisions involved in social research, their connections, and applications. Exams will be made up only if **prior written arrangement** has been made with Professor Liu.

2. The Project: Students are expected to finish the first three chapters of the project. Detailed requirement for each of the chapters will be provided in class. Each of the chapters consists of a

part of the big project. **Late** project will be accepted only if **prior written arrangement** has been made with Professor Liu. **Late project will significantly affect your performance in class and your grade.**

3. Lab assignments. Lab assignments account for 18% of the total grade. Lab assignments will cover various aspects of the class. All assignments are due in class on the date specified and **late assignment will significantly affect your performance in class and your grade. Late labs will not be accepted unless prior arrangement has been made with Professor Liu.**

4. Students' Attitude and Efforts for the Class: Students' attitude and efforts for the class (both inside and outside this class) are extremely important for their success in this class. Students are more likely to be successful in this class if they

1). **Work hard and enjoy the class**

2). **Read before coming to the class.** Try to understand class materials on a **daily or weekly basis.**

- attend the class **regularly and on time** (Professor Liu will take class attendance)
- make arrangements with other students for lecture materials and class-handouts, in case of absence.
- take responsibility for all the information communicated in class, including changes in dates and assignments
- **participate actively in class (bring two blue books with you)**
- ask Professor Liu and other students questions (inside or outside the class) if students do not understand class materials
- bring the text book and/or the computer output to the class

3). Be considerate and tolerant inside and outside the class. Respect each other' views and opinions regarding class content.

4). Help each other. Form a study group.

5). Hand in your assignment **on time**

6). Come to see me during my office hours or call me if they need assistance. Leave a message if I am not available. Please contact me **directly** and **as soon as possible** if you have any problems, comments or suggestions for the course. I am looking forward to working with you so that you can successfully pass this course and have a better understanding and appreciation of social research.

5. Sum-up: Each of the course requirements will make up the following proportion of the final grade.

Assignment	Grade	Date
Chapter 1 (Research Topic and Its Importance)	10%	Sep. 14
Chapter 2 (Literature Review and Research Questions)	13%	Sep. 28
Chapter 3 (Research Methods)	13%	Nov. 9
Exam # 1	18%	Oct. 14
Exam # 2	18%	Final week
Labs	18%	On dates in class
Students' Attitude and Efforts	10%	
Total	100%	

Required Textbooks for Soc 102

Babbie, Earl, and Fred Halley. 1998. *Adventures in Social Research: Data Analysis Using SPSS for Windows*. Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press.

Schutt, Russell K. 1999. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 2nd Edition, Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press.

Course Outline and Reading Assignment (Tentative)

Week	Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
1	8/30-9/5	Course Introduction	Schutt: Ch. 1 & 2 Schutt: Ch. 12: 447-457
2	9/6-9/12	Process and Problems of Social Research Social Research and Internet	Schutt: Ch. 2 Schutt: Appendix H
3	9/13-9/19	Research Questions and Objectives (Literature Review and Hypotheses) Secondary Data Analysis Chapter 1	Schutt: Ch. 2
4	9/20-2/26	Measurement	Schutt: Ch. 3 & 7
5	9/27-10/3	Measurement	Schutt: Ch. 3 & 7

		Sampling	Schutt: Ch. 4
		Chapter 2	
6	10/4-10/10	Sampling	Schutt: Ch. 4
7	10/11-10/17	Causal Relationship	Schutt: Ch. 5 & 6
		Exam # 1	
8	10/18-10/24	Causal Relationship	Schutt: Ch. 5 & 6
		Survey	Schutt: Ch. 7
9	10/25- 10/31	Survey	Schutt: Ch. 7
10	11/1-11/7	Experiment	Schutt: Ch. 6
11	11/8-11/14	Qualitative Methods	Schutt: Ch. 8
		Chapter 3	
12	11/15-11/21	Historical and Comparative Methods	Schutt: Ch. 9
13	11/22-11/28	Data Analysis (Thanksgiving Break)	Schutt: Ch. 11
14	11/29-12/5	Data Analysis	
15	12/6-12/12	Course Review and Evaluation	Schutt: Ch. 10
16	12/13-12/19	Exam # 2	
