**Plan 800: Research Design** (version 1/3/22)

Spring 2022

Wednesday 9:05-11:45, New East 301

Instructor: Noreen McDonald, noreen@unc.edu

Office Hours: M-Th afternoons, schedule a time to meet or book at [go.unc.edu/mcdonald](https://mcdonald.web.unc.edu/calendar)

Asking and answering questions about the social world is at the heart of planning and social science research. The goal of this course is to equip students with the tools to develop strategies to answer research questions and to discern the quality of these approaches. Research design is a language that most social science researchers share. As such, the concepts discussed in this course will be critical to the evaluation of your work and how you evaluate the work of colleagues.

This course is suitable for doctoral students and for advanced master’s students seeking to gain a deeper understanding of the subject. The objectives of this course are to:

* Know the logic and need for research design
* Identify and assess the main research designs used in social science research
* Understand the research proposal writing process including the importance of ethics and human subjects review.

This course will not review the details of methodological approaches and instead focuses on concepts that apply to quantitative and qualitative approaches. However, there is not a sharp line between research design and research methods so some readings and class discussions may blur this line.

**Course Requirements**

Students are expected to participate in class sessions by having done the assigned reading prior to class and raising and responding to questions. Other course requirements include:

1. Paper Analysis #1 (20%)
2. Paper Analysis #2 (20%)
3. Leading class session (10%)
4. Research proposal presentation (20%)
5. Final written research proposal (30%)

Students will also complete several assignments that will be discussed during class.

**Readings**

Readings come from the following books and articles. I have tried to put copies of readings up on Sakai, but for the books I recommend that you purchase the Yin and Shadish/Cook/Campbell books (or get them from the library – earlier versions are likely fine). The textbooks by Singleton and Straits and Schutt are often not required reading but do provide a summary of the topic.

* Singleton and Straits, *Approaches to Social Research* (S&S)
* Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications*
* Shadish, Cook, and Campbell, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference* (SCC)
* Schutt, *Investigating the Social World*

**Schedule**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Day** | **Topic** |
| 1 | 1/12 | How Research Connects to Action and the Logic of Research Design |
| 2 | 1/19 | Research Questions and Social Research Goals: Validity, Generalizability, Causality, Authenticity, and Ethics  |
| 3 | 1/26 | Research Design and Causality |
| 4 | 2/2 | Conceptualization and Measurement |
| 5 | 2/9 | Sampling and Writing Proposals |
| 6 | 2/16 | Proposal Updates |
| 7 | 2/23 | Experimental and Quasi-experimental Research Designs |
| 8 | 3/2 | Observational Research Designs |
| 9 | 3/9 | Case Study Research Designs |
|  | 3/16 | Spring Break |
| 10 | 3/23 | Mixed Method Approaches |
| 11 | 3/30 | Proposal Updates |
| 12 | 4/6 | Using Available Data |
| 13 | 4/13 | Collecting Data |
| 14 | 4/20 | Research Ethics |
| 15 | 4/27 | Proposal Presentations (Open to department) |

**Readings**

How research connects to action and the logic of research design (1/12)

* \*Lindblom, 1987, Who Needs What Social Research for Policymaking?
* \*Cairney & Jones, 2016, Kingdon’s Multiple Streams Approach: What is the Empirical Impact of this Universal Theory?
* \*Poulter, et al. 2009, Sea-level rise research and dialogue in NC: Creating windows for policy change
* \*Whittington, et al. Evidence-based policy analysis? The strange case of the randomized controlled trials of community-led total sanitation.
* \*Mintrom and Norman, 2009, Policy Entrepreneurship and Policy Change
* Lindblom, 1959, The Science of “Muddling Through”
* Etzioni, 1967, Mixed Scanning: A “Third” Approach to Decision Making
* Rittel & Webber, 1973, Dilemmas in a general theory of planning
* Merton, 1949, The Role of Applied Social Research in the Formulation of Policy: A Research Memorandum
* S&S Ch. 4 Elements of RD
* Schutt, Ch. 3 Research Ethics and Philosophies
* Little, Varieties of Social Explanation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science

Research Questions and Social Research Goals (1/19)

* \*Firebaugh. 2008, Ch. 1 in Seven Rules for social research.
* \*Lundberg and Young, 2005, “Inventing and framing research questions” (247-285)
* \*Martin, 1981, Garbage Can Model of the Psychological Research Process
* Schutt Ch. 2 The Process and Problems of Social Research (6th Ed)
* SCC Ch 2 Statistical Conclusion Validity
* SCC Ch. 3 External Validity section
* S&S Ch. 3 Research Ethics

Research Design and Causality (1/26)

* \*King, Keohane, and Verba, Ch. 3 Causality and Causal Inference
* \*Marini and Singer, Causality in the social sciences
* Salmon, Causality and explanation, Ch. 1.
* Schutt Ch. 6 Research Design and Causation

Conceptualization and Measurement (2/2)

* \*Carmines, 1979, Reliability and Validity Assessment, [Ch. 1](https://methods.sagepub.com/book/reliability-and-validity-assessment/n1.xml), [Ch. 2](https://methods.sagepub.com/book/reliability-and-validity-assessment/n2.xml), [Ch. 4](https://methods.sagepub.com/book/reliability-and-validity-assessment/n4.xml)
* \*SCC Ch. 3 Construct Validity
* S&S Ch. 5 Measurement
* Schutt Ch. 4 Conceptualization and Measurement

Sampling and Writing Proposals (2/9)

* \*S&S Ch. 6 Sampling
* Schutt Ch. 5 Sampling
* \*Przeworski and Salomon, On the art of writing proposals
* \*Watts, [Essentials for Research Design](http://methods.sagepub.com/book/a-handbook-for-social-science-field-research/n10.xml): In search of the holy grail: Projects, proposals, and research design, but mostly about why writing a dissertation proposal is so difficult
* \*[The Making of a Successful Proposal](https://files.webservices.illinois.edu/3389/artwritingprpsal_makingsccsflprpsl.pdf)
* \*Alford, 1998, Ch. 2 Designing a Research Project
* Perecman & Curran, 2006, [Bringing it All Back Home: Personal Reflections on Friends, Findings, and Fieldwork](http://methods.sagepub.com/book/a-handbook-for-social-science-field-research/n12.xml)

Experimental and Quasi-experimental Research Designs (Student-led) (2/16)

* SCC: Ch. 1 (Experiments and Generalized Causal Inference), 4 (Q-E Designed Lack Control Group), 5 (Q-E Designs with Control Groups, Ch. 8 (Randomized Experiments)
* S&S Ch. 7 (Experimentation), 8 (Experimental Designs)
* Schutt Ch. 7 Experiments
* Meyer, 1995, Natural and quasi-experiments in economics
* Honey-Roses and Stevens, 2017, [Commentary on the absence of experiments in planning](https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X17739352)

Correlational Research Designs (Student-led) (2/23)

TBD

Case Study Research Designs (Student-led) (3/2)

* \*Flyvbjerg, 2008. [Five Misunderstandings about case study research](https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405284363)
* \*Schrank, 2006, [Case Studies: Case Based Research](http://methods.sagepub.com/book/a-handbook-for-social-science-field-research/n2.xml)
* \*Yin, Ch 1 (Getting Started) & \*2 (Designing Case Studies), 6th Ed
* Campbell, "Case Studies in Planning: Comparative Advantages and the Problem of Generalization"

Spring Break (3/9)

Mixed Method Approaches (Student-led) (3/16)

* Singleton & Straits: Ch. 13 Multiple Methods (6th Ed)
* Axinn and Pearce, Ch. 1 Mixed Method Data Collection Strategies
* Small, [How to conduct a mixed method study: recent trends in a rapidly growing literature](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102657)

Proposal Updates (3/30)

Using Available Data (4/6)

* Singleton & Straits: Ch. 12 Research Using Available Data (6th Ed)
* Park, 2006, [Surveys and Secondary Data Sources: Using Survey Data in Social Science Research in Developing Countries](http://methods.sagepub.com/book/a-handbook-for-social-science-field-research/n6.xml)

Collecting Data (4/13)

* Singleton & Straits: Ch. 9-11 (6th Ed)
* Schutt Ch. 8 Survey Research
* Short, 2006, [Focus Group Interviews](http://methods.sagepub.com/book/a-handbook-for-social-science-field-research/n5.xml)
* Perecman and Curran, 2006, [Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools](http://methods.sagepub.com/book/a-handbook-for-social-science-field-research/n7.xml)

Research Ethics (4/20)

* When the Revolution Came for Amy Cuddy, [New York Times](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/18/magazine/when-the-revolution-came-for-amy-cuddy.html), 10/18/2017
* Simmons and Simonsohn, 2017, [Power Posing: P-Curving the Evidence](https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797616658563)
* Blog posting: <http://datacolada.org/37>
* S&S Ch. 3 Research Ethics
* Oakes, [Risks and Wrongs in Social Science Research](https://doi.org/10.1177/019384102236520)
* Fang, Steen and Casadevall, 2012, Misconduct accounts for the majority of retracted publications
* Perecman & Curran, 2006, [Ethical Considerations for Research in Cross-Cultural Settings](http://methods.sagepub.com/book/a-handbook-for-social-science-field-research/n11.xml)

**Honor Code**

All students are expected to follow the guidelines of the UNC honor code. In particular, students are expected to refrain from “lying, cheating, or stealing” in the academic context. If you are unsure about which actions violate the honor code, please see me or consult [honor.unc.edu](https://studentconduct.unc.edu/).

**Spring 2022 Course Delivery**

As long as it is possible to do so safely, we will be meeting in person this semester. I understand the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may require changes to this plan and will be monitoring the situation closely. If I need to change the format of the course temporarily due to outbreaks of illness, I will announce this via email.

**Mask Use (In-Person Instruction Modes)**

This semester, while we are in the midst of a global pandemic, all enrolled students are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in our classroom. This requirement is to protect our educational community—your classmates and me–as we learn together. If you choose not to wear a mask, or wear it improperly, I will ask you to leave immediately, and I will submit a report to the [Office of Student Conduct](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UNCChapelHill&layout_id=23). Students who have an authorized accommodation from Accessibility Resources and Service have an exception. For additional information, see [Carolina Together](https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/).

**Acceptable Use Policy**

By attending the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the acceptable use of IT systems and services. The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) sets the expectation that you will use the University’s technology resources responsibly, consistent with the University’s mission. In the context of a class, it’s quite likely you will participate in online activities that could include personal information about you or your peers, and the AUP addresses your obligations to protect the privacy of class participants. In addition, the AUP addresses matters of others’ intellectual property, including copyright. These are only a couple of typical examples, so you should consult the full [Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy](https://unc.policystat.com/policy/6875241/latest/), which covers topics related to using digital resources, such as privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual property.

Additionally, consult the University website “[Safe Computing at UNC](https://safecomputing.unc.edu/)” for information about the data security policies, updates, and tips on keeping your identity, information, and devices safe.

**Accessibility Resources and Services**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, including mental health disorders, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities.

Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email ars@unc.edu.

**Counseling and Psychological Services**

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more. Students can also call CAPS 24/7 at 919-966-3658 for immediate support.

**Title IX Resources**

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University’s Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim–titleixcoordinator@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (gvsc@unc.edu; confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu/).

**Policy on Non-Discrimination**

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals’ abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University’s [Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination](https://unc.policystat.com/policy/4467906/latest/) offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu/)) or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cnoreenmc%5CAppData%5CEqual%20Opportunity%20and%20Compliance%20Office), or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

**Diversity Statement**

I value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. I broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, and physical and learning ability. I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve. I appreciate suggestions.