

Research Methods

ORGB- C360-051

Spring 2004

Dr. Wendy L. Hicks

Stallings Hall 105

865-2694

Tuesday 6²⁰ – 9⁰⁰PM

Monroe Hall 528

Class Web Site: http://www.loyno.edu/~wlhicks/Research_Methods

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, & Friday, 3⁰⁰ – 6⁰⁰ PM; also, by appointment

Required Text:

Babbie, E. (2004); Edition: 10th ed. The Practice of Social Research (10th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson. ISBN: 0534620280; Publisher: Wadsworth Publishing

Course Description & Objectives:

This course, Research Methods, is designed to offer the undergraduate student the opportunity to delve into the realm of research as undertaken in an academic setting. Existing social policy and the laws under which we live on a daily basis are derived from academic research. Therefore, it is imperative for the student of social sciences to understand the underlying mechanisms from which political social policy is derived.

This course will expose the student to a variety of differing research methodologies as well as more unusual research options undertaken by some, more venturesome researchers with large budgets. Initially, students will read the traditional textbook, outlining the basic concepts of research in an effort to gain an understanding of fundamental uses of social research, and the ethics by which any social researcher must abide. As the semester progresses, students will be required to read articles written by social researchers in a variety of fields in an effort to critically analyze the methodologies utilized and the ethical underpinnings of such research.

Attendance & Participation:

Class attendance is expected. A student cannot expect to pass this course without attending class. This course is fast paced. If a student has any expectation of earning a passing grade they must be attendance for all class periods.

Assignments & Exams:

Students will be asked throughout the course of this semester to complete a variety of small article assignments. The due dates for these are listed on the syllabus. Each assignment will be detailed on a separate sheet of paper and will

be handed out in class as the semester progresses. Students will be given plenty of time to complete each assignment. Late assignments will be penalized by 50%.

Exams will initially consist of a mixture of multiple choice and true/false items. As students gain a broader knowledge of the material, test items will become more complex with short answer and essay items appearing. The final exam will be discussed at a later date. It will be a combination of all test items from the previous 4 exams.

Make-Up Exams:

Any student requiring a make-up exam must contact the instructor PRIOR to the regularly scheduled exam period. Contact may be made via e-mail, telephone, or written note. Exams requested after the regularly scheduled exam period may be permitted based on instructor discretion.

Grading:

Grading will be on a points scale. There will be no curving of grades. Each of the 4 exams will be worth 100 points and the final will be worth 200 points. The 3 small article assignments will be worth 25 points. The paper assignment will be worth 100 points.

The grading scale is below:

Total Points 775	
A	775 – 697.5
B	697 – 620
C	619 – 542.5
D	542 – 465
F	464 - Below

Writing Assignment:

Students will be required to complete an end-of-semester writing assignment in accord with proper research methodology as outlined in the text. Each student will be required to choose a topic within the field of criminal justice and develop a proposal outlining a proper methodological design with which to conduct a research project. The proposal should be approximately 10-12 pages in length and should include all of the necessary elements contained within a research methodology. In addition, students are asked to write a brief, 1 page synopsis of their selected topic, to be turned in January 27.

Topic:

The topic you decide to utilize for your paper is entirely up to you. However, find an issue within the field of CJ that is of interest to you. This will make the assignment much easier. You may pick a topic within any area of CJ: corrections, policing, juvenile, courts, theory, etc. The choice is yours. You will be required to write a brief synopsis describing your topic and what you plan to research. The due date for this is January 27.

Body of Paper:

The issue you have decided to write about should be defined and described as clearly and succinctly as possible. You will need to include any theoretical perspectives you will use in your research. In addition, if your topic is controversial in any way, that should be included and described.

You will need to determine and explain the purpose of your proposed research. Why does the issue merit research? Why are you the person to undertake this project? Will this research have some significance for society or the field of CJ? Finally, you will need to identify any pertinent variables you might want to consider in your study. Follow the methods described in your text as well as the articles listed on the syllabus as examples.

Relevant Literature:

You will need to provide me with a brief review of recent and past literature concerning your topic. You should pay attention to what others have had to say about your topic. Theoretical issues, academic debates, scholarly controversies, or practical applications should be addressed in the literature review. Be as complete as possible but remain brief. I don't want a tome; just a review.

Methodology & Hypothesis:

You should provide, with as much detail as possible, what method(s) you will utilize in your project. A perusal of literature will assist you in developing your methodology. Bear in mind, you do not have to rebuild the pyramids or rewrite the Torah. I do not expect any of you to be experts. It is a far better strategy to be a bit creative but simple than to try to engage in complex methodological problems. Replication of previous research is always a valid option. However, if you choose to replicate previous research you need to make yours a bit different in some aspect. Again, looking at past and present literature on your topic will assist you in this regard. You need to make your research unique. If you were an actual researcher this would be very important.

Expected Results:

For this section you will not actually have any results. Remember, this is a proposal. You are certainly not expected to actually conduct this research. We are pretending. However, all researchers have some idea of what they expect to find in their research. I want you to provide me with what you expect to uncover in your study. Again, past and present research will help.

Discussion:

This section ties everything else you have written together. You will paraphrase your opening paragraphs. You will again tell your readers your purpose, your hypothesis, and your expected results. This is very similar to a long conclusion. You need to provide more detail, though, than in a regular conclusion.

Class Schedule:

January 13	Opening remarks, syllabus Begin Part I: An Introduction to Inquiry Chapter 1: Human Inquiry and Science
January 20	Continue Part I: Chapter 2: Paradigms, Theory and Social Research Chapter 3: The Ethics and Politics of Social Research
January 27	Exam #1: Part I – An Introduction to Inquiry [Chapters 1 – 3] Article Assignment #1: Tuskegee Experiment & Nazi Medical Research [<u>Due February 10</u>] Synopsis due
February 3	Begin Part II: The Structure of Inquiry Chapter 4: Research Design Chapter 5: Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement Chapter 6: Indexes, Scales and Typologies
February 10	Finish Part II: Chapter 7: The Logic of Sampling Begin Part III: Modes of Observation Chapter 8: Experiments Article Assignment #2: Boot Camp Evaluation [Due March 2]
February 17	Exam #2: Part II – The Structure of Inquiry [Chapters 4 – 7]
February 24	Mardi Gras – No Class
March 2	Continue Part III: Modes of Observation Chapter 9: Survey Research Chapter 10: Qualitative Field Research
March 9	ACJS Conference – No Class

March 16	Continue Part III: Chapter 11: Unobtrusive Research Chapter 12: Evaluation Research Article Assignment #3: Field Research [Due April 13]
March 23	Begin Part IV: Analysis of Data Chapter 13: Qualitative Data Analysis Chapter 14: Quantitative Data Analysis
March 30	Exam #3: Part III – Modes of Observation [Chapters 9 – 12]
April 6	Easter Holiday – No Class
April 13	Continue Part IV: Analysis of Data Chapter 15: The Elaboration Model Chapter 16: Social Statistics Chapter 17: Reading and Writing Social Research
April 20	Exam #4: Part IV – Analysis of Data [Chapters 13 – 17]
April 27	Review for Final
May 4	Final Exam Paper Due