

**Fayetteville State University**  
**College of Arts and Sciences—Department of Sociology**  
**SOCI 590—Advanced Social Science Research**  
**Spring 2012 Semester**

**I. Locator Information:**

**Instructor:** Samuel Adu-Mireku, Ph.D.

**Course # and Name:** SOCI 590-01—Advanced Social Science Methods

**Office Location:** Taylor Social Science Building, Room 201      **Semester Credit Hours:** 3.0

**Office hours:** Mon. & Tue 3:00-5:30 p.m. and by appointment

**Day and Time Class Meets:** Tue (6:00 – 8:50 P.M.)      **Office Phone:** 910-672-1176

**Total Contact Hours for Class:** 48      **Location:** Helen T. Chick Building (HTC 216-B)

**Email Address:** sadu-mireku@uncfsu.edu

**FSU Policy on Electronic Mail:** Fayetteville State University provides to each student, free of charge, an electronic mail account ([username@uncfsu.edu](mailto:username@uncfsu.edu)) that is easily accessible via the Internet. The university has established FSU email as the primary mode of correspondence between university officials and enrolled students. Inquiries and requests from students pertaining to academic records, grades, bills, financial aid, and other matters of a confidential nature must be submitted via FSU email. Inquiries or requests from personal email accounts are not assured a response. The university maintains open-use computer laboratories throughout the campus that can be used to access electronic mail.

Rules and regulations governing the use of FSU email may be found at  
<http://www.uncfsu.edu/PDFs/EmailPolicyFinal.pdf>

**II. Course Description:** SOCI 590 is an advanced study of the various sociological research methods, with emphasis on research design, questionnaire construction, the construction and use of surveys, uses of available data, methods of collecting data and analyzing data, the testing of hypotheses, the drawing of inferences, and the writing of the research report. (*Prerequisites: SOCI 503; SOCI 335*)

**III. Disabled Student Services:** In accordance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ACA) of 1990, if you have a disability or think you have a disability to please contact the Center for Personal Development in the Spaulding Building, Room 155 (1<sup>st</sup> Floor); 910-672-1203.

**IV. Textbook:**

Babbie, Earl. 2008. *The Basics of Social Research*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

**Additional Reading**

American Sociological Association. 2010. *American Sociological Association Style Guide*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Washington, DC: American Sociological Association.

Green, Samuel B and Neil J. Salkind. 2011. *Using SPSS for Windows and Macintosh: Analyzing and Understanding Data*. 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Johnson, William A., Richard P. Rettig, Gregory M. Scott, and Stephen M. Garrison. 2010. *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

## V. COURSE GOALS and OBJECTIVES

As social science practitioners, our findings and conclusions about the social world must be based on research—a systematic process by which we investigate and improve our understanding of the social world. In addition, research enables the practitioner to identify questions and the appropriate methods and designs to make observations and interpret the results.

*SOCI 590*, therefore, is an advanced study of the research process. We will systematically review and discuss all aspects of the research process. The course will introduce you to how the social scientist selects a research problem, designs studies, collects data, analyzes the data, interprets the results, and draws valid conclusions. Also, you will learn how to integrate both qualitative and quantitative methods and techniques into social research. Above all, you will learn about the ethical responsibilities of the social science researcher.

In addition to gaining the theoretical knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary to conduct social research, you will also gain practical knowledge on “how to do” research through class exercises and a research project. You will also gain hands-on experience and the skills necessary to integrate computer resources into social research by using *SPSS for Windows* software for your data analysis.

### Student Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course, you should be able to:

1. Design a research project using both primary and secondary data by identifying a research problem, reviewing relevant literature, selecting variables, formulating hypotheses, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting findings, and presenting results.
2. Use a statistical package such as *SPSS* to analyze research data.
3. Interpret statistics (*SPSS*) output and provide theoretical explanations for statistical patterns.
4. Evaluate information and data reported in the popular press and in scientific journals using critical thinking skills developed in the course.
5. Prepare a manuscript that is suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.
6. Effectively communicate research findings, both in written and oral form, with the aid of PowerPoint.
7. Demonstrate knowledge of ethical requirements in social research as evidenced by successful completion of NIH’s online human subjects certificate course.

## VI. Course Requirements

The following are the minimum requirements of *SOCI 590*:

1. Attend class regularly and actively participate in class discussions.
2. Read all assigned materials in the course textbook, recommended materials, class lecture notes, and class handouts.
3. Take two (2) comprehensive examinations.
4. Complete all in-class and out-of-class exercises.
5. Successfully complete a research project. A research proposal is required for your project. The research proposal must be approved before you continue with the actual research project. You must successfully complete all four (4) phases of the research project to receive a passing grade for the course. If you fail to successfully complete any one of the four (4) phases of the research project you will not receive a passing grade for the course. The specific

requirements for the project will be discussed in class and also posted on Blackboard under the Research Project menu tab.

6. Make two oral presentations (research proposal and final research report). You may use *PowerPoint* slides during your presentations.

### Evaluation Criteria

#### a. Assigned Grades

Grade	Credit Hours	Quality Points	Meaning
A	Hours attempted and earned	4 per credit hour;	Superior
B	Hours attempted and earned	3 per credit hour	Good
C	Hours attempted and earned	2 per credit hour	Marginal (acceptable for graduate credit)
F	Hours attempted – Not earned	0 per credit hour	Failure (any level of performance below “C”)
FN	Hours attempted – Not earned	0 per credit hour	Failing due to non-attendance. (Student registered, but <u>never</u> attended.)
W	Hours attempted – Not earned	No impact on GPA	Class withdrawal prior to deadline (see Academic Calendar)

Adding your total points and dividing the sum by the total possible points for the course will determine the course grade (Total earned points/Total possible points) \* 100 = Your Grade Score

**Course Grading Scale:** A=Superior (90-100); B=Good (80-89); C=Marginal—acceptable for graduate credit (73-79); F=Failure—any level of performance below C.

#### b. Attendance Requirements

Regular attendance is a key factor to passing this course; therefore, I will record your attendance for each class meeting.

#### c. Graded Assignments

The course grade will be based on class exercises, two tests, a research proposal, an IRB report, and a final research paper. You will be tested on materials from lectures, class handouts, recommended reading materials, and the course textbook. Adding your total points and dividing the sum by the total possible points for the course will determine the course grade.

**Value of Each Assignment:** None of your test, quiz, and assignment scores will be weighted in computing your final grade

**d. Policy on Missed or Late Assignments**

If you miss a test without any prior notification, you will receive zero score on that particular test. You will be permitted to take a make-up test ONLY if you inform me at least a week before the scheduled date for the test. Any request for a make-up test must be accompanied by appropriate documentation. NOTE: You may not be permitted to make up class exercises that have been graded and returned to students. Since I will be discussing every graded assignment in class, it will not be fair to students who turn in their completed assignments on time for me to accept late assignments. Therefore, I expect you to adhere strictly to deadlines for class exercises and projects.

**e. Other: Academic Dishonesty**

Fayetteville State University's policy on academic dishonesty will be enforced. Please refer to the Student Handbook.

**Student Behavior Expectations:** As the instructor for this class, I will respect all students and will make every effort to maintain a classroom climate that promotes learning for all students. Students must accept their responsibility for maintaining a positive classroom environment by abiding by the following rules:

1. Students are expected to arrive to class on time, remain in class until dismissed by me, and refrain from preparing to leave class until it is dismissed.
2. Student/teacher relationships, as well as relationships among peers, must be respectful at all times.
3. Students are not permitted to wear headphones or other electronic gadgets that may be distracting to the classroom environment.
4. Students must refrain from any activity that will disrupt the class; this includes browsing unauthorized websites; and turning off cell phones and pagers.
5. Students are not permitted to use profanity in the classroom.
6. Students will not pass notes or carry on private conversations while class is being conducted.

**Consequences for Failing to Meet Behavioral Expectations:** The first time a student violates one of these rules, I will warn him or her privately, either after class or before the next class. I reserve the right to warn students publicly, if needed. The second time a student violates any one of the guidelines, I may deduct as many as twenty (20) points from the student's next exam grade. If a student violates the guidelines three times, I will report the student to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action according to the FSU Code of Student Conduct.

**VI. Academic Support Resources:**

- (i) Writing Center (Location—Helen T. Chick Building -- 001B; 672-1033)

## VII. Course Outline and Exam Schedule

This is a very flexible schedule. Adjustments will be made to accommodate how fast or slow students comprehend materials in each chapter.

### Unit 1—The Basics of Social Research

Introduction/overview; Human inquiry and social research;

Doing sociological research; Ethical consideration; Theory and social research; Research and design;

#### Assignment for Unit 1

- 1) Read chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4 of Babbie

**Additional Reading from UNC-Chapel Hill Writing Center:**

Topics: URL-- <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/index.html>

1. *Reading to Write*
2. *Writing Anxiety*
3. *Plagiarism*
4. *Literature reviews*
5. *Reading for Specific Fields—Sociology*

- 2) Review articles: (a) Adu-Mireku, S. (2002). Fear of crime among residents of three communities in Accra, Ghana. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 43(2), 153-168; (b) Klomegah, R. (2006). Sexual behavior and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa: A comparative analysis of Swaziland and Niger. *International Review of Modern Sociology*, 37(2), 217-237.

### Unit 2—The Research Proposal

Conceptualizing your research idea; Framing research questions; Deriving objectives from research questions; Review of literature; Hypotheses formulation; Methodological issues (participants or subjects; data consideration—primary or secondary data; variables selection; analytical techniques); Budget; Timeline.

#### The Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirement

Complete NIH's Protecting Human Research Participants course.

Available: <http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>

#### Assignment for Unit 2

- 1) Read chapters 4 & 15 of Babbie.
- 2) Read handout on literature review:  
Available: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/index.html>
- 2) Prepare a research proposal and an IRB report
- 3) Oral presentation of research proposal and IRB report

### Unit 3—Theory, Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement

Units of analysis; Ecological fallacy vs. reductionism; Levels of measurement; Correlation vs. causation; Spurious relationships; Reliability vs. validity; Indexes vs. scales

#### Assignment for Unit 3

- 1) Read chapters 2, 5 & 6 of Babbie

### Unit 4— Methodology, Results and Statistical Interpretation

Retrieving a data set; Creating data file, SPSS data management; Running multivariate statistics and interpreting results; Creating tables and formatting SPSS results for publication.

#### Assignment for Unit 4

- 1) Read articles/book:
  - DeMaris, Alfred. 1995. "A Tutorial in Logistic Regression." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 57:956-968.
  - Lottes, Ilsa L., Marina A. Adler, and Alfred DeMaris. 1996. "Using and Interpreting Logistic Regression: A Guide for Teachers and Students." *Teaching Sociology* 24:284-298.
  - Allison, Paul D. 1998. *Multiple Regression: A Primer*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

### Unit 5— Designing Surveys

Asking questions; Questionnaire construction; Survey designs; Self-administered questionnaires; Interview surveys; Telephone surveys; Strengths and weaknesses of survey research

#### Assignment for Unit 5

- 1) Read chapter 13 & 14 of Babbie
- 2) Read chapter/books:
  - Read chapter 9 of Babbie

Czaja, Ronald and Johnny Blair. 2005. *Designing Surveys: A Guide to Decisions and Procedures*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Babbie, Earl, Fred S. Halley, Jeanne Zaino, and William E. Wagner, III. 2011. *Adventures in Social Research: Data Analysis Using IBM SPSS Statistics*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

### Unit 6— The Logic of Sampling

Sampling methods and types; Sampling distributions; Probability vs. non-probability Sampling

#### Assignment for Unit 6

- 1) Read chapter 7 of Babbie

- 2) Analyze and compare national polling results on a current topic

### **Unit 7— Qualitative Field and Unobtrusive research**

Qualitative interviewing  
Observational techniques

#### **Assignment for Unit 7**

- 1) Read chapter 10 & 11 of Babbie

### **Unit 8— Evaluation research**

Evaluation vs. basic research; why evaluate? Formative evaluation vs. Summative evaluation;  
Methodological issues in program evaluation

#### **Assignment for Unit 8**

- 1) Read chapter 12 of Babbie
- 2) Weiss, Carol H. 1998. *Evaluation: Methods for Studying Programs and Policies*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

### **Unit 9— Research Paper**

This is a continuous unit. The research project will be ongoing throughout the semester. Additional information, including guidelines for the proposal and the final paper, as well as the rubric for grading, will be posted on Blackboard.  
Oral Presentation of Research Paper (PowerPoint required)

### **Examinations** **Midterm and Finals**

#### **VIII. Teaching Strategies**

Effective participation in class discussions will be expected. It is extremely important that you read all assigned topics before coming to class. If you do, you will be able to raise questions or comments during class discussions. While reading, pay close attention to theories, statistical data, and key concepts. Underline or write down important concepts and key terms from the reading materials.

#### **IX. Bibliography**

Adler, Emily S and Roger Clark. 2011. *An Invitation to Social Research: How It's Done*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth--Cengage Learning.

Babbie, Earl, Fred S. Halley, Jeanne Zaino, and William E. Wagner, III. 2011. *Adventures in Social Research: Data Analysis Using IBM SPSS Statistics*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Bailey, Carol A. 2007. *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Czaja, Ronald and Johnny Blair. 2005. *Designing Surveys: A Guide to Decisions and Procedures*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

George, Darren and Paul Mallery. 2006. *SPSS for Windows Step-by-Step: A Simple Guide and Reference 13.0 update*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Norusis, Marija J. 2012. *IBM SPSS Statistics 19.0 Statistical Procedures Companion*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Norusis, Marija J. 2012. *IBM SPSS Statistics 19.0 Guide to Data Analysis*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Sweet, Stephen A. and Karen Grace-Martin. 2003. *Data Analysis with SPSS: A First Course In Applied Statistics*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Thomas, Susan J. 2004. *Using Web and Paper Questionnaires for Data-Based Decision Making: From Design to Interpretation of the Results*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Weiss, Carol H. 1998. *Evaluation: Methods for Studying Programs and Policies*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.