The goal of the course is to acquaint students with some major themes in sociological research methods. The emphasis is on the “big picture” rather than hands-on practice working with particular methods. (The scope of the possibilities is too vast to cover what every different student needs for future research, and that kind of focused learning of methods is most effective when tied to work in the substantive areas that most interest the student.) The course does not cover data analysis, but the insights that we will try to reach apply to empirical research across the various subfields of sociology and different kinds of analyses (e.g. quantitative or qualitative).

In a graduate course, articles are typically of greater interest and the subject of more class discussion than a text. However textbook readings still can provide some useful structure, and may be especially helpful for those students with backgrounds in other fields or who were last exposed to such material some time ago. Readings from the text are listed in the syllabus, but we may not assign so much as to require purchasing the book, especially as there are likely to be copies around the department. (I do think that if you do not own a similar book, it probably is worth purchasing.) The text (Approaches to Social Research, Fifth Edition, R. A. Singleton, Jr. and B. C. Straits, Oxford Univ. Press) is a good general purpose sociological methods book that is somewhat more serious in tone than most undergraduate-focused texts and is a nice reference to have on your shelf.

Grades will be based on a midterm (40%), an end-of-semester paper-like assignment (40%), and a couple of smaller assignments (20%). If I get the sense that students are not keeping up with the readings, I may also give some pop quizzes covering main points from the day’s assigned readings. (These would become part of the student’s assignments score.)

**Ordered List of Readings**

**1. Background**


*Approaches* chapters on “The Nature of Science”, “Research Ethics”, “Research Design”

**2. Causality**


47. [parts only, and we’ll go through important but intimidating sections together]

3. Experiments

*“True” Experiments*


*Approaches* chapter on “Experimentation”, first sections of “Experimental Designs”

*Quasi-Experiments*


*Approaches* last sections of “Experimental Designs”

3. Surveys


Rosenfeld, R. 2007. Explaining the divergence between UCR and NCVS aggravated assault

*Approaches* chapters on “Survey Research”, “Survey Instrumentation”

### 4. Sampling issues

*Approaches* chapters on “Sampling”, “Field Research”, “Available Data”

#### Selection bias


*Enough?*


#### Hard-to-reach populations


### 5. Data quality


6. Mixed methods


7. *If enough time – Computational approaches*


Some Additional Readings (from past semesters’ syllabi)


UNIVERSITY AND SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES

The Secretary of the University maintains a web page that contains university policies that affect the instructor and the students in this course, as well as essential information specific to conduct of the course. The link to that web page is:  http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf

**Students with Disabilities.** Verification of disability, class standards, the policy on the use of alternate material and test accommodations can be found at the following:  http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/SAClter.pdf

**Religious Observances.** Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to religious observance are found at the following:  http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm

**Students called to active Military Duty.** Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty are found at the following:  http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm

**Incompletes.** You may be given an incomplete if you have carried a course successfully until near the end of the semester but, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond your control, have been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of course work. An incomplete is not given unless you prove to the instructor that you were prevented from completing the course for just cause as indicated above. The conditions for awarding an incomplete to graduate and undergraduate students can be found at the following:  http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf

**Discriminatory Conduct** (such as sexual harassment). Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of students, faculty and staff. Policies regarding discriminatory conduct can be found at:  http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf

**Academic Misconduct.** Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Policies for addressing students cheating on exams or plagiarisms can be found at:  http://www4.uwm.edu/osl/dean/conduct.cfm

**Complaint Procedures.** Students may direct complaints to the Sociology Department Chair or the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the Sociology Department Chair, the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences, or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. Policies may be found at:  http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm

**Grade Appeal Procedures.** A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College of Letters & Science. Procedures for undergraduate student grade appeal can be found at  
http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/upload/grievance_procedure.pdf, and graduate student procedures at  
http://www.graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/policies/

**Final Examination Policy.** Policies regarding final examinations can be found at the following:  http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm

**Book Royalties.** Royalties from the sale of faculty-authored books to students in their classes are donated to a UWM Foundation/Sociology Account to support future awards and activities for UWM students in Sociology.