This course is about the ways sociologists learn about social life. Knowing how sociologists do research will give you a better understanding of studies that you read about in other courses and studies mentioned in magazines, ads, and the news.

Doing research is creative, exciting, and fun.

Assignments. The only effective way to learn research methods is to do research yourself. Thus you will do two projects and several homework assignments. Together these assignments are 30 percent of your grade. [Doing them also is likely to mean higher test grades.] Assignments and reports must come in on time, at the beginning of class. You must turn in a paper copy, and most assignments must be typed.

Many assignments begin with work done in class or in recitation, and some classes will include other work in small groups. This is just one reason you must come to class and to recitation, and come on time. Positive participation during class and during recitation is 10% of your grade. Coming late, noisy behavior, disrespect towards other students, clear inattention, etc. are negative, and lower your participation grade. Just be considerate of others.

Readings. The Livingston Bookstore and New Jersey Books have the textbook, Daniel F. Chambliss and Russell K. Schutt, 2003, Making Sense of the Social World. Other assigned readings are on electronic reserve (ER) or on my website. Readings on ER or on the website are REQUIRED. Some readings add to the information in your textbook. Other readings illustrate use of a method. We will discuss examples in class, so bring articles to class. [For electronic reserves, go to IRIS on the library website, select reserves, type in my name, and select this class. To see the entire list for this class, click on “forward” at the bottom of the first page of reserve items.]

Please don’t ask if you should do the reading OR come to class! Classes and readings will overlap, especially at the beginning, but one doesn’t substitute for the other. I will not discuss everything that is in the readings, and I will provide information that is not in any of the readings.

Expect to read most assignments more than once. Read the assignment before class, and note parts that you find confusing. If I don’t cover that material in class, please ask a question – in class, after class, by e-mail, or during office hours. THEN look at the material again, along with your class notes. If you have a problem with a basic term early in the semester, try the exercises on the textbook CD.

Exams. There are two exams. Each exam has both multiple choice and short answer questions. The first counts 25%; the second, during finals, counts 30% of your grade. I give make-ups only for documented emergencies. Notify me before the exam; you can leave a message. Then bring documentation. There will be four or five quizzes, announced the class before. I will drop the lowest grade. Quizzes together are 5% of your grade.

Website. The class website is at www.rci.rutgers.edu/~judithjf/resmeth.htm. I will post announcements, handouts, some overheads shown in class, and other material. Check the website before each class, so you can download any overheads before class. I will set up a class listserve also, and you can post to the class listserve.

Academic Integrity and Research Ethics. I expect you to be honest and ethical as you do all course work and research. When you carry out research for the class, this means careful work, and REAL work. The university’s policies are posted at teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html.

Summary of grading:
- Test 1: 25%
- Test 2: 30%
- Quizzes: 5%
- Participation (class and recitation): 10%
- Projects: 30%

SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS*

I list readings by topic rather than class session. Before each class, I put the assignment for the next class on the board. You are, of course, responsible for knowing what is due.

1. Why take a class in research methods? What IS research in sociology? (January 19 - 24)
   - Glassner, Barry, 2000, "Killer Kids: Trend-making and Misdirection," Society for the Study of Social Problems Newsletter (Summer): 5-6. This is on electronic reserve, ER
   - Look at the class webpage on my website: www.rci.rutgers.edu/~judithjf/resmeth/ [many links will not ork now.]
   - Center for Disease Control, 2005, "Health related Hoaxes and Rumors." Go to one of the first six links listed at the end of the webpage: www.cdc.gov/doc.do/id/0900f3ec80226b9c. Also see "What we learn about smallpox from movies – fact or fiction?" www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/disease/movies.asp. [links on webpage]
   - Brody, Jane E., 2002, "Separating gold from junk in medical studies," NY Times, October 22. ER

2. Research questions and design: Theory, Past Research, Cause (January 25 - 31)
   - Carlo, Gustavo, 1999, "Why are girls less physically aggressive ...," Sex Roles 40 (May): 711 - 714 only (for now, but print the entire article).
   - Johnson, Jeffrey et al., 2002, "Television viewing and aggressive behavior during adolescence and adulthood," Science, 295 (March 29): 2468-2471. ER [see my website for a handout about this article]

3. Collecting data: Measurement (February 1 – 10)
   A. General Issues: operationalization, validity, reliability
   B. Measurement using existing data or data collected through a content analysis
      - Warren, Carol A.B. and Tracy X. Karner, 2005, "The textual and the visual as qualitative data," pp. 159-170 in Discovering Qualitative Methods. ER

* I may change assignments, dates, and so forth during the semester.
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Binder, Amy, 1993, “Constructing racial rhetoric: media depictions of harm in heavy metal and rap music?”
* American Sociological Review 58 (Dec.): 753 – 767.  ER

4. Ethical Research  (February 11 - 15)

* Making Sense of the Social World, in C. 2, But is it Ethical?, pp. 39-45

5. Selecting units for study: Populations and samples  (Feb. 16 – March 4)

A. Representative samples and non-representative samples  (Feb. 16 – 20)

* Making Sense of the Social World, C. 4, Sampling, 81-99 EXCEPT (for now) 92-94

First test about Monday, February 27  [The class before the test will include review.]

B. Representative samples -- when a simple random sample doesn’t work  (Feb. 28 - March 4)

* Making Sense of the Social World, C. 4, Sampling, 92-94
Friedman, Judith, 2002, “Disproportionate Stratified (random) Samples.  (handout)

6. Measurement using “fixed” questions  (March 5 - 11)

* Making Sense of the Social World, C. 6, Survey Research, 133-156
Friedman, Judith, 2000, "Writing questions and creating a questionnaire.”  (handout)
Schuman, Howard, 2002, "Sense and nonsense about surveys,” *Contexts* 1 (2): 40-47.  ER

The ICPSR GSS website:  http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/GSS/index.html  [I will tell you what to print.]
Friedman, Judith, 2000, "Background on the General Social Survey (GSS).”  (handout)

Spring Break

7. Causation and non-experimental research designs  (March 21 – 27)

* Making Sense of the Social World, C. 5 Causation and Experimental Design, 101-106 only (for now)
Harrell  (reread)
Friedman, Judith, 2000, "Creating a 2-Variable Table."  (handout)


8. Organizing Data, finding patterns, writing reports  (March 28 – April 4)

* Making Sense of the Social World, C. 9, Elementary Data Analysis, 220-244
Friedman, Judith, 2002, "Types of Three-Variable Hypotheses/Relationships/Findings.”  (handout )
Carlo, Gustavo, M. Raffaelli, D. Laible, and K. Meyer, "Why are girls less physically aggressive ….,” *Sex Roles* 40 (May): 711–714 AND 717-719.  ER
Rosenfeld (reread)

9. Less structured interviews and Fieldwork (April 5 - 11)

*Making Sense of the Social World*, C. 7, Qualitative Methods, 161-190

Unstructured Interviews
Weiss, Robert S., 2004, “In their own words: making the most of qualitative interviews,” *Contexts* 3 (Fall): 44-50.  ER
Read ONE of these two articles:
  Pierce, Jennifer, 2000, “Racing for Innocence: …,” *Qualitative Sociology* 26 (Spring): 53 – 70.  ER

Fieldwork
*Making Sense of the Social World*, C. 7, Qualitative Methods, 161-190
Adler, Patricia and Peter Adler, 2003, “The Promise and Pitfalls of going into the field,” *Contexts* 2 (Summer): 41-49.  ER

10. Causation again: True experiments, quasi-experiments (April 12 - 17)

Iovaglia, M., 2003, “From summer camps to glass ceilings: the power of experiments,” *Contexts* 2 (Fall): 42-49.  ER
High/Point, 2005, “Perry Preschool at 40.”  ER  and

11. Applied social research and Overview (April 18 – 30)

*Making Sense of the Social World*, C. 8, Evaluation Research, 192-201, 210-12, 217
Reread: Anderson, Johnson, Harrell, High/Point and Kirp

Project Alert, 2004, “ProjectAlert: Middle Grade Substance Abuse Prevention that Works!”
Center for …, “For Policy Makers …,” reread

*Making Sense of the Social World*, C. 10, Reviewing, Proposing and Reporting Research, 246 – 251, 263

12. Review in class May 1.

Second test most likely on Friday, May 6, 8:30 am.

* I may change assignments, dates, and so forth during the semester.