MASTER SYLLABUS

SSCI 370: Research Methods in the Social Sciences

Created by: D.Muehl / D. LeBoeuf-Davis
Updated by: Daniel McLane, Ph.D.

SCHOOL of BUSINESS AND LIBERAL ARTS
SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT
Last Updated: Fall 2021
SPRING 2022
A. **TITLE:** Research Methods in the Social Sciences

B. **COURSE NUMBER:** SSCI 370

C. **CREDIT HOURS:** 3 Lecture Hours per Week for 15 Weeks

D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE:** Yes

E. **GER CATEGORY:** No

F. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:** Fall and Spring

G. **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**
In this course students will engage in a comprehensive study of the scientific research methods utilized in the social and health sciences. Students are trained to be critical consumers of published research. Topics covered include the scientific method; critically evaluating research; qualitative and quantitative research analysis; operationalization and measurement, sampling techniques, surveys, field research, secondary data analysis, experimental research, correlation; and data management, analysis, and interpretation.

H. **PRE-REQUISITES:** ENGL 101, MATH 141 and PSYC 101 or SOCI 101 or ECON 101 or ECON 103 or permission of instructor

**CO-REQUISITES:** None

I. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Student Learning Outcome [SLO]</th>
<th>ISLO &amp; Sub-Sets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Compare and contrast the basic qualitative and quantitative research designs commonly used in the</td>
<td>2 – Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>social and health sciences.</td>
<td>[CA]</td>
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<td>b. Apply the scientific method to a research question within their discipline.</td>
<td>2 – Critical Thinking [IA]</td>
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<td>c. Critically evaluate published research in their discipline.</td>
<td>2 – Critical Thinking [CA]</td>
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<td>d. Demonstrate an understanding of one, or more, research method(s) and design(s).</td>
<td>2 – Critical Thinking [PS]</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY</th>
<th>Institutional Student Learning Outcomes [ISLO 1 – 5]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISLO #</td>
<td>ISLO &amp; Subsets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oral [O], Written [W]</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical Analysis [CA], Inquiry &amp; Analysis [IA], Problem Solving [PS]</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Foundational Skills</td>
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<td>Information Management [IM], Quantitative Lit, /Reasoning [QTR]</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ethical Reasoning [ER], Global Learning [GL], Intercultural Knowledge [IK], Teamwork [T]</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Industry, Professional, Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills</td>
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J. **APPLIED LEARNING COMPONENT:** Yes - Research

K. **TEXTS:** To be determined by the instructor

L. **REFERENCES:**

M. **EQUIPMENT:** Technology Enhanced Classroom

N. **GRADING METHOD:** A - F

O. **SUGGESTED MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS:**
   - Exams • Quizzes • Assignments/Research Paper • Participation/Discussion

P. **DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE:**
   - I. The Scientific Method
a. Overview of the research process  
b. Units of analysis  
c. Hypotheses and theories  
d. Deductive and inductive reasoning  
e. Ethics  
f. Institutional Review Boards (CITI Certification)  
g. Generating and developing research ideas  

II. Understanding and Consuming Research  
a. Using databases  
b. Interpreting results  
c. Drawing conclusions  
d. Evaluation of the Research Article:  
   o Title  
   o Abstract  
   o Literature Review  
Methods:  
   o Operationalization and measurement  
   o Sample characteristics  
   o Research design  
   o Results  
   o Discussion  

III. Measurement  
a. Reliability  
b. Validity  
c. Measuring constructs  
d. Individual differences  
e. Self-report measures  

IV. Sampling  
a. Sample size  
b. Representativeness  
c. Sampling distributions  
d. Recruiting your sample  

V. Experimental Design  
a. Issues in laboratory research: external validity vs. control  
b. Conditions of causality  
c. Experiments  
d. Quasi-experimental research  
e. Within subjects designs  

VI. Surveys and Interviews  
a. Survey development  
   o Psychometric properties  
b. Interviews  
   o Structured
VII. Research Designs
   a. Qualitative research
   b. Triangulation
   c. Case studies
   d. Quantitative research
   e. Qualitative versus quantitative designs
   f. Analyzing qualitative and quantitative data

VIII. Field, Observational, and Archival Research
   a. Field experiments
   b. Observational research
   c. Archival research
   d. Coding data

IX. Meta-Analysis
   o Sources of data
   o Using secondary data

X. Data management, analysis, and interpretation
   a. Storage and management of data
   b. Appropriate statistical methods and data reporting
   c. Significance testing and effect size
   d. Writing a research report
      o Title
      o Abstract
      o Literature Review
      o Methods
      o Results
      o Discussion

XI. Using research results
   a. Program evaluation
   b. Using research as evidence-based practice
   c. Publications
      o Academic
      o Practitioner-oriented