

Labor Studies 401: Research Methods in Labor

Studies

Instructor

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Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations

Virtual Office hours: Tuesdays, 4:00PM - 5:00PM

Thursdays, 11:00AM - 12:00PM

or email to set up an appointment

Zoom link for virtual office

hours: <https://rutgers.zoom.us/j/99594260300?pwd=d3lySnNBZENhU0pDMWI6L3I5eVdmQT09&from=addonLinks> to an external site.

Course Overview

This course is an introduction to the methods of research most commonly employed by social scientists. Most of us are exposed to social research every day, from reports of the effects of the pandemic on telework to articles on the impact of having children on the gender wage gap. The main purpose of this course is to make you a more critical consumer of this kind of material in part by showing you how social research is done and also by engaging you in the process of social research itself.

Why should this matter to me?

Objectives

This course is designed to:

1. Help students to understand the basics of methodological reasoning – how to formulate research problems and how to understand issues of social causality.
2. Guide students in making ethical decisions in doing research.
3. Give students an understanding of the nuts-and-bolts issues of research – e.g., research design, sampling, measurement.
4. Allow students to develop their abilities as researchers by conducting a project using three specific methodologies.
5. Make students more critical consumers of the social science knowledge presented to them in their everyday lives.

Required Texts

The required text for this course is:

Blackstone, Amy. 2012. Principles of Sociological Inquiry – Qualitative and Quantitative Methods. Saylor Foundation. Open access: <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/139>Links to an external site.

This is a text by a sociologist, but social science research methods are pretty much universal across disciplines. This is a good basic text, and even better, it is open access and free. I will supplement with other readings as necessary. Any reading material in this course will be posted on Canvas.

Course Requirements

- **Examinations:** There will be three examinations, all of which will be a combination of short/long answers. Taken together, these will account for 30 percent of your grade.
- **Exercises:** There will be a series of exercises. These will count for 20 percent of your grade.
- **Lecture Reflections:** During a typical week, you will be responding to a series of questions on the weekly lecture which you will answer after viewing the lecture. The number of reflection questions per lecture will be variable, but this component of the course will be worth 30 percent of your grade.
- **Reading Comments/Discussion:** During a typical week, you will be required to post a substantive comment on the reading in the discussion section. In total, these comments will be worth 20 percent of your grade.
- **Final Grade:** Your grade for the class will be calculated as follows:

Exams	30 percent
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Exercises	20 percent
Lecture reflections	30 percent
Reading comments	20 percent
Total	100 percent

Policies

Class Day/Assignment Policies:

I have treated this class as if it meets on Tuesday morning at 10:00am every week, though of course I realize that this is an asynchronous class and you will be doing your assignments and listening to and reading the content as your schedules allow. Assignments, reflections on lectures, and comments on readings are all due by 11:59 PM on Monday night the following week (this is true for every week of the semester, except the week before Spring Recess, when the schedule has been modified). Hence (nearly) each class week spans from Tuesday morning at 10:00am through and including the following Monday night at 11:59pm.

I expect you to submit your assignments on the specified due dates. Refer to your Canvas classroom for each week's assignment and/or project due dates. My grading policy for late assignments is as follows:

- 1 day late - 1% will be deducted from your total grade
- 3 days late - 10% will be deducted from your total grade
- 5 days late - 20% will be deducted from your total grade

Assignments more than 5 days late will not be accepted.

Messages Sent to Students' Canvas Inboxes

It is the responsibility of the student to regularly check for incoming course messages. Messages are always sent through the Canvas messaging system. Students will receive a notification when a new message has been sent to their Canvas inbox. Forgetting or being unable to check for messages in one's Canvas inbox is not an excuse.

Weekly Messages:

A weekly message will be uploaded into the announcements area of the course Tuesday mornings. Reviewing the weekly message is a required activity. Weekly messages present timely information on course activities/assignments and content.

Scholastic Dishonesty:

For the purposes of this course, scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the submission of assignments that are plagiarized or written in collusion with another or the falsification of any records connected with this course or any examination. Plagiarism includes quoting or closely paraphrasing a printed source without giving appropriate credit (e.g. Gould, 2021:123). It is acceptable to talk with classmates about homework assignments, projects and papers. Handing in substantially the same assignment constitutes plagiarism, however. I will give a grade of 0 to any written assignment that appears to be substantially similar to that of another class member or that uses others' material without proper citation; further consequences may follow at my discretion. If you have any doubts at all about what constitutes plagiarism check with me before you turn in any assignment. I will use Turnitin.com for examinations and projects.

Office hours:

My office hours are Tuesdays from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM and Thursdays from 11:00am to 12:00pm on Zoom, and you can also set up an appointment with me for a Zoom meeting to accommodate your schedule. Here is the Zoom link for my office hours: [https://rutgers.zoom.us/j/99594260300?pwd=d3lySnNBZENhU0pDMWl6L3l5eVdmQT09&from=addonLinks to an external site..](https://rutgers.zoom.us/j/99594260300?pwd=d3lySnNBZENhU0pDMWl6L3l5eVdmQT09&from=addonLinks%20to%20an%20external%20site..) My weekly office hours are a time when you can drop in to talk about whatever you want - questions you have about the material, how you're doing in the course, things that you find particularly striking (or irritating) about the course or the readings. Please do not hesitate to use this time. If you are having trouble, it is better for both of us if I know this early in the semester.

Copyright/Intellectual Property:

Lectures and materials utilized in this course, including but not limited to videocasts, podcasts, visual presentations, assessments, and assignments, are protected by United States copyright laws as well as Rutgers University policy. As the instructor of this course, I possess sole copyright ownership. You are permitted to take notes for personal use or to provide to a classmate also currently enrolled in this course. Under no other circumstances is distribution of recorded or written materials associated with this course permitted to any internet site or similar information-sharing platform without my express written consent. Doing so is a violation of the university's [Academic Integrity PolicyLinks to an external site.](#)

Finally, as the instructor for this course, I have the responsibility to protect students' right to privacy. Classroom recordings of students will therefore be treated as educational records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the U.S. federal law that governs access to educational information and records. Instructors and students must provide notification if any part of online sessions are to be recorded, and such recordings cannot be circulated outside the course.

Unit One: Framing Research/Basic issues*

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments
1	1/16 - 1/22	Epistemology and intro to methodology	Blackstone Ch 1, syllabus	Post comments on reading
				self-introduction
2	1/23 - 1/29	Theory and research	Blackstone Ch 2	View lecture, post reflections
				Post comments on reading
3	1/30 - 2/5	Research ethics	Blackstone Ch 3	Post comments on reading
4	2/6 - 2/12	Topics in social research	Blackstone Ch 4 and Ch 5	View lecture, post reflections
				Post comments on reading
Unit Two: Research Design and Methods				
5	2/13 - 2/19	Sampling	Blackstone Ch 7	

	2/16/2024	EXAM 1. Posted 2/16/24 at 10:00am		Due by 2/19/24 at 11:59pm.
6	2/20 - 2/26	Measurement	Blackstone Ch 6	View lecture, post reflections
				Post comments on reading
7	2/27 - 3/4	Experimental research	Blackstone Ch 12.2	Occup Data homework due
8	3/5 - 3/8 (short week due to Spring Recess starting on 3/9)	Observation research	Blackstone Ch 10	View lecture, post reflections
				Post comments on reading
SPRING RECESS (3/9-3/17)				
9	3/19-3/25	Observation research, continued	Supplemental article	Post comments on reading
10	3/26 - 4/1	Content analysis	Blackstone Ch 11	View lecture, post reflections
11	4/2 - 4/8	Content analysis, continued	Supplemental article	

	4/5/2024	Exam 2. Posted 4/5/24 at 10:00am		Due by 4/8/24 at 11:59pm.
12	4/9-4/15	Quantitative data analysis	Blackstone Ch. 8	View lecture, post reflections
				Post comments on reading
13	4/16-4/22	Quantitative data analysis, continued	Supplemental article	Bivariate data analysis due 4/29
14	4/23-4/29			
	4/25/2024	Exam 3. Posted 4/25/24 at 10:00am		Due by 5/6/24 at 11:59pm.
<p>* If the last few years have taught us anything, it is that things change. If we need to shift dates around, I will do my best to announce this well in advance</p>				

Other Course, Department and University Policies and Information:

[Computer/Software/Apps/Accessories Requirement](#)
[Special Needs Accommodations](#)

[Technical Support](#)

[Student Code of Conduct](#)

[Academic Integrity](#)

[Student Health & Wellness Services](#)