

**Graduate School for Social Research  
2018-2019**

**Empirical Research in the Social Sciences: Design, Implementation and Write-up**

**Course Description:**

This course focuses on the logic of theory-driven and empirically-based social science research and the process underlying scientific production. We emphasize the practical steps that enable scholars to design their research project, formulate testable hypotheses, and select the data and analysis techniques most suitable for answering the project's research question(s). Equally important, the course teaches you how to read published academic studies to critically assess their merits and limitations, and how to write up research projects to meet the requirements and expectations of major English-language social science publication outlets, especially those of peer-reviewed journals like the *American Sociological Review*, *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *Social Forces*, and the *European Sociological Review*.

To this end, the course comprises two independent, albeit complimentary, components, which follow one another during the 2018-2019 academic year. Part I of the course, to take place in Autumn 2018, teaches students the practicalities of moving from research design to research implementation. Part II, to be held in Spring 2019, focuses on reading and writing social science publications.

The entire course is conducted from an interdisciplinary perspective. Below are the detailed descriptions for **Part I, *Research Design and Implementation in Social Science*** (30 hours, Semester I) and **Part II, *Reading and Writing in Social Science*** (30 Hours, Semester II), including timeline and requirements specific to each of the course's components.

**Part I. Research Design and Implementation in Social Science (30 hours, Semester I)**

Instructors: Dr. Irina Tomescu-Dubrow, Dr. Ilona Wysmulek, and Dr. Kinga Wysienska-Di Carlo  
Place: Room TBA, Staszic Palace, 72 Nowy Swiat, 00-330 Warsaw, Poland  
Course Website: To do  
Email: [tomescu.i@osu.edu](mailto:tomescu.i@osu.edu), [ilona.wysmulek@ifispan.waw.pl](mailto:ilona.wysmulek@ifispan.waw.pl), [kwysienska@ifispan.waw.pl](mailto:kwysienska@ifispan.waw.pl)  
Office Hours: By appointment for office meetings. We are available any time via e-mail.

**Description:**

Part I of the course 'Empirical Research in the Social Sciences' deals with the multiple, often simultaneous and reiterative, steps of developing and carrying out theory-informed, empirical projects. Good research requires a well-formulated and testable problem, alternative explanations, and evidence that is explicitly tied to concepts and hypotheses. We cover the structure of research and theory construction, types of research questions and hypotheses; we assess different types of data (primary vs. secondary data, qualitative vs. quantitative) and of research methods in terms of their usefulness for answering given research question(s) and addressing specified hypotheses. Part I also provides an overview of the main methodological problems that different types of data and analyses carry. The format of the course combines lecture and in-class discussion.

**Objectives:**

Part I aims to provide students the key skills for developing both academic and non-academic research products that are empirically grounded and meaningful for the scientific community and/or for society in general (e.g. policy relevant). Understanding how to critically assess published empirical articles with respect

to the clarity and consistency of their research design, internal and external validity, and the correspondence between research problem – hypothesis – data – methods – conclusions, are important aspects of these skills.

At the end of this course you should be able to move from designing a study, whether article, dissertation proposal, or funding proposal, to implementing it. More specifically, you should know how to:

- Pose research question(s) relevant both to you and social science more broadly. Among others, these questions shall pass the ‘so what?’ condition and be methodologically feasible;
- Identify the theoretical framework(s) relevant to your research question(s);
- Build theory-informed arguments and use them to generate empirically testable hypotheses;
- Identify the qualitative and/or quantitative data most suitable for evaluating the research hypotheses of your projects;
- Assess the overall strengths and weaknesses of different types of data;
- Identify the data analysis technique(s) most suitable in light of your research hypotheses and data;
- Assess overall strengths & weaknesses of these technique(s).

In addition to imparting this specialized knowledge, Part I fosters critical thinking and communication skills. By the end of the semester, you should be able to present your research design and arguments to a scholarly audience or the lay public in clear, logical fashion.

## Course Requirements

**Classroom participation and attendance.** Everyone is expected to participate regularly and to come to class prepared to **meaningfully** discuss the readings. Punctual attendance is required. If you have a legitimate reason why you might be late on a regular basis, please notify us at the beginning of the course, or as soon as the condition appears. Excessive absences, tardiness, or leaving early will adversely affect your grade for classroom participation.

**Discussion.** Class discussions centered on key issues of research design are an important element of this course. Toward this goal, your *Reading Reactions* will serve as a **starting point** for our discussions – not an end point. The discussion format mimics in miniature what professional sociologists do – actively engage in theoretical debates with colleagues. We expect discussion to be professional and polite – but engaged. Do not shy away from points. Do push arguments. Do not accept two logically inconsistent points as “equally valid perspectives.” Do seek to integrate alternative perspectives and understand the basic assumptions that drive different conclusions. We will push you on your arguments, and we trust you will do the same for each other. For this format to work, you must be active participants.

## Reading Reactions

To help focus our class discussion, we request continuous feedback/reaction from you about the readings assigned throughout the course. They are due electronically (via email to the three instructors) a day prior to the class period whose readings you react to. To receive full credit, you must turn in FIVE reading reactions. We will not accept reactions for a given class period’s readings after their due date. It is assumed that you have access to e-mail and the Internet. You need to let us know at the beginning of the course if otherwise.

Reactions should be short, between 300 and 500 words (or so), and should focus on the readings’ research design (reasonably broadly construed); they do not need to refer to every article or chapter you are reading for a given class period. Reactions should convey your reflection on the strength of the link between (a) research question(s) and hypotheses, (b) the author(s)’ choice of empirical data, and (c) their choice of methods for analyzing these data to address the research question(s). Reactions should be **analytic** in nature and could include questions that you have about the readings (e.g. what you may not have understood with regards to the overall research design and its implementation), questions about the nature of social science, or a short critique of an article’s methodology. These reactions are not about how you ‘feel’ about the readings (whether you liked them or not). Neither should they summarize the readings. Please write the reactions presuming that we also did the readings.

Your reactions can take the form of enumerated points rather than a single, flowing narrative. We will use your comments and questions as part of class discussion. Please come prepared to discuss what you wrote (it would be a good idea to have a copy of the reaction with you).

### **One Essay**

The purpose of the essay is to provide you with a platform for critically analyzing arguments, tests, and conclusions presented in readings scheduled for selected sessions. You will have the opportunity to comment on how the research presented in the selected readings embodies the translation of theory into empirical research, and evaluate whether the conclusions and/or interpretations of results correspond with the proposed research problem. The essay should be roughly 1,000 words (up to 5 pages, 12-point font, double-spaced). It is due by the date/time indicated in the syllabus (e-mailed to us as attachments, with your name and the Essay number in the file name). Specific instructions will be distributed in class.

### **Group Assignment - Field Research**

To experience how the process of research design and implementation can feel, you will engage in a group exercise where you will use observation as your data collection method. Since the method is the “servant” (Firebaugh 2008), together with members of your group you will first need to formulate a research question that you can answer using data collected via field observation. Specific requirements of the Group Assignment, including for writing up the results of your exercise, will be handed out in class.

### **Research Proposal**

The final project for this course consists of a research proposal (approx. 10 pages long, 12-point font, double-spaced). We will discuss the appropriate components of the research proposal in class, and provide a detailed handout of the requirements. **Each student must write up their own paper individually and turn in their own work.**

Completing the Research Proposal involves several steps, each due at different time points during Semester I (see Time Outline in Syllabus):

Step 1: Prepare a 300-500 words **General Statement about the your research proposal’s topic**, which should include (a) Research problem; (b) Research question(s) (not hypotheses); (c) The argument as to why your research question passes the ‘so what’ condition; (d) which data you consider most appropriate for addressing the research question(s). Please indicate in your Statement whether your research proposal is, or potentially could be, linked to your PhD thesis.

Step 2: Prepare the **Outline of your Research Proposal** (up to 2 pages, 12-point font, double-spaced), which should include (a) Research question(s); (b) Main theoretical frameworks (which frameworks you will use, rather than a detailed description of what each states) that inform your research; (c) Research hypothesis or hypotheses, and how they link to the theoretical frameworks you chose; (d) What data and methods you regard as necessary to examine the research hypotheses; and (3) Which are the most serious methodological limitations these data & methods are likely to raise, given what you set out to investigate.

Both the General Statement and the Outline can take the form of bullet-points, followed by several phrases under each point (that is, they do not have to be written as a flowing narrative).

You are expected to present your Outline in small groups. You should treat this presentation like a “roundtable” at a conference. Bring 4 copies of all materials that you wish to share with fellow “attendees.” Usually this takes the form of an outline of the paper, but it can go beyond this. Outstanding presenters include as part of their handouts a) key lessons to be learned, and b) a list of resources (web links, key bibliographical references, key people working on that topic) to learn more.

Step 3: Prepare the full **Research Proposal** (btw. 9 -11 pages, 12-point font, double-spaced) according to the requirements distributed in class.

## Grading:

Grades will be based: 15% on Class participation (including “discussion-leader day”), 15% on Reading reactions; 15% on Essay; 15% on Field Methods Assignment; and 40% on the Research Proposal. Total possible points = 100%.

Students receiving more than 90% of possible points are guaranteed at least a 5-, more than 80% at least a 4-, more than 70% at least a 3-, and more than 60% at least a 2.

## Readings:

Readings for Part I are available from the instructors, via a course-specific G-drive and the GSSR library. Readings are shared for academic instruction only, and are not to be distributed further. Please consult the Timetable for reading materials assigned to each class period.

### Main reading sources:

Becker, Howard S. 1998. *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While You're Doing It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. “Concepts” Pp. 109-145; “Sampling

Creswell, John W. 2009. **Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches**, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Los Angeles: Sage.

Firebaugh, Glenn, 2008. **Seven Rules for Social Research**, Princeton University Press. SRSR

Hargittai, Eszter, Editor **Research Confidential: Solutions to Problems Most Social Scientists Pretend They Never Have**. 2009.

King, Gary Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, 1994 **Designing Social Inquiry**, Princeton University Press.

Singleton Royce A. Jr., Bruce C. Straits. 1999 (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). **Approaches to Social Research** Oxford University Press, USA

Selected chapters **Cross-Cultural Survey Guidelines CCSG** [ccsg.isr.umich.edu/index.php](http://ccsg.isr.umich.edu/index.php)

**Selected articles** from the *American Sociological Review (ASR)*, *American Journal of Sociology (AJS)*, *Sociological Methodology*, *Social Forces* & others

Of possible interest (optional):

AJS had an in-depth symposium on Urban Ethnography in 2002. Volume 107(6)

“[Poverty, Morality and the Pitfalls of Urban Ethnography](#)” Wacquant

“[Ideologically Driven Critique](#)” – Anderson

“[What kind of Combat Sport is Sociology?](#)” – Duneier

“[View from the Left Bank](#)” – Newman

Griswold & Wright. 2004. “[Cowbirds, Locals, and the Dynamic Endurance of Regionalism](#)” AJS 57:1-15

Minichiello, Victor, Aroni, Rosalie, Hays, Terrence. 2008 *In-depth Interviewing: principles, techniques, analysis*. Pearson/Prentice Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

Paxton et al 2006. Women’s political representation *ASR*

Tellers and Bailey 2013 Understanding Latin American beliefs about racial inequality\_ *AJS*.pdf

## Policies on Attendance, Late Materials, and Make-Ups:

We expect everyone to show up to class on time. During class, cell phones and other electronic devices with noise-capacity must be turned off. We will make exceptions to this rule if you explain why you need them turned on during class. Please inform us of this reason before class begins.

Please remember to be courteous and polite to one another during heated discussions. We will be with each other for several months and we all need a comfortable classroom environment to learn and discuss issues.

All assignments are to be turned in electronically, via email to [tomescu.1@osu.edu](mailto:tomescu.1@osu.edu), [ilona.wysmulek@ifispan.waw.pl](mailto:ilona.wysmulek@ifispan.waw.pl) and [kwysienska@ifispan.waw.pl](mailto:kwysienska@ifispan.waw.pl) by the specified deadlines. We will accept late materials *only if* notified 24 hours prior to the deadline. Except for documented reasons (e.g. doctor’s note), late assignments will incur a 10% penalty per day. For emailed assignments: it is your responsibility to be sure that we received your work.

## Time Outline – Part I

1. **Nature of Science. The Science in Social Sciences. Introduction to Research Design**  
Monday, Oct. 22  
17:00 – 19:00  
Mandatory:  
Creswell, John W. 2009. Ch. 1 “The Selection of a Research Design”  
*Hargittai* (Ed) Introduction (Ch1) by Hargittai “Doing Empirical Social Research”  
  
Additional readings (optional):  
Becker, Gary. 1993. “How I Learned What a Crock Was” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 22: 28-35. *This article illustrates how research topics are generated*  
Singleton Royce A. Jr. and Bruce C. Straits, Ch 2 “Nature of Science”

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2. **Theory, Formal Models, Arguments (I)**  
Friday, Oct. 26  
17:00 – 19:00  
Mandatory:  
Cohen, Bernard P. (1989). *Developing Sociological Knowledge: Theory and Method*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall. Chapters 1-3 and 10-11.  
Sutton, Robert I. and Staw, Barry M. 1995. “What theory is not” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 40: 371-384  
Markovsky, Barry and Lisa Dilks. (2013). “Science, Pseudoscience and Common Sense.” In Heidtman Joanna and Kinga Wysieńska (Eds.), *Procesy Grupowe. Perspektywa Socjologiczna*. Warsaw: Scholar Publishers. Original manuscript in English.  
  
Additional readings (optional):  
Becker, Howard S. 1986. Pp. 135-149 in “Terrorized by the Literature.”

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3. **Theory, Formal Models, Arguments (II): Causality and Causal Inference**  
Monday, Oct. 29  
17:00 – 19:00  
Mandatory:  
Cohen, Bernard P. (1989). *Developing Sociological Knowledge: Theory and Method*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall. Chapters 4-7 and 12.  
Tootell, Geoffrey, Alison Bianchi, and Paul Munroe. (2002). “Formalization and Inference.” In Szmatka, Jacek, Michael Lovaglia, and Kinga Wysienska (Eds.), *The Growth of Social Knowledge*, Westport, CT: Praeger.  
Thye, Shane R. (2014). “Logical and Philosophical Foundations of Experimental Research in the Social Sciences.” In Webster, Murray Jr. and Jane Sell (Eds.) *Laboratory Experiments in the Social Sciences* (Second Edition). Amsterdam: Elsevier/Academic Press.  
  
Additional readings (optional):  
Gangl. 2010. Causality in Sociology. *Annual Rev Sociology*

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4. **Theory, Formal Models, Arguments (III): Research Question(s) and Research Hypotheses**  
Monday, Nov. 5  
17:00 – 19:00  
Mandatory:  
Cohen, Bernard P. (1989). *Developing Sociological Knowledge: Theory and Method*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall. Chapter 14.  
Hempel, Carl. (1966). *Philosophy of Natural Science*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. Chapter 3.  
Wysieńska-Di Carlo, Kinga and Zbigniew Karpiński. (2018). “An Experimental Study of Status Effects on Trust and Cooperation.” *SAGE Research Methods Cases*  
Shelley, Robert K. (2002). “How Scope and Initial Conditions Determine the Growth of Theory.” In Szmatka, Jacek, Michael Lovaglia, and Kinga Wysienska (Eds.), *The Growth of Social Knowledge*, Westport, CT: Praeger.

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5. **Units of observation. Sampling**  
Monday, Nov. 12  
17:00 – 19:00  
Mandatory:  
Singleton Royce A..Jr. and Bruce C. Straits, Ch. 6 “Sampling”  
Becker, Howard S. 1998. “Sampling.” pp. 67-108 *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While You're Doing It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.  
  
Additional readings (optional):  
Lieberson, S. 1991. "Small N's and Big Conclusions" *Social Forces*, 71:307-320

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King, Kohane and Verba. 1994. Ch. 6

**Essay due TBD**

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6. **Measurement: Concepts; Indicators. Reliability & Validity of Measurement**  
Monday, Nov. 19  
17:00 – 19:00  
Mandatory  
*Approaches* Ch. 5: "Measurement"  
Brush, Lisa 1990. "Violent Acts and injurious Outcomes in Married Couples: Methodological Issues in the National Study of Families and Households." *Gender & Society* 4(1): 156-167.  
Becker, Howard S. 1998. "Concepts" Pp. 109-145 in *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While You're Doing It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Additional Readings (optional):  
Ragin, Charles. 2000. *Fuzzy Set Social Science*. Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press
- Research Proposal: Step 1, General Statement about Research Topic, due**
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7. **Qualitative Methods: Types of Data and Analysis - Overview**  
Monday, Nov. 26  
17:00 – 19:00  
Mandatory:  
Creswell, John W. 2009. Ch. 9 "Qualitative Procedures" in *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*. Los Angeles: Sage.  
*Hargittai (Ed)*, Ch 13 Gallo "Doing Archival Research"  
Jody Raphael and Deborah Shapiro. 2004. "Violence in Indoor and Outdoor Prostitution Venues" *Violence Against Women* 10:126-139.
- Additional readings (optional):  
Burawoy, Michael 2003. "Revisits: An Outline of a Theory of Reflexive Ethnography" *ASR* 68:645-679  
*Hargittai (Ed)*, Ch 5 "The Challenges of In-Depth Interviewing with Disadvantaged Respondents"  
*Hargittai (Ed)*, Ch 4 Clawson "Part of the Community"  
Lance, Larry M. 1998. "Gender Differences in Heterosexual Dating: A Content Analysis of Personal Ads." *The Journal of Men's Studies* Vol 6(3): 297.305.  
Draus, Paul J. and Robert G. Carlson. 2009. "The Game Turns on You:" *Crack, Sex, Gender, and Power in Small-Town Ohio.* *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. 38(3): 384-408.
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8. **Independent Research: Fieldwork**  
Monday, Dec. 3  
17:00 – 19:00  
Mandatory:  
Singleton Royce A..Jr. and Bruce C. Straits. 1999. Ch. 10  
Feagin, Joe. 1991. "The Continuing Significance of Race: Antiracist Discrimination in Public Places". *ASR* 56: 101-116
- Group Assignment Field Methods due TBD**
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9. **Survey Research (I): Types of survey design; Questionnaire development**  
Monday, Dec. 10  
17:00 – 19:00  
Mandatory:  
Creswell, John W. 2009. Ch. 8 "Quantitative Methods"  
*Hargittai*, Ch 11 Bandelj "Giving Mega Attention to Macro Research"  
CCSG: Data Collection [ccsq.isr.umich.edu/index.php/chapters/data-collection-chapter](http://ccsq.isr.umich.edu/index.php/chapters/data-collection-chapter)
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10. **Survey Research (II): Data Analysis Techniques**  
Monday, Dec. 17  
17:00 – 19:00  
Mandatory:  
Creswell, John W. 2009. Ch. 8 "Quantitative Methods"  
*Hargittai (Ed)*, Ch 12 Freese "Secondary Analysis of Large Social Surveys"
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11. **Mixed Methods**  
Friday, Dec. 21  
17:00 – 19:00  
Mandatory  
Creswell, John W. 2009. Ch. 10 "Mixed Methods Procedures" in *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*. Los Angeles: Sage.  
Singleton Royce A..Jr. and Bruce C. Straits, Ch. 13 "Multiple Methods"  
Olsen, Wendy. 2004 "Triangulation in social research" in *Developments in Sociology* M Holborn (Ed)
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12.  
Monday, Jan. 7  
17:00 – 19:00

**Experiments in the Social Sciences**

Mandatory:

Foschi, Martha. (2014). "Hypotheses, Operationalizations, and Manipulation Checks." In Webster, Murray Jr. and Jane Sell (Eds.) *Laboratory Experiments in the Social Sciences* (Second Edition). Amsterdam: Elsevier/Academic Press.

Auspurg, Katrin, Thomas Hinz, and Carsten Sauer. 2017. "Why Should Women Get Less? Evidence on the Gender Pay Gap from Multifactorial Survey Experiments." *American Sociological Review* 82: 179-210.

Pager, Devah, and Bruce Western. (2012). "Identifying Discrimination at Work: The Use of Field Experiments." *Journal of Social Issues* 68(2): 221-227.

Or

Riach Peter, and Judy Rich. 2002. Field experiments of discrimination in the market place. *Econ. J.* 112:480–518 Rich.

**Research Proposal: Step 2, Outline, due**

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13.  
Monday, Jan. 14  
17:00 – 19:00

**New methods of data collection. Big data in the social sciences**

Mandatory:

*Hargittai*, Ch 6 Walejko "Online Survey"

Fontes, Thiago O. and Michelle O'Mahony. 2008. "In-Depth Interviewing by Instant Messaging." *Social Research Update*. Issue 53: Spring <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU53.pdf>

**Roundtable Presentations of Research Proposal Outline**

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14.  
Monday, Jan. 21  
17:00 – 19:00

**Research Ethics**

Mandatory:

Singleton Royce A..Jr. and Bruce C. Straits Ch 3 "Research Ethics"

Cross-Cultural Survey Guidelines, Ethics in Survey research:  
[ccsg.isr.umich.edu/index.php/chapters/ethical-considerations-in-surveys-chapter](http://ccsg.isr.umich.edu/index.php/chapters/ethical-considerations-in-surveys-chapter)

Lallmark et al 2009\_Ethical issues in the use of in-depth interviews.pdf

Additional readings (optional):

Grinyer, Anne. 2007. The ethics of Internet usage in health and personal narratives research. *Social Research Update*. Issue 49 Spring . <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU49.html>

American Sociological Association "Code of Ethics" Read on-line at:  
[www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/asa\\_code\\_of\\_ethics-june2018.pdf](http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/asa_code_of_ethics-june2018.pdf)

**Roundtable Presentations of Research Proposal Outline**

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15.  
Monday, Jan. 28  
17:00 – 19:00

**Summary**

Mandatory:

Firebaugh, Glenn 2008. Ch 7: The seventh rule: Let method be the servant, not the master.

King, Kohane and Verba. 1994. "Knowing what to avoid"

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**Research Proposal Due TBD (during Exam week in Polish Academic Year)**

# **Empirical Research in the Social Sciences: Design, Implementation and Write-up**

## **Part II: Reading and Writing in the Social Sciences (30 hours, Semester II)**

Instructors: Joshua K. Dubrow, Ilona Wyszumlek, and Kinga Wysienska-DiCarlo  
Place: Room TBA, Staszic Palace, 72 Nowy Swiat, 00-330 Warsaw, Poland  
Course Website: To do  
Email: [dubrow.2@osu.edu](mailto:dubrow.2@osu.edu), [ilona.wyszumlek@ifispan.waw.pl](mailto:ilona.wyszumlek@ifispan.waw.pl), [kwysienska@ifispan.waw.pl](mailto:kwysienska@ifispan.waw.pl)  
Office Hours: By appointment for office meetings. We are available any time via e-mail.

### **Description**

At the heart of academic social science are theory-informed empirical research articles and constructive criticism on the pre-publication writing of colleagues. Part II of the ‘Empirical Research in the Social Sciences’ course trains students in how to read and write English language empirical research articles in the social sciences that conform to international standards. By article, we mean that which is found in the top journals of sociology, e.g. generalist journals such as *American Sociological Review* (Impact Factor 5.06), *Social Forces* (IF 2.11), and *European Sociological Review* (IF 1.76), and specialty journals such as *Qualitative Sociology* (IF 1.23). These articles have ca. 8000-9000 words and tend to follow a similar structure: Title, abstract, acknowledgements, introduction, theory and hypotheses, data and methods, results, conclusion, and references. Other sections depend on the methods and content of the empirical analyses, such as “setting” (for qualitative articles) and appendices.

Students will need to understand both the structure of empirical research articles and the kind of content that should be included within each part of the structure. They will write based on their own research, drawing from Part I of the course. They will also learn how to revise both their own writing and the writing of their colleagues.

### **Objectives**

Part II aims to provide students the key skills for how to read and write for the top English language sociology journals. At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand the structure of empirical research articles
- Understand the content of each section of empirical research articles
- Critically assess the structure and content of empirical social science research
- Gain experience in writing each section of a theory-informed, empirically-based article
- Develop useful writing strategies and habits
- Revise their own writing
- Provide constructive criticism on the writing of colleagues

Part II promotes critical thinking and communication skills in addition to this specialized knowledge. By the end of the semester, you should be able to present your arguments to a scholarly audience or the lay public in clear, logical fashion.

### **General Course Structure**

In the first class periods, we will discuss “Reading” e.g. (a) audience expectations, (b) the structure of empirical research articles, (c) writing strategies and habits that are useful and efficient for the production of articles, and (d) how to provide constructive criticism. The rest of the classes will have the following structure: In the first hour, we will discuss the readings of the day and read and critique the writing of articles published in the top sociology journals, going in-depth on particular sections. In the second hour, under the supervision of the instructor, students will be paired with their colleagues and provide constructive criticisms on each

other's writing. The instructor will inform students in advance of who their paired colleague will be (to generate a variety of criticisms, pairs will change every class period).

## **Course Requirements and Evaluation**

Class Participation (30%): Students are expected to have read the book chapters and articles that we will discuss with a focus on the particular section or sections due for that day. In classes where writing is due, students are expected to have prepared in advance the constructive criticism of their colleagues' writing.

Writing Text for Colleagues to Constructively Critique (40%): For many class periods, students will write in advance a short text (ca. 300 – 500 words) that is to be submitted to their paired colleague and to the instructor. Some writing will be new for that class period and some will be revised text based on the constructive criticism. Details pertaining to the content and structure of this assignment will be handed out in class.

Writing Text for the Instructor to Constructively Critique (20%): At the end of the course, students will submit to the instructor several sections of an empirical research draft paper that they have written and revised throughout the course, ca. min. 2000 words. Details pertaining to the content and structure of this assignment will be handed out in class.

Summarizing Chapters in "How to Write" Books (10%): For selected class periods, students will submit to the instructor a short summary (ca. min. 200 words) of given chapters in the "How to Write" book. Details pertaining to assigned chapters will be handed out in class.

## **Readings**

(a) Articles from the top journals in sociology TBA

(b) On Writing

### Required

Schimmel, Joshua. 2012. *Writing Science: How to Write Papers That Get Cited and Proposals That Get Funded*. Oxford University Press.

Brookhart, Susan M. 2017. *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students, Second Edition*. ASCD Press.

NB: Chapters will be available in the GSSR library

### Optional

The Academic Phrasebank, The University of Manchester, [phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk](http://phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk)

Online Writing Lab, Purdue University, [owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](http://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)

## Part II - Course Outline

### **Class 1: Introduction to the Course; Expectations of Academic Audiences**

Guetzkow, Joshua, Michèle Lamont and Grégoire Mallard. 2004. "What Is Originality in the Humanities and the Social Sciences?" *American Sociological Review* 69(2): 190-212.

Davis, Murray S. 1971. "That's Interesting: Towards a Phenomenology of Sociology and Sociology of Phenomenology." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 1(4).

Barley, Stephen R. 2006. "When I write my masterpiece: Thoughts on what makes a paper interesting." *Academy of Management Journal* 49: 16-20.

### **Class 2: What Gets Published in the Top Journals? Topics and Structures of Articles in the Top Journals**

TBA

### **Class 3: The General Structure of Empirical Research Articles; Searching for and Finding the Relevant Literature for Your Research Project**

TBA

### **Class 4: Writing Strategies and Writing Habits**

Becker, Howard S. with Pamela Richards. 1986. *Writing for Social Scientists: How To Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, Or Article*: "Risk," written by Pamela Richards, pp. 108 – 120.

Smith, Chris. 2018. "Six academic writing habits that will boost productivity." LSE Impact Blog

### **Class 5: How to Provide Constructive Criticism**

Chapters in: Brookhart, Susan M. 2017. *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students, Second Edition*. ASCD Press.

### **Class 6: How to Write the Introduction**

Schimmel (2012) Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 (pp. 1 – 49)

### **Class 7: How to Write the Theory and Hypotheses**

Schimmel (2012) Chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 50 – 66)

### **Class 8: How to Write the Data and Methods**

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### **Class 9: How to Write the Results**

Schimmel (2012) Chapter 8 (pp. 67 – 82)

### **Class 10: How to Write the Conclusion**

Schimel (2012) Chapters 9 and 10 (pp. 83 – 103)

### **Class 11: How to Write the Title and Abstract**

Schimel (2012) Chapters 13 and 14 (pp. 124 – 144)

### **Class 12: How to Write the Setting and Appendices**

Schimel (2012) Chapters 15 and 16 (pp. 145 – 173)

### **Class 13: How to Write Acknowledgments, Citations, and References**

Schimel (2012) Chapters 17 and 18 (pp. 174 – 188)

### **Class 14: Framing Research Questions for Specific Audiences**

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Thunder, David. 2004. "Back to Basics: Twelve Rules for Writing a Publishable Article." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 37(3): 493-5

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### **Class 15: Grant Finding and Grant Writing**

Przeworski, Adam and Frank Salomon. 1995. *On the Art of Writing Proposals: Some Candid Suggestions for Applicants to Social Science Research Council Competitions*. SSRC.

Henson, Kenneth T. 2003. "Debunking Some Myths about Grant Writing." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 26.

Moffat, Anne Simon. 1994. "Grantsmanship: what makes proposals work?" *Science* 265 (September 23)