



UNIVERSITY *of*
DENVER

**INST 3000: Research Methods & Design
Spring 2018**

Instructor: Dr. Marie Berry

**Josef Korbel School of International Studies
Room: Sie 3120
Tuesdays & Thursdays: 10:00 am – 11:50 am
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Office Hours: by appointment
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Course Overview:

This course will introduce you to the fundamental elements of social science research and will serve as a workshop to complete a research proposal that may be used as the basis of thesis research. The foundation of any social science investigation is the research proposal in which you formulate a question and design a process by which you will explore that question through a systematic collection and analysis of evidence. The design process is the same whether you are writing a short class research paper, or are conducting a major research project. The manner in which you gather and analyze evidence, however, will vary based on your research question, your research goals, and your resources. We will therefore go through the process of research design. Because international studies provides multiple methods of inquiry, we will also explore a variety of methods that may be used to gather and analyze evidence.

The life of a social scientist is one of reading, writing and revision. Science is an iterative process through which the more we learn, the more questions we raise and the more precise we can be in formulating our own research. A key to becoming a good researcher is to read. In this class, you will read and critique scholarly articles and you will read and critique each other's work. We will examine the types of questions being posed by scholars—including some within our own department—and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the different methodologies being used. We will apply this critical eye to our own work in order to narrow, refine and improve our own inquiries.

This class is designed so that you begin work on your thesis. A primary goal is for you to leave with a clearly-defined research agenda that you will be able to complete on your own. To this end, you will complete an extensive literature review and a research proposal. A secondary goal is to provide opportunities and introductions for you so that you can connect with a thesis adviser. Our final goal is to be exposed to a range of research designs used in international studies, and to understand the utility and limits of diverse methodological approaches. I will also spend approximately 15 minutes

each week giving you guidance on writing a social science research paper. It is my hope that this information helps improve your writing skills in a way that extends beyond this class.

Required texts:

Schutt, Russell K. 2012. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. (7th edition – get a used version!). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Turabian, Kate. 2007. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (7th or 8th edition). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Assignments:

There are 8 assignments for this class. A description of each can be found on the course website. All assignments must be uploaded to Canvas by 5 pm MST on the day they are due. I do not accept late assignments.

1. Research question **(5 points)**: 4/3
2. Revised research question and ethics **(5 points)**: 4/12
3. Proposal Outline **(5 points)**: 4/26
4. Annotated bibliography **(10 points)**: 5/3
5. Literature Review w/peer review **(10 points)**: 5/10
6. Research proposal draft **(10 points)**: 5/24
7. Presentation **(10 points)**: 5/29 & 5/31
8. Research proposal final **(35 points)**: 6/5

In addition, participation will count for 10 points. Total: **100 points**.

Class policies:

This class is structured to be a workshop and so your attendance is essential. More than two absences will impact your grade. You are responsible for materials covered when you are not in class. Plagiarism is unacceptable and will result in a failing grade.

As the term progresses, I may substitute the reserved readings based on interests expressed by you. Any changes or additions will be announced in class or via email.

As your instructor, I unconditionally reject every form of bigotry, discrimination, hateful rhetoric, and hateful action, whether directed towards one's race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disability, citizenship, political views, socioeconomic status, veteran status, or immigration status, in class and out. For any member of this class (or the wider DU community) who may feel fear or oppression, my doors are open and I am ready to help.

I also affirm all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is indicated on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your preferred gender pronoun.

If you qualify for accommodations, please see me at the beginning of the quarter so that the issue may be addressed in accordance to University policy. If you have any potential scheduling conflicts due to religious observances, please let me know.

If there are any ways that I can make your experience in this class, and at Korbel or DU in general, more safe and supportive, please reach out (inside my office hours or out).

Course Schedule

WEEK 1: Intro to research methods and design

March 27: In class:
Overview of course
Introduction to international studies research and the sociological imagination
Herbert Gans, Sociology as a Vocation

*Nothing due

March 29: In class:
Elements of research design and measurement
Causality and reliability in social science research
Film: Chimamanda Adichie's "The Dangers of a Single Story" TedTalk.

Reading due:
SCHUTT Chapter 1 & 2
TURBIAN, Chapter 1 & 2

WEEK 2: Ethics and Sources

April 3: In class:
Ethics of qualitative research
(Short) films on ethics

Reading Due:
SCHUTT Chapter 3
TURBIAN 3 & 4

Assignment #1, Research Question DUE (please post on Canvas by 5 pm)

April 6: NO CLASS

WEEK 3: Research Design

April 10: In class:
Conceptualization and Measurement
Levels of measurement
Validity and reliability

Reading Due: SCHUTT Chapter 4

April 12: In class:
Sampling, Research Design, and Causation

Reading Due:

Kiju Jung, et. al., "Female hurricanes are deadlier than male hurricanes,"
Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 111(24): 8782-8787. (on course website)

SCHUTT Chapters 5 & 6

**Assignment #2, Revised Research Questions & Ethics Due by 5 pm
(on Canvas)**

WEEK 4: Qualitative methods

April 17: In class:
Qualitative research overview (Ethnography and interviewing)
Model interview activity; presentation of an ethnographic study
Selections from Elijah Anderson's *Streetwise* & Arlie Hochschild's *The Second Shift*

SCHUTT Chapter 9 (Qualitative Methods)
Andrew Abbot, *Methods of Discovery*, Chapter 1 (on course website)

April 19: In class:
Qualitative data analysis
Film: *Sidewalk* (1999), by Mitch Duneier and Barry Alexander
Interview coding exercise: Piers Morgan Interview with Janet Mock

Reading due:

SCHUTT Chapter 10
TURABIAN Chapters 6 & 7
*Writing a social science research paper

WEEK 5: Survey Research, Quantitative Methods

April 24: In class:
Introduction to survey research & mixed methods research
How to read a research article
*Strategies for editing and revising your research paper

Reading due: SCHUTT Chapter 8 & Appendix B “How to read a research article”

April 26: In class:
Introduction to Statistics

Reading Due: SCHUTT Chapter 14
Joel Best, “Damned Lies and Statistics” Chapter 1 (on website)

Assignment #3 Due, Proposal Outline

WEEK 6: Field Methods & Case Studies

May 1: In class:
Applied strategies for conducting research and fieldwork
Historical & comparative research
Reading Due: SCHUTT Chapter 12

May 3: In class:
Guest Lecture on field methods and qualitative research

*Writing about methods

Due: Assignment #4: Annotated Bibliography

WEEK 7: International Field-Based Methods

May 8: In class:
PENDING – stay tuned, readings and course topics will be tailored to the class needs and interests

May 10: In class:
PENDING – stay tuned, readings and course topics will be tailored to the class needs and interests

WEEK 8: Data Analysis

May 15: In class:
Secondary data analysis
Content analysis

Reading due: SCHUTT Chapter 13

Peer review of Literature Review due online

May 17: **Individual Meetings with me (sign up for a time)**

WEEK 9: Writing and Polishing Your Work

May 22: *Writing workshop with DU Writing Center

Reading due: TURBIAN Part III: Style

May 24: **Assignment #6 Due: Research Proposal Rough Draft**

Reading due: Reading for your own projects

WEEK 10: Individual Presentations & Wrap Up

May 29: **Assignment #7:** Research project presentations
*Please add at least one substantive and constructive comment prior to class for each of your classmates by the day they are scheduled to present.

May 31: **Assignment #7, cont.:** Research project presentations

FINAL PROPOSAL (Assignment #8) DUE TUESDAY, JUNE 5th at 5:00 PM to CANVAS

**Please note: The above schedule and procedures in this course are flexible and are subject to change throughout the semester. If the above syllabus changes, I will notify you in advance in class or via email.*

APPENDIX – ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment #1

Before we undertake a research project, we need to think about what we are interested in and why we would like to research that particular topic. We must also think about how our research contributes our broader understanding of the social world. In other words, we should think about conducting research that matters for the real world, for theory, or policy makers, and so forth.

In order to do this, we must understand different modes of inquiry. We need to be able to identify these diverse modes and understand how others use these different modes for their own research. Such knowledge will help us determine which methods and paradigms will be most helpful to our own research. Post Question 1 on Canvas.

1. 1 page write up
 - a. What is your current project and why do you want to work on it? You may want to state your thesis (if you have developed it) or the topic of interest. Why are you writing about this topic? Do you want to describe the phenomenon, explain the phenomenon, or explore a different perspective with a potential goal of predicting other instances of the phenomenon. Write the reason for your research, what you want to learn, and how you hope to explore your topic. You should also discuss why your topic is important for others.

Assignment #2

Social science is an iterative process. Often, we start our research through our interest in a fairly broad issue. As we start to read about the broad topic area, and start to think about the practicalities of conducting research, we need to refine our initial research idea, narrow the scope and clarify what variables are important. Research careers can be built upon exploring many facets of a singular topic.

As we begin to approach our topics practically, we also need to think about the ethical implications of research. Ultimately, when we have refined our topic and assembled a research proposal, we will need to submit our protocol to ethics review committees. These committees look for both ethical consideration and check to ensure that the research project has been well thought out.

You should bring a hard copy of your assignment to class, and also post your response to Part 1 on the class Canvas site. This week, you will be asked to do two things.

1. Revise your assignment from last week to create a topic statement and research question. Explain both your broad topic area as you understand it. Explain why you are interested in this topic, and what you hope to achieve by writing this paper. Next, provide one to three

specific research questions that relate to your topic. For each research question, discuss how the question relates to your broader area of interest, why answering the question is important to you and to the scientific community, and how you might go about exploring this question. This write-up will be one to three pages in length.

2. Complete DU's Education on the Protection of Human Research Participants. The instructions and access for this are located in Assignment 2 Part 2 companion document, which will be distributed in class.

Assignment #3

Proposal Outline

The purpose of this assignment is for you to begin organizing your thoughts on what you want your research to do, and also for you to organize the materials that you have. The style and length of your proposal will vary. Some sections may have only bullet points or notes whereas others will be written as though they are in their final stage. Your proposal must include the following:

Introduction: Describe your research topic, your research question and why this topic is of interest to the broader research community. You should summarize your methodology and state what you believe you will find. Think of this as your roadmap for the rest of your paper. **This section should be well written** with complete paragraphs and a thoughtful organization (e.g introduction, conclusion). You should draw upon your previously submitted work (assignments 1 and 2). This is also a good place to 'hook' the reader. Is there something really interesting about your topic or your approach? Tell the reader here.

Literature Review: Write a few paragraphs to introduce the reader to the various topics/theories that are relevant to your research. Then, outline the topics you will cover and list the resources you have to address these topics. Summarize the key resources. You may want to conclude with several paragraphs about how your research intersects with the work that has been done previously.

Methodology: Describe the method(s) you will use to tackle your research question.

Data sources: Describe the resources you will use to perform your analysis. This may include datasets, primary sources, description of planned field work, list of secondary sources.

Concerns: In this section you should describe any difficulties you think you may encounter, be they physical or theoretical. This is where you anticipate and plan for obstacles to your research. Your colleagues will read this section and offer feedback on how to overcome some of these concerns.

Conclusion: You haven't completed your research yet, so for now you should describe what you hope your research will accomplish in terms of contributing to the field, informing policy, etc. This section should be written in a narrative form with full sentences and thoughtful order. Relate this section back to your introduction.

Assignment #4

Annotated Bibliography

The purpose of this exercise is for you to examine what the state of knowledge is about your general topic, to explore what research has been done on your specific research question, and to determine what resources (primary or secondary data sources) are available for your research. In order to do this, you have to read, research, read some more.

This reading should help you identify key issues that appear frequently in the literature. Once you have identified these key issues, you must assess the quality of the evidence surrounding the issue. For example, from the general reading, you might find that human consumption of beef has detrimental environmental effects. Your next step would be to examine what evidence that supports such a statement – are there empirical data which show deforestation is driven by the demand for beef? How is deforestation quantified? How is it actually linked to eating beef? Are there model simulations which project deforestation based on an increase in beef consumption? You can save yourself a lot of trouble by learning what is and is not available at an early stage of your research project. As you will find, there may be a dearth of evidence for some factors which may be deemed critical to your sector. Overcoming this lack of evidence may be difficult in one quarter or even in one year. But the more you know before you start your thesis, the more likely you will be to have a successful project.

Prepare an annotated bibliography of at least **fifteen books and articles** that you might use as sources in your research project. For the books/articles, you must include a citation of the source (use the Turabian book as your guide) and a short summary. This should be a three or four sentences that are written in your own words, not cut-and-pasted from the abstract. You should also include a sentence or two about how this resource may contribute to your work. This should be **a thoughtful selection of materials**.

You **MUST** include at least **five** books and **five** articles from peer-reviewed publications. How you divide the remainder of your resources is up to you.

Articles or books found on the internet may only be used if they are from a peer-reviewed publication, from an edited & published publication, or published on-line by a legitimate organization (i.e. UNDP, UNEP, USAID, etc.). This means that most articles which are found in the DU e-databases (Jstore, PubMed, etc.) are acceptable. Be careful with articles from Summons. Greet other articles with suspicion. Information from class notes, course papers, blogs and such that are posted on the web are typically not acceptable sources.

If you are working with numeric data or databases, such as World Development Indicators, you should describe the fields/specific variables that will be of use to your research. Do not make a generalized comment such as “I will use WDI to look at economic progress.” Rather, “I will use GDP annual growth rate, GDP/capita (PPP), and % of GDP from industry for the years 1989 to 2005 to document macroeconomic shifts.”

Assignment #5

Literature Review

By this juncture, you have read more than the introduction and abstracts for the materials you assembled in assignment #4. You have read those materials, and found more materials that relate to your research. You have summarized a number of these materials. Now, you need to **synthesize** these materials into a cohesive story that will tell your reader the state of knowledge on your research topic. The literature review also serves to frame your specific research question in a broader corpus of knowledge.

I look at the literature review as a story that links the disparate points of knowledge (each of your book/article summaries) into a singular fabric by showing both where there is overlap and where there are unique pockets of information. This story may have several different points of focus, or may only have one. This story may include a description of different theoretical perspectives that will help you analyze your topic. It may include the history on your subject, and tell how different scholars have studied or interpreted your topic. It may also include examples of methods that other researchers have used to explore similar or dissimilar topics. You should also point out the shortcomings of the work. Let the reader know what these methods are, and how you will utilize them. The story should describe your topic and help show where your specific research question falls.

There is no one way to construct a literature review. What I am looking for is evidence that you have read widely on matters that will assist you in framing and examining your topic. I also want to see that you are starting to pull out the main/most important theses or thread in your materials. I do not want to see rote recitation of fact. I want to see how main points from different sources intersect, overlap, or disagree.

This is an opportunity for you to synthesize materials, and in the process, help you to identify where you may need to do some more work or where you need to narrow your focus. It is also an opportunity for you to experiment. If you are not certain how to organize your materials, create several outlines and then follow one. When you present your literature review to class, ask classmates for feedback and present them with your alternative organization.

There is no set length for the literature review. I do, however, expect you to have a thorough handle on approximately 15 to 20 sources. (You will expand this for your thesis). Bring a hard copy to class and post an electronic copy on the Canvas site by the start of class on the due date.

Assignment #6 & #8
Rough draft due May 24
Final draft due June 5th

The main goal of this class is to create a research proposal that will guide you through your intended research project. The proposal should be typed with one inch margins on all sides and double spaced. There is no set length. Please use APA citation format (in-text citations with bibliography). You must include the following sections:

- **Title Page**
- **Abstract:** This section should summarize your research question, methodology involved in your exploration of the question, major (anticipated) findings, and implications of this research. This section is limited to 250 words. It follows the title page but is not numbered.
- **Introduction:** This section should be a few paragraphs long and is where you state your research topic, research question and working hypothesis. The purpose is to both hook the reader by telling her/him why this is an exciting topic and why it is worth investigating. You should also summarize the analytic framework and research methods you will use to investigate your topic. What do you expect to find and why? How will you investigate this?
- **Literature Review:** This is where you report on, summarize and synthesize the work that has been previously done on your topic. You will expand upon what you submitted in previously.
- **Theoretic Model / Analytic Framework:** In this section you restate your research question and tell why this is important in a broader research/social context. You should explain why your specific question(s) is relevant to your topic and whether your work is conceptual, practical or applied. Based on the work which has been done previously on this topic, you will explain why your endeavor is important and unique. You should present your working hypothesis and justification for the same, and you should explore alternative explanations. In so doing, you may provide a critique of work that has been done previously so yes, there may be some redundancy with the literature review. Tell how have these articles influenced thought on your topic. Do they agree or disagree on issues? What gaps are there in the literature? How will your study contribute to the literature? This section will draw from and expand upon the conclusion you presented in your outline. Many times students will have literature review and analytic framing in the same section.
- **Methodology/Research Design** Describe the method(s) you will use to tackle your research question and justify the design. Have others used this method in similar projects? How will you replicate or vary their work. How will this contribute to answering your research question? This section will include several subsections:
 - **Data sources:** Describe the resources you will use to perform your analysis. This may include datasets, primary sources, description of planned field work, list of secondary sources.
 - **Data gathering:** How will you collect your data or select your subjects?
 - **Analysis:** How do you plan to analyze your data?
 - **Ethical considerations:** self explanatory

- **Concerns:** In this section you should describe any difficulties you think you may encounter, be they physical or theoretical. This is where you anticipate and plan for obstacles to your research. Your colleagues will read this section and offer feedback on how to overcome some of these concerns.
- **Timeline** – this should be a detailed plan for obtaining data, analyzing data, writing sections of your paper, revising sections, submitting to your advisor, time for feedback from your advisor, final revision, submission based on DU and departmental deadlines.
- **Bibliography**

Assignment #7
Due May 29 or May 31

Guidelines for class presentation

You will present an overview of your research plan. This presentation will be limited to **15 minutes**. We will allow a few extra minutes for audience questions after you have finished. We will then critique your proposal. You should present a brief introduction to your topic and let us know why you think this is an interesting case study. You should then focus on:

- Your specific research question
- Where this falls in the broader context of the topic/field you are researching and what your analytic framework will be (this should draw from your literature review)
- Background information on your topic (summarize the research you have done thus far)
- How you plan to research your topic. What are your methods and data sources? Report on successes or failures you have had to date.
- What are one or two fascinating features of your project. These may be obstacles, critical successes or examples to support your thesis.

This is a brief presentation, so the information you provide should be a synthesis of your research. Speak to one or two points which you deem important and provide some factual information to support your view. This should draw from your assignments and independent reading to date. I understand that this is a work in progress. Let the audience know where your research is heading and what you hope to learn/present in your final report. Our goal is to help each other refine the research plan.

PowerPoint is not required. However, if you choose to do a PowerPoint presentation, as a general guide you should plan on each slide needed approximately 3 minutes to discuss. Please email your PowerPoint presentations to me prior to class. You will be cut off at 15 minutes so please practice your presentation.

You will be assessed on the information in presentation (do you present a clear research agenda. Do you provide background on your topic? Are you judicious in your selection of material to include? Are your methods and analytic framing appropriate?) and how well you present (are you familiar with your material? Can you convey your message in the allotted time? Can you answer questions?).

Assignment #8: Same as #6