Research Methods

Course prefix: HTS

Course number: 2101

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
34970

Instructor First Name: KEMAL

Instructor Last Name: BUDAK

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

This course introduces students to the logic, tools, and ethical foundations of sociological research. Students learn how sociologists transform social questions into empirical research, select appropriate methodologies, collect and analyze data, and communicate findings in a rigorous and ethical manner. Emphasis is placed on understanding the strengths and limitations of different research designs, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches.

Through engagement with classic and contemporary sociological studies, students examine how research methods shape what we can know about social life, inequality, culture, religion, gender, race, and institutions. The course also develops students' critical research literacy, enabling them to evaluate social science claims encountered in academic work, policy debates, and media. By the end of the course, students will have practical experience designing and executing a small-scale sociological research project while reflecting on the ethical and political dimensions of knowledge production.

Course learning outcomes:

Explain the logic of sociological inquiry: Distinguish between sociological questions, theories, hypotheses, and empirical evidence, and explain how they are connected within the research process.

Compare major sociological research methods: Evaluate qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches, including surveys, interviews, ethnography, experiments, content analysis, and secondary data analysis.

Design a sociological research study: Formulate a research question, conduct a literature review, operationalize key concepts, select appropriate methods, and justify methodological choices.

Collect and analyze social data: Apply basic techniques for data collection and analysis, including coding qualitative data and interpreting descriptive quantitative findings.

Apply ethical principles to social research: Identify ethical issues in sociological research, including informed consent, confidentiality, power dynamics, and the role of Institutional Review Boards (IRBs).

Required course materials:

The Craft of Research, Fourth Edition (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing), Fourth Edition by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, William T. FitzGerald

Grading policy:

Attendance and Participation (10%): It is crucial to attend every class to stay up to date with the course material. You are allowed only **TWO** absences (excused and unexcused combined) throughout the semester. Lectures, videos, and discussions are designed to complement the reading assignments by providing additional insights, rather than simply repeating the content.

In Class Assignments (15%): There will be several in-class assignment throughout the semester:

Assignments (**60%)**: Your ultimate task is to craft a research design. Throughout the semester, you will complete a series of assignments that build toward this goal. Each assignment represents a step in the process, and together they will culminate in a final paper presenting a complete research design.

Midterm (15%): The midterm exam will consist of multiple-choice, short answer, true/false, and short essay questions based on the weekly readings and class material.

Attendance policy:

It is crucial to attend every class to stay up to date with the course material. You are allowed only **TWO** absences (excused and unexcused combined) throughout the semester. Lectures, videos, and discussions are designed to complement the reading assignments by providing additional insights, rather than simply repeating the content.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Academic Conduct: Students are expected to adhere to the **Georgia Tech Honor Code**. Violations of the Honor Code will be addressed appropriately and may result in an "F" on the assignment or in the course. If you require special accommodation due to a disability, please inform me as soon as possible. You should also contact the **Office of Disability Services**.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools: You may use generative AI programs, e.g. ChatGPT, to help generate ideas and brainstorm. You should be aware that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, biased or otherwise problematic. Also, use of these tools may stifle your own independent thinking and creativity. Per GaTech's Honor Code, you may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). When/if you use AI platforms in your assignments, please write a note to clarify where in your process you used AI, include the prompt used to generate the material, and which platform(s) you used. See this article for how to cite AI properly: How to cite ChatGPT: **https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt**. **That said, using any AI tools during a proctored exam or quiz is never permitted**.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This course is a Core IMPACTS course within the Social Sciences area, designed to provide students with essential knowledge in foundational academic disciplines. It aims to help students master course content while supporting their broader academic and career goals. The course is centered around the following guiding question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

By completing this course, students should achieve the following learning outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior and understand how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

The course content, activities, and exercises are designed to help students develop the following career-ready competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion