

Research Methods

Last Updated: Thu, 07/17/2025

Course prefix: HTS

Course number: 2101

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
91137

Instructor First Name: Yaqi

Instructor Last Name: Yuan

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

In this course, students are provided with an introduction to the process of social research and to a wide range of methodologies. We will explore how sociologists use scientific methods to research issues important to the discipline. For most of you, your experiences with research up to this point have mainly involved reading about and thinking about other people's ideas and research. In contrast, this course is about "doing" research. This is clearly important for those of you who plan to be professional researchers, but it is also important as consumers of research, as we all are. After all, research affects the news we receive, the purchases we make, and the products we use. Engaging in research can provide critical skills for assessing research you encounter every day.

Course learning outcomes:

By the end of the course, students should be able to...

...be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a research method being employed for a research study.

...understand ethical issues that may arise in the course of research.

...be able to critically evaluate published social science research, with an emphasis on the methods used to answer research questions.

...understand where data come from, how they are analyzed, how we evaluate truth claims, and what constitutes systematic evidence that is valid and reliable.

...be able to identify a variety of sociological methods and determine which methods might best answer certain research questions.

...understand the fundamentals of how to design a social research project.

Required course materials:

Dixon, Jeffrey C, Royce Singleton and Bruce C Straits. 2019 (2nd Edition). The Process of Social Research. Oxford University Press.

Grading policy:

1. Class Preparation and Participation:15%
2. Exams: 40% (Exam1–20%; Exam 2 – 20%)
3. Research Activities:20% (5% each)
4. Research proposal: 25%

Attendance policy:

Read all assignments before the beginning of each class. The better prepared you are before class, the more you will get out of the course. Class preparation and participation will be based on your regular contribution to class discussions. During our meetings, we will discuss the readings and have class activities (either by yourself or with other students as a group). Every student (students can also work as a group) needs to contribute to class discussions three times through the semester in order to get 12 points toward their final grade for this part.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question: How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

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

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career- Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion