Contact Information

Instructor
Dr. Josh Meisel
Assistant Professor and Graduate Coordinator
Coordinator, Criminal Justice Minor
Department of Sociology

Office, Phone & Email
M 3:00-4:00 and R 9:00-10:00
or by appointment
BSS 534
Phone Number: 826-4446
Email: meisel@humboldt.edu

Meeting Time and Location:
Seminar – Tuesday, 5:00-6:50 BSS 306
Lab – Thursday, 5:00-7:50 Science 364

Course Description
This is the required methods course for all Sociology masters students. The purpose of this course is to provide students with a working knowledge of the research methods and basic statistical skills needed to collect and analyze quantitative data. Though this course considers the methodological issues relevant to conducting an array of quantitative research, we will focus on the art and science of survey research methods. In addition to methodological considerations, we will also examine the social, political and ethical dimensions of designing and executing research in general and applied research in particular. Over the course of the semester we will explore the stages of survey development and administration including measurement, instrumentation, sampling and distribution, and institutional review board approval. The course also includes a lab component that will provide you with hands-on exposure to statistical analysis using SPSS.

Official Catalog Description:
Activity course on data collection and analysis methods: interview, experimental, demographic, and historical-comparative.

Learning Outcomes
The following learning outcomes are course, Department and University specific:

Course
By the end of the semester, students should be able to:
1. Demonstrate sensitivity to the social, political, and ethical factors shaping social scientific research.
2. Critically analyze and understand survey research methods, including mode of delivery, sampling, instrumentation, and their application to concrete research situations.
3. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of using secondary sources of survey data.
4. Identify appropriate statistical methods and conduct analyses to answer sociological questions using quantitative data.
5. Develop and pilot an applied research project.
6. Demonstrate proficiency in writing about and visually presenting research based on quantitative data.

Department
By the end of the semester, students should be able to:
1. A solid foundation in sociological methods and related methodological theory.
2. Professional socialization, including an understanding of ethical issues.
3. Hands-on experience in their appropriate field (teaching/practicing).

University
By the end of the semester, students should be able to:
1. Effective communication through written and oral modes.
2. Critical and creative thinking skills in acquiring a broad base of knowledge and applying it to complex issues.
3. Competence in a major area of study.

Course Readings and Resources
It is your responsibility to have completed the reading by the assigned dates.

Required Books
Babbie, Earl. The Practice of Social Research (various editions). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth. (copies will be loaned out on first day of course)

Other Required Readings (on Moodle)

Assignments and Point Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Administration</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damn Lies and Statistics</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Worksheets</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Design</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Components and Weight
• Participation (18%) Be in class. Participate. Facilitate. It is essential that you are physically and intellectually present in class. Your informed participation based on the readings and involvement in the class research project will play a central role in everyone’s overall learning experience. As a member of this class, you have a responsibility to yourself and other students to be an active learner; come prepared, participate, listen, ask questions, challenge omissions and offer alternative frameworks. As your instructor, I will offer guidance in your own process of discovery. Therefore, students who attend all classes but do not participate can expect a C for participation. Students who attend all classes and make thoughtful contributions on a fairly regular basis will earn a B towards their final grade. Students that attend all classes and make consistently strong contributions to class discussion will earn an A for participation.
• **Survey Administration Experience** (3%). There will be opportunities to gain experience administering surveys in this course. Details will be provided.

• **Damn Lies and Statistics** (3%). In collaboration with another student (or solo) you will locate a news story that you believe presents dubious research/statistics. You will present the story to the class identifying why you believe the research/statistics are questionable and where possible, track down the original study source and present this information to the class.

• **Lab Worksheets** (10%) Lab worksheets will completed and reviewed in lab.

• **Research Paper** (30%) You will design and execute a research study using an existing data set. Ideally this assignment will contribute to your methodological strategy and analytic skills for your thesis/project. The paper will involve data analysis using SPSS and discussion of “real” data pertaining to your own research interests. I will help you acquire a data file from General Social Survey. More information will be provided in class and on Moodle.

• **Survey Design Project** (30%) The benefits of collaborative and experiential learning have been well documented in the educational literature. “Learning by doing” provides students the opportunity to ask questions in a “real world” situation, analyze data, and problem solve in such a way that the gap between textbook learning and daily experience is bridged. You will execute a research project in pairs in which you will practice the initial phases of study design, survey instrument development, sampling design, and (time permitting) piloting of an instrument. Project options will be provided in class and project expectations will be provided separately.

**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 – 100%</td>
<td>281 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 93%</td>
<td>270-280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89%</td>
<td>260-269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84 – 86%</td>
<td>251-259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Below 84%</td>
<td>250 and lower</td>
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</table>

**Minimum Grade**

Sociology graduate students must earn a grade of B or above to meet degree requirements. The grade of “B-” is a failing grade for graduate students and triggers suspension from the graduate school.

**Estimated Outside Class Time**

Students hoping to earn an “A” in this class can anticipate spending an average of 12-16 hours each week on outside class activities: reading; accessing, preparing and analyzing data; writing and editing; and thinking about material in preparation for our four-hour class meetings. I encourage you to schedule and use this preparation time starting in the first week so that you can make the most of this seminar.

**Late Work and Extra Credit**

As a general rule, late work will not be accepted and I do not assign extra credit assignments. However, it is always best to communicate with me about a life crisis or medical issues.

**University Policies**

**Students with Disabilities:**

Persons who wish to request disability-related accommodations should contact the Student Disability Resource Center in House 71, 826-4678 (voice) or 826-5392 (TDD). Some accommodations may take
up to several weeks to arrange. Student Disability Resource Center Website\(^1\). If you are a student with a disability, please consider discussing your needs and possible accommodations with me as soon as possible.

**Add/Drop policy:**
Students are responsible for knowing the University policy, procedures, and schedule for dropping or adding classes. Add/Drop Policy\(^2\)

**Emergency evacuation:**
Please review the evacuation plan for the classroom (posted on the orange signs), and review Emergency Operations Website\(^3\) for information on campus Emergency Procedures. During an emergency, information can be found campus conditions at: **826-INFO** or at the Humboldt State Emergency Website\(^4\).

**Academic integrity:**
If you plagiarize, or otherwise cheat, on any exam or assignment, you will fail this course and your name and the nature of your infraction will be forwarded to the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities. Plagiarism involves intentionally representing someone else’s words or ideas as your own. If you use outside sources—either in the form of quotes or ideas—you **must** cite them to indicate where they come from. Please see or email me, or visit the Writing Center, if you need help with citations. Students are responsible for knowing the policy regarding academic honesty. Academic Honesty Policy\(^5\)

**Attendance and disruptive behavior:**
Students are responsible for knowing policy regarding attendance and disruptive behavior. Attendance and Disruptive Behavior Policy\(^6\)

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\(^1\) [http://www.humboldt.edu/disability/](http://www.humboldt.edu/disability/)

\(^2\) [http://www.humboldt.edu/~reg/regulations/schedadjust.html](http://www.humboldt.edu/~reg/regulations/schedadjust.html)

\(^3\) [http://studentaffairs.humboldt.edu/emergencyops/campus_emergency_preparedness.php](http://studentaffairs.humboldt.edu/emergencyops/campus_emergency_preparedness.php)

\(^4\) [http://www.humboldt.edu/humboldt/emergency](http://www.humboldt.edu/humboldt/emergency)


\(^6\) [http://studentaffairs.humboldt.edu/judicial/attendance_behavior.php](http://studentaffairs.humboldt.edu/judicial/attendance_behavior.php)
Quantitative Research Methods Course Schedule

The course schedule is subject to change, depending on our progress in covering the material. Any changes will be announced in class. It is your responsibility to know what is announced in class, whether or not you are present when it is announced. Readings should be completed prior to class for which they are assigned.

Survey: Dillman et al. SPSS: Elliott & Woodward M: Moodle Readings (download from Moodle)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Focus &amp; Readings to be Discussed</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | August 25  | **Introductions and Course Overview**  
What is Social Research?  
Survey Project Options (Connie Stewart) |                                                      |
|      | August 27  | **Statistical Reasoning**  
SPSS: Chpt 1                                    |                                                      |
| 2    | September 1| **Research Inquiry**  
Review Babbie on:  
• Human Inquiry and Science  
• Paradigms, Theory, and Social Research|                                                      |
|      | September 3| **Describing and Examining Data**  
SPSS: Chpt 2 pgs. 21-35 |                                                      |
| 3    | September 8| **Research Ethics and Politics**  
Review Babbie on:  
• The Ethics and Politics of Social Research  
M: Boot Camps Article  
M: DARE Article | Complete IRB Tutorial (CITI)                        |
|      | September 10| **Describing and Examining Data**  
SPSS: Chpt 2 pgs. 35-47 |                                                      |
| 4    | September 15| **Elements of Tailored Design**  
Survey: Chpts. 1-2  
M: Edwards |                                                      |
|      | September 17| **Creating and Using Graphs**  
SPSS: Chpt 3 | First Data Analysis paper due Friday by 9pm         |
| 5    | September 22| **Sampling**  
Review Babbie on The Logic of Sampling  
Survey: Chpt. 3 |                                                      |
|      | September 24| **Comparing One or Two Means**  
SPSS: Chpt 4 pgs. 75-95  
M: Sex and Significance |                                                      |
| 6    | September 29| **Questionnaire Construction**  
Review Babbie on:  
• Research Design  
• Survey Research  
Survey: Chpt. 4  
M: Laumann et al. |                                                      |
|      | October 1  | **Comparing One or Two Means**  
SPSS: Chpt 4 pgs. 95-108 |                                                      |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Focus &amp; Readings to be Discussed</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>October 6</td>
<td><strong>Questionnaire Construction</strong>&lt;br&gt;Review Babbie on Experiments&lt;br&gt;Survey: Chpt. 5&lt;br&gt;M: Gaile</td>
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<td></td>
<td>October 8</td>
<td><strong>Analysis of Variance and Covariance</strong>&lt;br&gt;SPSS: Chpt 7 pgs. 185-202</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>October 13</td>
<td><strong>Visual Survey Design</strong>&lt;br&gt;Review Babbie on:&lt;br&gt;• Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement&lt;br&gt;• Indexes, Scales, and Typologies&lt;br&gt;Survey: Chpt. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October 15</td>
<td><strong>Analysis of Variance and Covariance</strong>&lt;br&gt;SPSS: Chpt 7 pgs. 203-230</td>
<td>Second Data Analysis paper due Friday by 9pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>October 20</td>
<td><strong>Question Order Effects</strong>&lt;br&gt;Survey: Chpt. 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October 22</td>
<td><strong>Correlation and Regression</strong>&lt;br&gt;SPSS: Chpt 5 pgs. 109-129</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>October 27</td>
<td><strong>Telephone Survey Administration</strong>&lt;br&gt;Survey: Chpt. 8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October 29</td>
<td><strong>Correlation and Regression</strong>&lt;br&gt;SPSS: Chpt 5 pgs. 129-144&lt;br&gt;M: Kerley et al.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>November 3</td>
<td><strong>Web Questionnaires and Implementation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Survey: Chpt. 9</td>
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<td></td>
<td>November 5</td>
<td><strong>Analysis of Categorical Data</strong>&lt;br&gt;SPSS: Chpt 6 pgs. 145-164</td>
<td>Third Data Analysis Paper Due Friday by 9pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>November 10</td>
<td><strong>Mail Questionnaires</strong>&lt;br&gt;Survey: Chpt. 10</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November 12</td>
<td><strong>Analysis of Categorical Data</strong>&lt;br&gt;SPSS: Chpt 6 pgs. 164-184</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>November 17</td>
<td><strong>Mixed-Mode Questionnaires and Survey Implementation</strong>&lt;br&gt;Survey: Chpt. 11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November 19</td>
<td><strong>Nonparametric Analysis Procedures</strong>&lt;br&gt;SPSS: Chpt. 8</td>
<td>Fourth Data Analysis Paper Due Friday by 9pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>November 24 and 26</td>
<td><strong>No Class – Fall Break</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>December 1</td>
<td><strong>Uncertainty and Survey Research</strong>&lt;br&gt;Survey: Chpt 12</td>
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<td></td>
<td>December 3</td>
<td><strong>Wrap Up – Open Lab</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>December 8</td>
<td><strong>Survey Project Presentations</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>December 10</td>
<td><strong>Discussion of Data Analyses</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>December 13</td>
<td><strong>Survey Project Packet Due on Moodle</strong></td>
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