



SENIOR SEMINAR: Research Practicum

Exploring the Real and the Relevant through Practical Tools

Class Meetings: Monday and Friday 8:30 - 10:00am, LI 1002
Office Hours: Monday and Friday -- 10:00-12 noon, and by appointment

Prof. Jack D. Harris
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COURSE SUMMARY

This course has the two-fold special task of being a summative course for the major on the one hand, and a meaningful exit course that will provide skills useful in your future employment. To that end, you will be doing several assignments simultaneously -- critiquing current published research and presenting that critique to the class, learning computer-based analysis and presentation tools, and acting as a research consultant to local agencies. You will be employed by these local agencies, and we will expect that your work and your presentations seek the highest standards and are professionally enacted. This means that your written work will conform to standard social science rules, that your work habits will reflect sustained and regular practice of skills, and that your presentations will be rigorously organized, carefully articulated, and engagingly performed.

EXPECTATIONS and EVALUATION

1. Choose one piece of relevant action sociological research that is methodologically interesting, photocopy enough for the class, assign and present to the class based on a critique of theory and method, and submit the critique for evaluation (10%);
2. Choose one piece from Nyden to present to the class based on a critique of its salience, importance, and quality, and submit the critique for evaluation (10%);
3. Propose and execute a research consulting project that reveals your mastery of sociological analysis, and a present a working draft of this project to the class using Excel and PowerPoint. (70%);
4. Learn tools of computer-based research to help you organize and analyze your project.
5. Complete one written critique of another student's research consulting project (10%);
6. We will be a working group, that is, we will be supporting and advising each other on critiques and projects. Your absence will diminish our resources. Absences beyond three will affect your grade by one-third for each additional absence.

Your written work is expected to conform to the formats and rules set forth in the American Sociological Review, copies of which are in the library. I will be very strict about this. It is very important that you keep to the schedule, and work in the lab regularly on your own to complete the exercises in Berk & Carey, Data Analysis with Microsoft Excel. The lab will be exclusively available to us during our scheduled class time. I also recommend that you test your abilities with the problems at the end of each chapter in Kranzler & Moursund's Statistics for the Terrified.

Reading: Kenneth Berk & Patrick Carey, Data Analysis with Microsoft Excel
Jeffery Katzer, Kenneth Cook & Wayne Crouch, Evaluating Information
Gerald Kranzler & Janet Moursund, Statistics for the Terrified
Philip Nyden, et.al., Building Community: Social Science in Action

COURSE OUTLINE and ASSIGNMENTS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>
January 13, Mon.	-- CLASS - Introduction to course and lab	
January 17, Fri.	-- CLASS - What do we know? How do we know it?	Katzer, Sections 1, 2 & 3
January 20, Mon.	-- CLASS – Research Consultancies	Nyden, Intro, 1, 2, 15, & 25
January 24, Fri.	-- LAB - Introduction to Excel and Power Point	Berk, Chapters 1& 2
January 27, Mon.	-- CLASS - Review Practice Articles (Ch 19 and 20)	Katzer, Sections 4, 5, 6 & Chapters 18-20
January 31, Fri.	-- CLASS - Draft Research Consulting Proposals due	
February 3, Mon.	-- LAB - Single variable statistics, Scatterplots	Berk, Chapters 3 & 4 Kranzler, Chps. 1-6, Appendix A
February 7, Fri.	-- CLASS - Evaluating Information Presentations	_____
February 10, Mon.	-- LAB - Probability and Inference	Berk, Chapters 5 & 6
February 14, Fri.	-- <i>NYS Department of Education Workshop - Syracuse</i>	Nyden, Chps. 13, 14, Conclusion
February 17, Mon.	-- CLASS - Final Research Consulting Proposals due	
February 21, Fri.	-- CLASS - Evaluating Information Presentations	_____
February 24, Mon.	-- LAB - Correlation and Regression	Berk, Chp. 8, Kranzler, Chp. 7
February 28, Fri.	-- CLASS - Evaluating Information Presentations	_____
March 3, Mon.	-- CLASS – Update: Research Consulting Proposals	
	-- SPRING BREAK --	
March 17, Mon.	-- CLASS – Review of Research Methodologies	
March 21, Fri.	-- CLASS – Community Case Study Presentations	(1)_____ (2)_____
March 24, Mon.	-- CLASS – Update: Research Consulting Proposals	
March 28, Fri.	-- CLASS – Community Case Study Presentations	(3)_____ (5)_____
March 31, Mon.	-- CLASS – Community Case Study Presentations	(8)_____ (11)_____
April 4, Fri.	-- CLASS – Community Case Study Presentations	(17)_____ (18)_____
April 7, Mon.	-- CLASS – Update: Research Consulting Proposals	
April 11, Fri.	-- CLASS – Research Consulting Presentations	_____
April 14, Mon.	-- CLASS – Research Consulting Presentations	_____
April 18, Fri.	-- CLASS – Research Consulting Presentations	_____
April 21, Mon.	-- CLASS – Research Consulting Presentations	_____
April 25, Fri.	-- CLASS – Research Consulting Presentations	_____
April 28, Mon.	-- CLASS – Final Thoughts: Action Sociology and Social Policy	

FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT DUE : Monday, May 5, 12 noon, at my home.

POTENTIAL RESEARCH CONSULTANCY SITES:

(You may have other sites that are of interest to you such as Pure Waters, Geneva Free Library etc.)

1. Pulteney-Williams Street Neighborhood Watch
 - a. Needs Assessment of Neighborhood
 - b. Census of Target Neighborhood
 - c. CUT project Interviews
2. Geneva Housing Authority
 - a. Web of Service Agencies
 - b. Residential Safety
 - c. Potential ROSS participants and recruitment strategies
3. Boys and Girls Clubs
 - a. Board of Directors Questions
 - b. Assessment of Services
4. Finger Lakes Even Start
 - a. Program Assessment – Family Interviews
 - b. Programming Effectiveness
 - c. Transportation issues
5. Agri-Business Child Development
 - a. Parent's Services
 - b. Grant-based Evaluation and Assessment
6. Lakeview Mental Health
 - a. Assessment of Student Volunteer Program
7. Geneva Free Lunch Program
 - a. Customer Awareness and Recruitment
8. HWS Public Service Office
 - a. Program Assessments

STUDENT DELIVERABLES:

1. Formal Statement of Work
2. Formal Agreement for Services
3. Research questionnaire or survey
4. Written Consultant's Draft Report
5. Presentation to Agency Board or Administration
6. Written Consultant's Final Report