

# **AECO 4230.001**

## **Introduction to Social Science Research**

**Spring 2009**

Instructor: Michael Bomba

Office hours: By appointment

Department Office: Denton Campus, Chilton Hall, Room 263

(940) 565-3437 - AECO office where message can be left

(940) 565-4658 fax

Meeting time: See class calendar for assignment due dates

Classroom: The World Wide Web.

Goal: Provide students with an introduction to the methods of conducting research in the social sciences.

Objectives: At the end of the course, students should have moderate skills in critically evaluating reports of research for appropriate research design. Specifically, students should be able to perform the following:

1. Identify the type of methodology employed in a research report.
2. Understand issues of data validity and reliability.
3. Identify the type of data collected and its appropriateness for the analytical measures used in the research.
4. Identify and understand the limitations and appropriateness of sampling used in the research and its implications for research conclusions.
5. Have introductory abilities to identify a research methodology appropriate to a given research question.
6. Understand the comparative strengths and weaknesses of the research methods reviewed in the course.
7. Understand ethical issues in the conduct of research.
8. Be able to perform basic data analyses using a spreadsheet software package.

### **Texts:**

Making Sense of the Social World (2nd ed.), 2006

Daniel F. Chambliss and Russell K. Schutt

Pine Forge Press, Thousand Oaks, CA (ISBN 9781412927178)

Social Science Research: A Cross Section of Journal Articles for discussion and Evaluation (5th ed.), 2007

Turner C. Lomand

Pyrzczak Publishing, Los Angeles, CA (ISBN 1-884585-74-4)

## Optional Sources:

The Basics of Social Research (2nd ed.) 2002

Earl Babbie

Wadsworth-Thompson, Belmont, CA (ISBN 0-534-51904-0)

Reading Statistics and Research, 1974

Schuyler Huck, William Cormier & William Bounds, Jr.

Harper Collins New York (ISBN 0-06-042976-3)

Understanding Research Methods: An Overview of the Essentials (3rd ed.), 2002

Mildred L. Patten.

Pyrczak Publishing, Los Angeles, CA (ISBN 1-884585-47-7)

Introductory Statistics for Business and Economics (4th Edition) 1990

Thomas H. Wannacott and Ronald J. Wannacott

John Wiley & Sons, New York, NY (ISBN 0-471-61517-X)

During the course of the semester I may suggest other optional readings to the class for those students who have an interest in a particular topic. Any suggested optional readings will not be required readings for the course.

\*The weekly readings noted below are from the required textbook by Chambliss & Schutt (abbreviated at "CS").

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings*</u>
1/19	Lesson 0 Introduction	
1/26	Lesson 1: Social Research	CS-1
	Lesson 2: Philosophy of Science	
2/2	Lesson 3: Research Process, Lit Review, Ethics	CS-2
2/9	Lesson 4: Operationalization and Measurement	CS-3
2/16	Lesson 5: Sampling	CS-4
2/23	Lesson 6: Research Design	CS-5
3/2	Lesson 7: Experiments	
3/9	Lesson 8: Survey Research	CS-6
3/23	Lesson 9: Qualitative Field Research	CS-7
3/30	Lesson 10: Qualitative Data Analysis	CS-8
4/6	Lesson 11: Evaluation Research	
4/13	Lesson 12 & 13: Historical & Comparative Research	CS-Appendix B

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings*</u>
4/20	Lesson 14: Descriptive statistics	CS-9
4/27	Lesson 16: Correlation Statistics	
5/4	Lesson 17: Reporting Research	CS-10

### **Grading:**

Grades will be based on the following:

Quizzes (points as marked on each quiz)	20%
Exercises	35%
Article Review Exercises (Lomand)	30%
Final	15%

### **Homework:**

Exercises assigned for each lesson will be posted on the class calendar. Some exercises require you to participate in a bulletin board discussion. I expect meaningful contributions from each of you in these discussions. You will note that throughout the lessons, I refer to these discussions as "posting to the bulletin board" or similar phrasing. You access the bulletin board through the "Discussion" button in WebCT.

Each exercise has instructions. All written assignments must be grammatically correct and free of spelling errors. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Quizzes cover the reading materials for the specified lesson. The quizzes are my measure that you have read and understand the material. They are open book, of course.

Article Review Exercises will be based on assignments in the Lomand book. They count for a good bit of your grade, but are reasonable. Some will require discussions. Pay attention to your readings and be thoughtful and you will do well.

### **Final:**

The final will consist of one article critique. I will email the article for you to review a couple of weeks before the semester ends. Your job will be to write a 3-5 page critique of an article that illustrates one or more of the methods we will study this semester. It will be due as posted on the class calendar during finals week.

**ADA accommodation:**

If you require accommodation for a special need, you must notify the instructor prior to the 12th class day as specified in the academic calendar. If you have questions about an accommodation, please see the ADA advisor for the Institute of Applied Economics.

**Religious holidays:**

Since this course does not require you to be present on a specific day within each week's assignments, you should accomplish each assignment around any religious holidays you choose to observe. If there is a conflict, you must notify me, the instructor, in writing by the date noted in the academic calendar.

**Statement on academic dishonesty**

I encourage you to work with your classmates on exercises and article review exercises if you have difficulty in completing an assignment. However, I expect you to do your own work. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and could lead to very serious disciplinary action (see undergraduate catalog or the student handbook). This includes copying assignments from your classmates or from work submitted in a previous semester. If you have any questions regarding this issue, contact the instructor.