



THE UNIVERSITY  
of NORTH CAROLINA  
at CHAPEL HILL

Sociology 707 (4 credits)  
**Methods of Social Research:**  
**Research Design, Data Collection, & Measurement**  
Spring 2017  
MW 9:30am – 11:15pm  
Hamilton Hall 151

Kenneth (Andy) Andrews  
[hta@unc.edu](mailto:hta@unc.edu)  
919.843-5104  
Office hours: M 2-3:30 (HM 155B)

### Course Description

*Methods of Social Research* (SOCI 707) is a graduate-level course covering research design broadly conceived. Our focus is how research questions are developed in such a way that they can be convincingly addressed by the analysis of empirical data.

Major topics covered in the course include the relationship between theory and research, variables and measurement, causality, the political and ethical dimensions of research, and the main methods of data collection in social science – including participant observation, ethnography, semi-structured interviews, sample surveys, content analysis, experiments, and comparative-historical methods.

The goals of the course are (1) to understand how to craft a strong ‘sociological puzzle’ that will move understanding forward, (2) to improve students’ abilities to constructively critique research methods and approaches used in the social sciences – identifying the qualities of excellence and major flaws, (3) to equip students with fundamental tools to design and conduct their own research, (4) to provide foundational guidance for student choices about further in-depth training in specific methods, and (5) to further socialize students to the profession of sociology.

### Course Materials

Readings for this course will come from a selection of assigned books listed below and articles or chapters that are available online or will be posted on Sakai. Specific readings are listed in the Course Schedule below.

#### *Required Books*

- (1) Alford, Robert R. 1998. *The Craft of Inquiry: Theories, Methods, and Evidence*. New York: Oxford.
- (2) Singleton RA, Jr. and Straits BC. 2010. *Approaches to Social Research*, Fifth Edition. New York: Oxford.
- (3) Ribas, V. 2015. *On the Line: Slaughterhouse Lives and the Making of the New South*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

I will circulate a reading guide for each week that highlights major themes, places readings in broader context, and pose a set of reading questions for you to consider in preparation for class meetings.

### Course Website

<https://sakai.unc.edu/portal/site/707sp17>

## Requirements

- Research proposal
  - Written summary of research question/s for MA (or equivalent) project (due Fri, Jan 20)
  - Short paper on how your topic *could* be studied within each of three paradigms (due Fri, Feb 10)
  - Specific aims/Project summary for MA (or equivalent) project (due, Fri Mar 10)
  - Draft of MA (or equivalent paper) proposal (due, Fri, Apr 7)
  - Peer feedback on proposal (due, Fri, Apr 14)
  - In-class presentation of proposal (dates TBD)
  - MA (or equivalent paper) proposal (due Mon, May 4)
- Proof of Certification in Human Subjects Research: CITI training (due, Wed Feb 8)
- Article critique/discussion (scheduled throughout the semester: see below)
- Research controversy presentation and short paper (due, TBD)

*Research Proposal.* The main requirement for this course is to develop your MA proposal (or an equivalent). In the course of the class you will turn in a statement of your research question/s, a description of the project in the form of NIH Specific Aims or NSF Project Summary, a draft of the proposal, present the project orally to the class, and turn in a final draft. Due dates for these requirements are provided above.

*Article Critique.* Another requirement for the course is that each student will be assigned (based on preferences) one of the readings for class that has a star by it in the syllabus and be responsible for initiating class discussion on the article as well as turning in a written review of the article by the start of that day's class. The written review should be 5-7 double-spaced pages critically evaluating the article's research design. A more detailed description of the assignment will be available on Sakai.

*Certification in Human Subjects Research.* UNC is participating in a required ethics training program known as CITI (Collaborative IRB Training Initiative). All faculty, staff, and students involved with research must complete this training to be in compliance. The following web site is the primary link for the onsite training modules as well as additional information about the program: <https://www.citiprogram.org>. If you have not already done so, please complete the course for social and behavioral scientists. Upload a copy of the CITI Course Completion Record to Sakai (under Assignments) by Feb 8.

*Research Controversies.* For this assignment you will work in a small group to investigate a recent controversy in social science research to understand the nature of the controversy and the research design issues that were involved. Your group will make a presentation to the class summarizing the key issues and the implications for researchers. Each person will submit a short paper recapping the main issues and offering recommendations for ways that researchers can improve research practices to avoid possible pitfalls highlighted in your case.

## Grades

Course grades will be based on class participation throughout the semester (20%), article critique/discussion (15%), research controversy paper (15%), and the research proposal (50%).

## Meetings and Contacting Me

I am available and happy to meet outside of class at a time that works well for both of us. Email, of course, is great for asking smaller questions, but if you would like to meet in person, please talk to me about it in class or email to set up a time.

**General Courtesy and Commitment**

The class will be most successful collectively and for you individually by maintaining some basic norms. Please come to all classes. Please always be on time. Use laptops in class only for course related activities. Finally, critically evaluate with the ideas in the class while also being respectful of the contributions of all class members.

**Academic Honesty**

I expect that all work you do for this course will be your own. The University Honor Code is in effect for all written assignments. Please read the provisions of the Honor Code carefully, and make certain that you understand and follow them. Let me know if you have any questions. Violations of the Code will not be tolerated. <http://honor.unc.edu/>

**Course Schedule**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading</i>
11 W	The Research Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alford, RR. 1998. Introduction and Chapter 1, <i>The Craft of Inquiry: Theories, Methods, and Evidence</i>. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.</li> </ul>
18 W	Theory and Research Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alford, RR. Chapters 2-3, <i>The Craft of Inquiry</i></li> </ul>
23 M	From Research Question to Research Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rachel Kahn Best, 2012. "Disease Politics and Medical Research Funding: Three Ways Advocacy Shapes Policy." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 77(5):780-803</li> <li>Singleton RA, Jr. and Straits BC. 2010. "Chapter 4: Elements of Research Design" in <i>Approaches to Social Research</i>, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition</li> </ul>
25 W	Multivariate Approaches – Core Issues, Exemplars, and Critiques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alford, Robert R. Chapters 4, <i>The Craft of Inquiry</i></li> <li>Budig, MJ. and England P. "The Wage Penalty for Motherhood." <i>ASR</i> Vol. 66, No. 2 (Apr., 2001): 204-225.</li> <li>Abbott, Andrew. 1988. "Transcending General Linear Reality." <i>Sociological Theory</i> 6: 169-186.</li> </ul>
30 W	Interpretive Approaches – Core Issues, Exemplars, and Critiques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alford, RR. Chapter 5. <i>The Craft of Inquiry</i></li> <li>Rivera, Lauren. 2012. Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms. <i>American Sociological Review</i>. 77:999-1022.</li> <li>Fine, Gary Alan. 1993. "Ten Lies of Ethnography: Moral Dilemmas of Field Research." <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i> 22:267-294</li> </ul>
<b>Feb</b> 1 W	Historical Approaches –	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alford, RR. Chapters 6, <i>The Craft of Inquiry</i></li> </ul>

		Core Issues, Exemplars, and Critiques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young, M. 2002. "Confessional protest: The religious birth of US national social movements." <i>ASR</i> 67:660-688.</li> <li>• Lieberman, S. 1991. "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases" <i>Social Forces</i> 70:307-320.</li> </ul>
6	M	Writing Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becker, H. <i>Writing for Social Scientists</i>, Chs 1, 7, 8</li> <li>• Munger, MC. 2010. "10 Tips on How to Write Less Badly." <i>The Chronicle of Higher Education</i> 57.03</li> <li>• Grant, AM and Pollock, TG. 2011. "Setting the Hook" <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> 54(5):873-879.</li> </ul>
8	W	Research Ethics and Evaluating Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Singleton and Straits. "Chap 3: Research Ethics" in <i>Approaches to Social Research</i>, Fifth Edition</li> <li>• <a href="#">CITI Training</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">ASA Code of Ethics</a></li> <li>• Cornwall M. 2010. "From the editor: Ten most likely ways an article submission fails to live up to publishing standards." <i>Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion</i> 49(4):i-v.</li> <li>• Brunsma, Prasad, and Zuckerman. 2013. "Strategies for Reviewing Manuscripts." Report of ASA Task Force on Journal Review Times. Pp. 1-5.</li> </ul>
13	M	Measurement in Qualitative and Quantitative Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Singleton and Straits. "Ch 5: Measurement" in <i>Approaches to Social Research</i>, Fifth Edition.</li> <li>• Jerolmack, C. and Khan, S., 2014. Talk is cheap ethnography and the attitudinal fallacy. <i>Sociological Methods &amp; Research</i>.</li> <li>• Pugh, A.J., 2013. What good are interviews for thinking about culture?: Demystifying interpretive analysis. <i>American Journal of Cultural Sociology</i>, 1(1), pp.42-68.</li> </ul> <p>FURTHER READING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carmines EG, Zeller RA. 1979. <i>Reliability and Validity Assessment</i>. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.</li> </ul>
15	W	Selecting Cases & Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Singleton and Straits. "Ch 6: Sampling" in <i>Approaches to Social Research</i>, Fifth Edition</li> <li>• Marker, DA. 2008. "Methodological Review of 'Mortality after the 2003 Invasion of Iraq: A Cross-Sectional Cluster Sample Survey'" <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i> 72:345-363.</li> </ul> <p>FURTHER READING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groves R et al. 2009. Chapter 4: Sample Design and Sampling Error. <i>Survey Methodology</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed</li> </ul>

20	M	Selecting Cases & Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small ML. 2009. "'How Many Cases Do I Need?': On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Fieldbased Research." <i>Ethnography</i>. 10(1): 5-38.</li> <li>• Lareau A, 2011. "Chap 1: Concerted Cultivation and the Accomplishment of Natural Growth" pp. 1-14 and "Appendix A" pp. 345-360 in <i>Unequal Childhoods</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.</li> </ul> <p>FURTHER READING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ragin, Charles. 1992. <i>What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry</i></li> </ul>	
22	W	Causality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little, D. 1991. Ch 2 and 8 in <i>Varieties of Social Explanation</i></li> <li>• Katz, J., 2014. Situational Evidence Strategies for Causal Reasoning From Observational Field Notes. <i>Sociological Methods &amp; Research</i></li> </ul> <p>FURTHER READING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lieberman, S. 1985. <i>Making It Count: The Improvement of Social Research and Theory</i> Berkeley: University of California Press.</li> <li>• Winship, Christopher and Stephen L. Morgan. 1999. "The Estimation of Causal Effects from Observational Data." <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> 25:659-707.</li> </ul>	
28	M	Causal Inference, Mechanisms, and Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reskin, B. 2003. "Motives and Mechanisms in Modeling Inequality." <i>ASR</i> 68:1-21.</li> <li>• Lee, D., 2010. The early socioeconomic effects of teenage childbearing: A propensity score matching approach. <i>Demographic Research</i>, 23(25), pp.697-736.*</li> </ul>	
<b>Mar</b>	1	W	Panel Presentations and Discussion of Research Plans	Meeting will be rescheduled for March 2 to coincide with graduate recruitment
6	M	Experiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Singleton RA, Jr. and Straits BC. 2010. "Chapter 8: Experimental Designs" in <i>Approaches to Social Research</i>, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition</li> <li>• Correll, Shelley J, Stephen Benard, and In Paik. 2007 "Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?" <i>AJS</i> 112:1297-1338.*</li> </ul>	

8	W	Collecting Qualitative Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spradley JP. 1979. <i>The Ethnographic Interview</i>. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Pps. 55-68, 78-91, 120-131, 155-172, &amp; 223.</li> <li>• Kolb, K.H., 2011. Sympathy work: Identity and emotion management among victim-advocates and counselors. <i>Qualitative sociology</i>, 34(1), pp.101-119.*</li> <li>• Lareau A. 2011. "Chap 14: Reflections on Longitudinal Ethnography and the Families' Reactions to Unequal Childhoods" pp. 312-332.</li> </ul>
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**SPRING BREAK**

20	M	Analyzing Qualitative Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saldaña J. 2013. "Chap 1: An Introduction to Codes and Coding." <i>The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers</i>. Los Angeles: Sage.</li> <li>• Ryan G and Bernard R. 2003. "Techniques to Identify Themes." <i>Field Methods</i> 15:85-109.</li> <li>• Kleinman S and Kolb KH. 2011. "Traps on the Path of Analysis," <i>Symbolic Interaction</i> 34:425-446.</li> </ul>
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22	W	Ethnography and Participant Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ribas, V. 2015. <i>On the Line: Slaughterhouse Lives and the Making of the New South</i>. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.</li> </ul>
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27	M	Semi-Structured Interviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gerson, K., 2002. Moral dilemmas, moral strategies, and the transformation of gender lessons from two generations of work and family change. <i>Gender &amp; Society</i>, 16(1), pp.8-28.*</li> <li>• Viterna J. 2006. "Pulled, Pushed and Persuaded: Explaining Women's Mobilization into the Salvadoran Guerrilla Army." <i>AJS</i> 112: 1-45.*</li> </ul>
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29	W	Sample Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groves, Robert 2011 "Three Eras of Survey Research" <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i>, 75 (5), 2011, pp. 861- 871.</li> <li>• Singleton and Straits. "Ch 9 Survey Research"</li> </ul>
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FURTHER READING

- Chaps 1, 2, & 5 in Groves R et al. 2009. *Survey Methodology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed

<b>APR</b>	3	M	Questionnaire Design and Survey Interviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schaeffer, Nora Cate and Stanley Presser. 2003. "The Science of Asking Questions." <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> 9: 65-88.</li> <li>• Singleton and Straits. "Ch 9 Survey Instrumentation"</li> </ul>
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FURTHER READING

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chang, L. and Krosnick, J. A. (2003), Measuring the Frequency of Regular Behaviors: Comparing the “Typical Week” to the “Past Week”. <i>Sociological Methodology</i>, 33:55–80.</li> <li>• Weinreb AA. 2006. “The Limitations of Stranger-Interviewers in Rural Kenya.” <i>ASR</i> 71:1014-1039.</li> <li>• Winship C and Radbill L. 1994. "Sampling Weights and Regression Analysis." <i>Sociological Methods and Research</i> 23:230-257</li> <li>• Chaps 7, 8 and 9, Groves R et al. 2009. <i>Survey Methodology</i>, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.</li> </ul>
5	W	Trends and Controversies in Survey Design and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBD, possible topics: internet panels, cross-national designs, polling and prediction</li> </ul>
10	M	Comparative-Historical Design: Comparative Logic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skocpol, Theda and Margaret Somers. 1980. “The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry.” <i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i> 22:174-197.</li> <li>• Andreas Wimmer and Yuval Feinstein. "The rise of the nation-state across the world, 1816-2001", in <i>American Sociological Review</i> 75(5):764-790, 2010*</li> </ul>
12	W	Comparative Historical Design: Temporal Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bennett, Andrew and Colin Elman. 2006. “Qualitative Research: Recent Developments in Case Study Methods.” <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 9:455-476.</li> <li>• Fourcade, Marion and Sarah Babb. 2002 "The Rebirth of the Liberal Creed: Paths to Neoliberalism in Four Countries." <i>AJS</i> 108:533-579*</li> </ul>
17	M	Quantitative Approaches to Relational, Contextual, and Spatial Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Haynie DL. 2001. “Delinquent Peers Revisited: Does Network Structure Matter?” <i>AJS</i>. 106(4):1013-1057.*</li> <li>• Schofer, E and M. Foucade-Gourinchas. 2001. “The Structural Contexts of Civic Engagement: Voluntary Association Membership in Comparative Perspective.” <i>ASR</i> 66: 806-828.*</li> </ul> <p>FURTHER READING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breiger, Ronald L. 2004. “The Analysis of Social Networks,” Ch. 22 in <i>Handbook of Data Analysis</i></li> </ul>
19	W	Longitudinal Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meadows, S.O., McLanahan, S.S. and Brooks-Gunn, J., 2008. Stability and change in family structure and maternal health trajectories. <i>American sociological review</i>, 73(2), pp.314-334.*</li> <li>• Schwadel, P., 2011. Age, period, and cohort effects on religious activities and beliefs. <i>Social Science Research</i>,</li> </ul>

40(1), pp.181-192.\*

FURTHER READINGL:

- Tuma, Nancy. 2004. "Modeling Change," Ch. 13 in *Handbook of Data Analysis*

24 M Mixed Methods Research

- Johnson BR & Onwuegbuzie AJ. 2004. "Mixed Methods Research: A Paradigm Whose Time Has Come." *Educational Researcher* 33(7):14-26.
- Pearce, LD. 2015. "Thinking Outside the Q Boxes: Further Motivating a Mixed Research Perspective." in Hesse-Biber and Johnson (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Mixed and Multimethod Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

26 W Examples of Mixed Methods Research

- 2008. Small ML, Jacobs EM, and Massengill RP. "Why Organizational Ties Matter for Neighborhood Effects: A Study of Resource Access through Childcare Centers." *Social Forces*. 87(1).\*
- Giordano, P.C., Copp, J.E., Longmore, M.A. and Manning, W.D., 2015. Contested domains, verbal "amplifiers," and intimate partner violence in young adulthood. *Social Forces*.\*