

Quantitative Research Methods: SOC 222

Spring 2014

Tentative Syllabus

American University of Central Asia

Department of Sociology

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Classrooms and schedule: Tuesday and Thursday
(room 326) at 8:00 – 9:15
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday at 12:10 –
13:10 in room 325

INTRODUCTION

Quantitative research is research involving the use of structured questions where the response options have been predetermined and a large number of respondents are involved. By definition, measurement must be objective, quantitative and statistically valid. Simply put, it's about numbers, objective hard data.

This course covers all major components of quantitative research including construction of survey instruments, administration of the process, analysis and reporting of results. In addition, it explores the quantitative analysis of qualitative data.

PROGRAM GOALS

In this course, students will develop the skills needed to:

1. understand quantitative research techniques;
2. formulate research questions appropriate to survey research;
3. understand the links between existing research and new research;
4. construct effective questionnaires;
5. collect and process quantitative data;
6. develop ability to interpret research findings, and
7. coherently describe conclusions.

READINGS

Each class has a reading assignment indicated in the Course Outline. The students are required to prepare the assignments *before* the class in order to take part in the discussion.

Required texts:

1. Babbie, Earl. 2001. *The Practice of the Social Research* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.
2. Burns, Robert. 2000. *Introduction to Research Methods* (4th ed). London: SAGE Publications
3. Baker, Therese L. 1999. *Doing Social Research* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill

Supplementary texts:

1. Fowler, Floyd J. 1993. *Survey Research Methods* (2nd ed). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications
2. Rea, Loius M. and Richard A. Parker. 1997. *Designing and Conducting Survey Research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers
3. Wesberg, Herbert F., Jon A. Krosnick, and Bruce D. Bowen. 1996. *An Introduction to Survey Research, Polling, and Data Analysis* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publication.

REQUIREMENTS

Class participation and effort (5% of final grade)

Learning is an active process, so the classroom should likewise be active: questions and comments are actively welcomed so long as they are on-topic. Students will be held accountable for all class material on the exam and on the assignments. No medical certificates will be accepted.

Grading Guidelines for Seminar and Lecture Participation

'A' – Students attend each lecture and seminar with questions about the lectures and readings. In engaged dialogues, they raise these questions for other students to discuss, and listen to contrary opinions. They initiate and develop critical issues concerning the seminar activities. They are well-structured and well-organized for the completion of their research projects.

'B' – Students complete their readings, but do not always reflect on the questions and issues raised during the lectures and seminars. Though they articulate their own views, they passively wait for others to initiate interesting

issues. They are reasonably well organized for their own projects.

'C' – Students attend, prepare and listen attentively, but rarely enter into discussions. They are adequately prepared for their own projects.

'D' – Students are inconsistent in their attendance and preparations. They do not respect others' contributions. They are also poorly prepared for their own projects.

'F' – Students are consistently ill-prepared and have poor attendance. They are rude and disruptive. They also fail to show any signs of organizing their own projects.

Assignments (3*10=30% of final grade)

There will be three assignments throughout the semester. Unless otherwise stated, homework assignments are to be done by students individually. **Any students who plagiarize will get an "F" grade for that assignment. All assignments are due at the beginning of the classes on the day it is due (see schedule below). No late assignments will be accepted.** Further information on assignments will be distributed later in the semester.

Assignment #1: Formulation of research topic

Assignment #2: Design of preliminary draft of the questionnaire

Assignment #3: SPSS database

In-class presentation of research proposal and contribution to the discussion of other students' projects (15% of final grade)

Each student will deliver 1 presentation throughout the course. The presentation should include the information on the research topic, motivation for the study, questions and/or hypotheses, preliminary review of literature and proposed method. Further information on the presentation will be distributed later in the semester.

Participation is the key to a lively presentation. 5% of the course grade will depend upon contributions to our students' presentation. Participation provides the opportunity to practice speaking and persuasive skills, as well as the ability to listen. Comments that are vague, repetitive, unrelated to the current topic, disrespectful of others, or without sufficient foundation will be evaluated negatively. What matters is the quality of one's contributions to the class discussion, not the number of times one speaks.

Grading Guidelines for Presentations

'A' – Students presented important points in a thorough manner; made extensive eye contact with the audience; did not read the presentation; kept to the 7-10 minute time limit; used visual support for the presentation (posters, props, etc.). The speech natural and continuous with few or no unnatural pauses.

'B' – Students presented some important points but could have been more thorough; made limited eye contact with the audience; did not read the presentation; kept within one minute of the 7-10 minute time limit; used some type of visual support. Slight stumbling, but manages to rephrase or continue

'C' – Lacking in important points and/or details; made little eye contact with the audience; read the presentation often; diverged from the 7-10 minute time limit by 2-3 minutes. The speech frequently hesitant or jerky; sentences may be left uncompleted

'D' – Severely lacking in important points and/or details; failed to make eye contact; read the presentation; diverged from the time limit by more than three minutes; did not use any type of visual support. The speech very slow and uneven, except for short or routine sentences.

'F' – Assignments where none of the above apply.

Guidelines for Evaluating Participation

'A' – Outstanding Contributor: Ideas offered are always substantive, provide one or more major insights as well as direction for the discussion. Challenges are well substantiated and persuasively presented. If this student were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished markedly.

'B' – Good Contributor: Ideas offered are usually substantive, provide good insights and sometimes direction for the discussion. Challenges are well substantiated and often persuasive. If this student were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished.

'C' – Adequate Contributor: Ideas offered are sometimes substantive, provide generally useful insights but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion. Challenges are sometimes presented, fairly well substantiated, and are sometimes persuasive. If this student were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished.

'D' – Unsatisfactory Contributor: Ideas offered are seldom substantive, provide few if any insights and never a constructive direction for the discussion. Integrative comments and effective challenges are absent. If this student were not a member of the class, valuable air-time would be saved.

'F' – Non-Participant: This person says little or nothing during discussion. Hence, there is not an adequate basis for evaluation. If this student were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would not be changed.

Midterm and final exams (2*10 = 20% of final grade)

There will be two in-class, closed-book exams during the semester (see schedule below). Each exam will contribute 10% to students' total grade. Final exam is cumulative. Exams will cover all material covered in lectures and in textbook. **Any student who cheats on an exam will get an "F" grade for that exam.**

Missed exams can be re-taken under following conditions:

1. students inform the instructor before an exam unless of an illness;
2. students must have written documentation for the absence; and
3. the instructor determines when the make-up is taken and the format of the exam.

Research papers (2*15 = 30% of final grade)

Students will conduct research project on the topic of their own choosing. Students will define the study problems and propose methods to address these problems, carry out data collection and analysis. **Paper #1** should identify the research topic, key research hypotheses as well as present the related literature review. **Paper #2** should include the revised paper #1, research methods, and preliminary analysis of quantitative data collected. The papers will be written in APA style. **Any students who plagiarized will get an "F" grade for that paper. Papers received late will not be accepted (see schedule below).** Further information on the research papers will be distributed later in the semester.

Grading Guidelines for Assignments, Exams and Research papers

'A' – Assignments of exceptional quality, and are comprehensive and original in their insights, and written with some sense of style.

'A-' – Assignments of comprehensive and original quality, with an insightful treatment of the subject matter. They indicate a high degree of intellectual, conceptual and analytical sophistication. Assignments are also well-structured, with clear, creative themes, which are supported by clear evidence, and they astutely evaluate counter-arguments.

'B+' – Assignments are extremely thorough and thoughtful, though they lack originality, comprehensiveness or insight. Assignments are logical and clear, and have well-reasoned objectives and written structure.

'B' – Assignments are well-reasoned and well-organized, and the ideas are developed, but with little originality. They also indicate exceptional insights, but are inadequately developed.

'C+' – Assignments show competency of the subject matter, with an adequate written structure. They contain some ideas, which demonstrate analytical skills, though overall they are not well developed.

'C' – Assignments regurgitates readings and lecture ideas and materials.

'D+' – Assignments have evidence of some thought, though they lack analytical structure.

'F' – Assignments where none of the above apply, or are plagiarized from other sources.

GRADING GUIDELINES

Class participation and effort	5%
Three assignments	30%
In-class presentation of research proposal	15%
Midterm and final exams	20%
Two research papers	30%
Total possible points	100%

Grades will be assigned based on the following ranges:

Grade	Percent
A	Over 95%
A-	90 – 94%
B+	85 – 89%
B	80 – 84%
B-	75 – 79%
C+	70 – 74%
C	65 – 69%
C-	60 – 64%
D	55 – 59%
F	Under 54%

COURSE OUTLINE

Weeks	Tentative topic calendar	Assignments and exams
WK1 January 13-19	Review of syllabus and introduction	Babbie, Chapter 1 & 2
WK2 January 20-26	Research Designs	Babbie, Chapter 4
WK3 January 27- February 2	Causation	Babbie, Chapter 3 Burns, Chapter 9
WK4 February 3-9	Conceptualization and Measurement	Babbie, Chapter 5 Baker, Chapter 4 Burns, Chapter 8 & 9
WK5 February 10-16	Survey Research	Babbie, Chapter 10 pp. 255 – 262 <u>Supplementary readings:</u> Weisberg, Chapter 1 & 2 Assignment #1
WK6 February 17-23	Presentation of research projects	Handouts
WK7 February 24 –March 2	Presentation of research projects	Handouts
WK8 March 3-9	Discussion of the Paper 1 guidelines Midterm exam	Handouts
WK9 March 10-16	SPRING BREAK	
WK10 March 17-23	Developing effective questionnaires and questions	Babbie, Chapter 6 <u>Supplementary readings:</u> Weisberg, Chapter 4 Rea, Chapter 3 Fowler, Chapter 5&6 Paper 1 is due on March 20th by 18:00 (papers submitted late will not be accepted).
WK11 March 24-30	Indexing and Scaling	Babbie, Chapter 7 pp. 166 – 187
WK12 March 31- April 6	Sampling theory Sampling size, selecting a representative sample	Babbie, Chapter 8 Burns, Chapter 6 <u>Supplementary readings:</u> Weisberg, Chapter 3 Rea, Chapter 6,7,&8 Fowler, Chapter 2&3 Assignment #2
WK13 April 7-13	Administering the questionnaires Data processing: coding, data entry and data cleaning	Babbie, Chapter 10 pp. 264 – 277 Babbie, Chapter 14 <u>Supplementary readings:</u> Weisberg, Chapter 5&6 Rea, Chapter 4 Fowler, Chapters 7&8

WK14 April 14-20	Data processing: coding, data entry and data cleaning contd.	Babbie, Chapter 14
WK15 April 21-27	Data analysis: frequency tables, crosstabulations and graphic devices	Babbie, Chapter 15 Babbie, Chapter 16 Assignment #3
WK16 April 28-May 4 (no classes on Thursday, 1 st of May)	Course revision and discussion of Paper 2 guidelines	
Finals week May 5-11	Final exam is on May 8th Paper 2 is due on May 13th by 12:00 (papers submitted late will not be accepted).	