Sociology 3660   Brenda Marsteller Kowalewski
Sociological Research   SS 126
TTh 9:00 - 10:15 PM   Office hrs T 8:00 – 9:00 AM
Rm. SS44   and by appointment
Spring 2015   801-626-7737
On Canvas through Student Portal   bkowalewski@weber.edu

Course Objectives

- Introduce students to sociological research, its connection to theory, and the ethical issues involved in doing social research.

- Teach students, through a community based research project, how to structure and conduct social research. Issues of research design, conceptualization, operationalization, measurement of concepts, sampling, data compilation, and data analysis will be explored.

- Provide students an opportunity to employ various modes of observation, such as, survey research, qualitative field research, content analysis, and/or experiments by conducting evaluation research for a community agency.

- Engage students in data analysis and hone their written and oral communication skills by providing them the opportunity to compile and present a report of their research findings to their peers and representatives from the community agency for whom they are doing the research.

- Hone students research skills and give students the opportunity to learn the civic value of such skills as civic skills.

Required Texts:

Babbie, Earl. The Basics of Social Research. Wadsworth Publishing.

ASA Code of Ethics. American Sociological Association: Washington, D.C.
    http://asanet.org/

Other assigned readings/handouts:
    Evaluation Research Example – #22 Wysocki
    Origins and Principles of Community-Based Research – Strand et al

Course Evaluations

Evaluation of performance in this course will, in large part, be based on a research project (described in more detail below), as well as four tests, class attendance and participation, and a group evaluation rating. The tests are not cumulative. Each test addresses a specific set of chapters and readings (see course schedule below). Class attendance and participation are essential for successful performance in this course. And finally, the research project is a group project, therefore, each member of the group will have the opportunity to rate the performance of all group members according to the following criteria:

a) an above average contributor, driving force behind the project,
b) an average contributor, or
c) below average, just doing enough to get by.

Community-Based Research Project: Collecting, Compiling, and Analyzing Data
All assignments in this course are related to the community-based research projects. Community-based research is research that is driven by a community agency's need for information. You and I provide the research skills to help the agency carry out that research.

This semester, we will be working with the Ogden United Promise Neighborhood (OUPN) project facilitated out of the United Way of Northern Utah. Weber State University's Center for Community Engaged Learning is a key partner in the OUPN project and serves as the data management team for the project. This semester, we will be helping the community research team for the OUPN develop a couple of assessment instruments needed to evaluate the effectiveness of programs in the neighborhood. More details to come in class from our community partners. We will also be completing some smaller data collection efforts with and for community organizations. Details about these will also be forthcoming.

Students will be divided into working groups to address some portion of the overall class research project. Each group will be working directly with our community organizations.

There are several written assignments that each group must turn in to me as they are working on their particular piece of the overall project. These assignments are designed to culminate in a final research report which will be distributed to me and the community organization (see descriptions of these in the Written Assignments section below).

Project "Task List" for each Group of Student Researchers:
- Read background literature and materials and summarize into a literature review
- Develop and choose the set of research questions your group will focus on (done in conjunction with Community Partners)
- Create a research design (done in collaboration with your community partners).
- Create data collection instruments to measure the outcomes (you write the first draft and then bring community partners into the process).
- Administer the data collection instruments (done in collaboration with your community partners if the timing is appropriate).
- Compile and analyze these data (if the timing is appropriate).
- Create PowerPoint presentation for oral presentation to the community organization's staff members.
- Write final report for community partners.

Non-written Assignments
All Groups must complete the following:
1. Human Subjects Review Assignment **Due by: January 29ᵗʰ**
On internet – all group members must complete and get the certificate for the group to acquire full credit for the assignment. Use link on Canvas to access the online training modules.
http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php

2. Participant Observation/On-site work with Community **Complete by: April 30ᵗʰ**
Everyone in the group is required to be involved in a minimum of 20 hours of participant observation, collaboration with community partners, training, data collection, or similar

tasks on site.

Tracking Your Project Hours through the CCEL on WeberSync
This course is a CEL – Community Engaged Learning – course through the Center for Community Engaged Learning (CCEL). As such, this course uses a university-wide hours tracking system called WeberSync to record the hours you complete in the community as required by the assignments in the class.

You have already been pulled into my WeberSync portal and placed in the Social Research Methods group. This will allow you to record and view the hours you've completed in the community. If this is your first time interfacing with WeberSync, you will be prompted to set up a user profile. Once you do so, you never have to set up your profile again for the duration of your college career.

All of your hours will be recorded electronically. Simply use your WSU Wildcard to swipe in and out of the Community Research Extension located in the bottom of the United Way building. This will automatically time stamp your participation at the organization. If you are working on the project outside of the community organization site, you can record your hours online and the site supervisor will approve your hours online. Either way the process is paperless.

I will monitor the hours you are contributing to this project throughout the semester via WeberSync. If you do not record your hours of community engaged learning via WeberSync, you will not receive credit for the community engaged learning project assigned in this class or the assignments associated with it (which is all the assignments except for the exams). **All hours must be complete and recorded via WeberSync no later than April 30, 2015.**

Note: Recording your hours in the community through WeberSync is beneficial to you for this class but also for future employment and/or graduate school admission. Through WeberSync, you are able to generate a co-curricular transcript documenting the experiences you've had outside the classroom that have contributed to your learning. The hours you've contributed to the community through this CEL designated course, and others like it, will be recorded on this co-curricular transcript.

3. Administer Data Collection Instruments (UTA Project)   **Complete by: January 30th**
        Everyone in the group is required to administer the data collection instruments to the subjects in a research sample. This will involve going to the community organization on several occasions to administer surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.

Written Assignments
The following is the list of assignments each group needs to complete over the course of the semester:

        1. Proposed Research Plan: **Due: February 24th**
                (see Babbie for more specific description of each part of the research plan)

I. Research Objectives

What is your group studying specifically and what is your research trying to accomplish?

II. Concepts

What concepts are important to this research? How is your group defining these concepts?

III. Literature Review

Begin to summarize previous research on your topic. For this particular project, it is important to gather previous research on your topic and understand the data collection instruments used in each of these studies. Previous research will inform your research design – you may propose that our community organization replicate previous research, add on to something that has already been researched, or simply utilize some of the same concepts, measurements and methods that have proven successful for other researchers. This section will be more fully written in the next assignment. You should just be starting to identify research sources at this point.

IV. Methods

A. Subjects for Study

Who is going to be studied in this research? How many? How are they being selected? Etc.

B. Data Collection Methods

Are you interviewing, administering a survey, using participant observation, using content analysis or some other method? What are the particulars of this methodology for this research? Why is this the most appropriate method for this research?

C. Measurement

How are you measuring those concepts you identified above? In other words, what questions are you asking in the interview, on the survey, or whatnot to operationalize the concepts?

V. Schedule

What is the time-line your group has set for itself to complete this project?

VI. Assignments

Who in the group is responsible for what part of the project?

2. Literature Review   **Due: March 19th**

Your group will produce a complete literature review of all previous research on this topic paying particular attention to data collection instruments used in these studies as these instruments will inform the development of your own data collection instrument this semester.

3. Data Collection Instrument   **Due: April 9th**

Your group will be responsible for creating the data collection instrument to be used in

the proposed research design.

4. Written Research Report (first draft)   **Due: April 14ᵗʰ**

This is a first draft of your final written report. The outline of this report should look like the following:

I. Research Objectives
II. Concepts
III. Literature Review
IV. Methods
      A. Subjects for Study
      B. Data Collection Methods
      C. Measurement
V. Conclusions

This should be a complete draft of your paper written out like a paper, NOT an outline. However, you should use the headers listed in the outline above as subheadings in your paper. The use of subheadings helps to organize your paper for your reader.

5. Oral Presentation   **Due: April 28ᵗʰ**

Your group will present your final report orally to our community partner administrators, staff, board members or others affiliated with the program with an interest in this research.

6. Final Written Report   **Due: April 30ᵗʰ**

This is the "clean" version of the first full draft of the Written Research Report turned in to me earlier. Your group needs to **submit 2 copies** of this report – one for me and one for your community partner.

Grades

Test #1	20 points
Test #2	30 points
Test #3	40 points
Test #4	15 points

Community Research Project:
   Non-written Assignments

Human Subjects Review	10 points
Logging Hours with Partner Org	10 points
Administer Data Collection (UTA)	10 points

   Written Assignments

Assignment 1 (Proposed Research Plan)	10 points
Assignment 2 (Literature Review)	30 points
Assignment 3 (Instrument)	30 points
Assignment 4 (1ˢᵗ Draft Report)	20 points
Assignment 5 (Oral Presentation)	10 points
Assignment 6 (Final Report)	35 points

Group Contribution Rating   30 points

Total   300 points

The final grades will be determined as follows:
270 - 300 = A- to A
240 - 269 = B- to B+
210 - 239 = C- to C+
180 - 209 = D- to D+
below 180 = F

Student Expectations and Course Parameters
1. Attendance
You must be present at least 80% of the class time. Unexcused absences exceeding 20% of class will result in forfeiting the class participation grade; this is a 10% reduction of your final grade.
2. Professionalism and soft skills
Taking this course comes with a set of expectations:
▪ *Timeliness* – Class will start and end on time. You are expected to come to class on time and submit all assignments on time.
▪ *Technology* – You may use a laptop for note-taking, but should you misuse this privilege (facebook, chats, movies, etc.), you will be asked to put away the computer and continue taking notes by hand. Furthermore, cell phones (incl. texting) and earphones do not belong in class. You will be asked to take ear phones off/put cell phone away or leave the classroom.
3. Late assignments and papers
All assignments and papers must be handed in on the due date. Late papers and assignments accrue a penalty of -5% for each late day (24-hr. period) including weekends.
4. Extra credit
There is no planned extra credit in this class.
5. WSU Student Code
Students are expected to be familiar with the WSU Student Code and abide by it. The Code may be reviewed on line at http://www.weber.edu/ppm/Policies/6-22_StudentCode.html. All necessary steps will be taken to enforce the Student Code to guarantee fairness to all students.
6. Academic Dishonesty
As specified in PPM 6-22 IV D, cheating and plagiarism violate the Student Code. Plagiarism is "the unacknowledged (uncited) use of any other person's or group's ideas or work." Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism are subject to failure of a specific assignment, or, in more serious cases, failure of the entire course. WSU subscribes to TurnItIn.com, an electronic service that verifies the originality of student work. Enrollment in this course may require you to submit some or all of your assignments to it this semester, and documents submitted to TurnItIn.com are retained, anonymously, in their databases. Continued enrollment in this course constitutes an understanding of and agreement with this policy.

7. Emergency Closure
If for any reason the university is forced to close for an extended period of time, we will conduct our class via Canvas. Look for announcements on Weber e-mail. Code Purple is a good way to be alerted to campus closures, and you are encouraged to sign up for it.

8. Syllabus Modification
This syllabus is intended to give the student guidance in what will be covered during the course, and will be followed as closely as possible. However, the instructor reserves the right to modify, supplement and make changes as course needs arise.

9. Note to Students with Special Needs
Any student requiring accommodations or services due to a disability must contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in room 181 of the Student Service Center. SSD can also arrange to provide course materials (including this syllabus) in alternative formats upon request. Please refer to SSD's website for more information: http://weber.edu/ssd

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Course Schedule
(subject to change)

Jan 13   Receive syllabus and introduction to course

Jan 15   Community-Based Research: What's that?
                          Origins of Community-Based Research chapter - Handout

Jan 20-22   Introduction: Theory, Research, and Ethical Issues
                          Reading: Chapters 1, 2 & 3 (Babbie), ASA Code of Ethics
                                IRB
                                Human Subjects assignment
                                Consent Forms – examples

Jan 27   *No Class* – complete Human Subjects Assignment online

Jan 29   Preparation for administering the UTA survey

Feb 2-5   **TEST #1 available on Chi Tester**

Feb 5   *No Class* **– Take Exam 1 in Testing Center**

Feb 10   Research Design
                          Reading: Chapter 4 (Babbie)

Feb 12   **Project Orientation – OUPN Project**
                          OUPN Partners Present

Feb 17   Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement
                          Reading: Chapters 5 & 6 (Babbie)

Feb 19	Research Design and Measurement of outcomes being measured in CBR projects
Feb 24	Library – Learning how to search for scholarly sources
Feb 19-26	**TEST #2 available on Chi Tester**
Feb 26	Evaluation Research: What is it and how does it relate to the project in this class? Reading: Chapter 12 (Babbie) Reading #22 from Wysocki – Handout
Mar 3-5	Research Methods - Survey Methodology Reading: Chapter 9 (Babbie)
Mar 9 – 13	***Spring Break – No Classes***
Mar 17	In-class time for group to put finishing touches on literature review and begin drafting data collection instrument
Mar 19	Research Methods - Field Research & Unobtrusive Research Reading: Chapters 10 & 11 (Babbie) (Literature Review Due)
Mar 24 - 26	Sampling Reading: Chapter 7 (Babbie)
Mar 31 - Apr 2	Project: Group work – create data collection instrument to measure outcomes
Mar 29- Apr 5	**TEST #3 available on Chi Tester**
Apr 7	Project: Group work with partner input on data collection instrument
Apr 9	Project: Final data collection instrument due by end of class
Apr 14	Preparation for presentation – create power point presentation (meet in SSLab) (First draft of Written Report due)
Apr 16	Learning SPSS (meet in SSLab) and Creating Codebooks. Reading/Reference: A Simple Guide to SPSS for Windows Reading: Chapters 13 & 14 (Babbie)
Apr 21	Data Processing – Compiling and Coding Data (meet in SSLab) Reading/Reference: A Simple Guide to SPSS for Windows

Apr 23   Analysis of Data   (meet in SSLab)
                                         Reference: A Simple Guide to SPSS for Windows

Apr 24-30   **TEST #4 available on Chi Tester**

Apr 28   Presentation of Literature Review and Data Collection Instrument to Community
                                Organization (Oral Presentations)
                                9:00 – 10:50 AM (this is our regularly scheduled Final Exam time)

Apr 30   Final Written Report due by midnight