

School of Global Studies  
SGS 305  
Research Methods  
Spring 09



**Instructor:**

**Dr. Pamela McElwee**  
Assistant Professor,  
School of Global Studies  
West Hall Room 150  
pamela.mcelwee@asu.edu  
727-0736

**Time: MW 12:00-1:15**  
**Location: Phys Science A 106**  
**Line #: 26556**

**Office Hours:**

Wed: 10-11:30 am  
Other times by email appt.

Main Office for School of Global Studies:  
West Hall 140  
727-8286

## Course Description

This course is designed to provide a broad introduction to social science research methods and design, particularly the social science methods used to analyze global problems. Consideration is given to both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. The course differs from other courses on research design in that it is decidedly interdisciplinary in nature (drawing on literature from nearly all branches of the social sciences: anthropology, political science, sociology, geography and economics) and it consciously addresses the unique nature of social science research within global studies. Through the use of case study material in addition to literature on the methods themselves, students will be able to understand more deeply both the social science and the policy issues often being discussed on the global stage. We will in particular pay attention to questions of 'how do we know what we know about the globe'? That is, what is the role of a researcher and the role of social science in helping to assess and understand complicated global issues?

*Requirements:*

There are no prerequisites for this course, but students must be sophomores or above, or have the instructor's permission to enroll, as this is an upper division course. The course serves as a required course for all Global Studies majors, regardless of their topical track, and you must be a global studies major or have the instructor's permission (if, for example, you are thinking of switching majors) to enroll. This is a writing and reading intensive class, so you will need to be prepared for a large amount of homework. The class is taught in both fall and spring semesters, and it counts as an L distribution course for General Studies credit.

*Objectives:*

The course has three objectives.

- \* To understand competing approaches to research design, and their philosophical differences.
- \* To get better acquainted with specific research methodologies, including in person interviews, survey design, field observation, comparative research, and case studies.
- \* To facilitate students in making informed choices over research design and methodological choices for the questions they seek to answer, and to judge and evaluate the quality of others' projects and methodologies.

### **Required Reading**

There is one required text for the course. Please make sure you have the right edition of the textbook:  
Babbie, E (2003). *The Practice of Social Research*. 11th Ed. Belmont CA, Wadsworth.

There is one recommended text for the course.

Booth, WC, et al.(2003). *The Craft of Research*. 2nd Edition. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

There will also be supplemental readings that will be available on the class Blackboard site. Students are responsible for accessing and reading these supplemental articles.

### **Requirements & Grading**

This course will serve as a vehicle to emphasize reading skills, discussion skills, and research skills of the student. There will be a fairly intense amount of reading spread throughout the semester, as well as extensive writing. Please budget your time for homework that you can devote the necessary time to staying up to date with the readings. Students are expected to do all of the required readings for the assigned dates and to be prepared to discuss them in class. I reserve the right to call on any student in class: please be prepared! Pop quizzes may be given at any time throughout the semester, particularly if I feel discussion is suffering from a lack of preparation.

Other written work and their points are listed in the table below. Dates and details will be finalized throughout the course. Please discuss with me if any assignment or due date is unclear.

### **Grades**

There are 100 points that are possible to achieve in the work in this class. I will grade according to the following scale. (According to university policy, C- and D+ are not available.) Cutoffs are firm, especially the use of pluses and minuses.

#### *Grading Scale*

A	90 - 100
A-	89
B+	88
B	80 - 87
B-	79
C+	78
C	70 - 77
D	60 - 69
E	- 59

## Assignments

The points you will be graded on in the class include the following assignments:

Assignment	Points (100 total)	Due Date
Draft outline of research design paper	5	Feb 25, in class
Midterm exam	10	Mar 4, in class
Practice exercises	30 (10 each)	Apr 1, Apr 13, Apr 22 in class
Final research design paper	25	May 4
Final Exam	20	May 13
Attendance/Participation/Discussion (may include pop quizzes)	10	All semester

All assignments are due in class, with the exception of the final paper which is to be turned in online to a Safe Assignments drop area on Blackboard. This means they are NOT to be emailed to the instructor, or dropped off at my mailbox after class, etc. In class means in class, and any assignment not turned in at the proper class time begins to be considered late immediately following the class in which it was due. Late assignments will be penalized 5 points per day late, with the exception of the final paper, for which I will accept NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS. Any paper not turned in on May 4 will not receive a grade for the final paper assignment. There are no exceptions: if you anticipate having a problem with this deadline, turn in your paper early.

### *Practice Exercises:*

A series of short exercises related to survey research, interviews, and field observations will constitute 30% of the grade. Each is worth 10 points, and will involve you 'practicing' a research method through interactions with people in your dorm, work, family, etc. You will be required to conduct an interview, survey and participant observation and then write up your results and your analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each method. The format for these exercises will be discussed in class.

### *Research Paper:*

One major research design essay (approximately 15-20 pages) will be required of each student, and will comprise 30% of the total grade for the course. This essay will deal with a proposal for an individual research project or interest (such as a prospective senior or honors thesis, or summer research proposal) and the proposed methods to address the research question asked. The final paper must have at least 10 sources in the bibliography, and class discussion will explain what are considered legitimate sources (i.e. Wikipedia is NOT a legitimate academic source). A short 1-2 page outline and sample bibliography for the long paper will be due Feb. 25 and should focus on describing the research question, the methods to be explored, and what format the final paper will take. This short synopsis will enable the instructor to better assist students ahead of time with the longer paper. The final paper will be due May 4.

The criteria for the research paper is as follows:

1. The paper must be typed in 12 point font and be double spaced.
2. The paper must be in a standard bibliographic format (see Chicago Manual of Style or Turabian's Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.)

3. You must turn in the draft outline and sample bibliography Feb 25, so that I can see where you hope to go with the paper and give you advice on ways to approach your topic.
4. The paper must be turned in on the date due of May 4. NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. PERIOD.
5. Papers must be turned in on the Safe Assignments area of our Blackboard site. You are responsible for uploading in the correct format on time.
6. Papers should be proofed carefully, and please pay attention to readability and writing style, as well as to content. An A paper is not only well-researched, but well-written. I am willing to help review one early draft of papers if you give it to me with two week's notice. Please see me if you would like this assistance.

### **Exams:**

There will be a mid-term and final exam, which will constitute 30% of your total grade for the course. Exam format will be announced in class prior to the exam. There will be no make up exams for those who miss the in-class exam unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor, or the student has an excuse signed by a dean. There are no exceptions to this rule; students who miss exams without an excuse or prior arrangement will receive a 0 for the exam.

### **Blackboard Information**

This course has a Blackboard site. The site contains the syllabus and any supplemental required readings (marked with an asterisk on the schedule below). I will also post on the website announcements, class lecture notes, and extra handouts/readings. The website is only a supplemental aid, and not a replacement for attending class.

### **Attendance and Make-ups**

*Attendance:* Because this is a seminar-type class, and because it is a required class for the major, attendance and participation is an important part of making the class work. You will be allowed 3 'free' missed days of class; after that, any absence without a Dean's/Doctors excuse or without clearing it with me ahead of time will result in a deduction of points from your grade. Each unexcused absence beyond your 3 'freebies' will deduct 5 points from your grade; no exceptions. I will take attendance at every class period and it is YOUR responsibility to make sure you are signed in if you come late, leave early, etc. Additionally, if you cannot attend a class it is YOUR responsibility to obtain notes, syllabi changes, assignments etc. from another student.

#### *Make-ups for assignments:*

If you know you will have to miss class in advance because of something beyond your control (NOT, for example, a routine appointment), let me know (with relevant documentation) in time to arrange when you should hand in any work. Make-up after the fact is available only for a documented emergency. Students who will miss class due to an athletic competition or other official university events are required to follow official ASU policies if they wish to make up an assignment. Those who fail to do so will not be accommodated. You must notify me immediately, and at that time we can make arrangements for turning in missed work. For exams, there will be no make up exams for those who miss the in-class exam unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor, or the student has an excuse signed by a dean. In all cases, you must notify me with adequate documentation in a timely manner.

### **Withdrawals and Incompletes**

*Incompletes:* I will not give incompletes for this course, except for extreme and ongoing situations such as family problems or illnesses that you or an immediate family member suffer that would make it impossible for you to come to class. Documentation is required. *Withdrawals:* Please see me if you feel you will need to withdraw from the class. You will need to follow ASU and SGS rules on dates for withdrawal.

## Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is not tolerated in any shape or form. There are severe sanctions for cheating, plagiarizing and any other form of dishonesty, such as turning in the same work for more than one class, among other things (see <http://www.asu.edu/clas/ssfd/documents/Academic%20Integrity%20Brochure.pdf>). It is YOUR responsibility to be aware of what constitutes plagiarism: in the “Student Academic Integrity Policy” manual, ASU defines “Plagiarism” [as] using another's words, ideas, materials or work without properly acknowledging and documenting the source. Students are responsible for knowing the rules governing the use of another's work or materials and for acknowledging and documenting the source appropriately.” This means that you must use quotation marks when you quote a source directly, and acknowledge the source when paraphrasing as well as quoting. Lifting ideas and concepts from sources to form the major argument of your work, even if you include the original citation in the bibliography, is also a form of plagiarism. So is buying/borrowing papers others have written. Don't do it.

**I have a zero tolerance policy on academic dishonesty: An initial incident will result in the student receiving a zero for the assignment. A second incident will result in a F in the class, and a grade of XE is an option for cases in which I feel there has been serious misconduct.**

There may be additional university consequences, including expulsion. Please see ASU's Office of Student Life: “Student Academic Integrity Policy”, which all students are expected to follow: [http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife/judicial/academic\\_integrity.htm](http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife/judicial/academic_integrity.htm)

## Other Policies

*Please note the following.*

1. There is no extra credit work.
2. The classroom is a place of mutual respect. Everyone is expected to treat each other and his/her questions and comments with civility. Cell phones must be off or on silent. Please, no text messaging, surfing websites, reading outside material, and the like during class. If you are using a computer during class I reserve the right to ensure you are using it for class purposes.
3. Announcements and instructions throughout the course (in class and on Blackboard) will amplify, supplement, and possibly change the syllabus. The student is responsible for keeping up-to-date on these announcements and for understanding any changes.
4. Email is a medium for communication with the instructor that should be used sparingly, and with respect. Please do not email me expecting an immediate answer, or email with a question the night before an assignment is due. Use the instructor's office hours to discuss projects and class questions in depth, rather than email, which should be reserved for only basic communication. I do not usually answer email on weekends or evenings so please plan ahead accordingly.
5. If you have any disability or need any special consideration in the classroom or with assignments, please see me so that we can make appropriate arrangements. You may contact the Disability Resource Center at (480) 965-1234 or [www.asu.edu/drc](http://www.asu.edu/drc) for more information.

## Outline and Schedule of Class Periods and Readings

\* Readings marked with a star are found on the Blackboard site for the class.

-- This schedule is subject to change; refer to announcements in class--

### Part I - Building Blocks and Foundations of Social Science

#### WEEK 1: Introduction to “Social Science” and to “Methods”

Jan 21: Introduction to the class

#### WEEK 2: Role of Theory in Social Research

*Recommended: Booth, Ch 1, 2, 3 & 4*

Jan 26: Why do we need social science research to understand the world? And what is research, anyway?

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 1, “Human Inquiry and Science”.

Jan 28: A Brief Review of Major Social Theories

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 2, "Paradigms, Theory, and Research", p. 31-43.

#### WEEK 3: Basics of Social Science Research

Feb 2: Links between theory and research

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 2, "Paradigms, Theory, and Research", continued p. 43-59.

Feb 4: Understanding and bridging the qualitative/quantitative research divide

**Required:** \*Bryman, A. (1988). "The debate about quantitative and qualitative research." In *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. London: Unwin Hyman. p. 72-91

#### WEEK 4: Research Design

Feb 9. Ethical Research

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 3 “The Ethics and Politics of Social Research”.

Feb 11: Designing an Original Research Project

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 4 "Research Design”.

#### WEEK 5. Literature Reviews for Research Design

*Recommended: Booth, Ch 5, 6*

Feb 16: Using Secondary Sources and Understanding the Quality of Sources

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 17 “Reading and Writing Social Research”, Appendix A “Using the Library”

Feb 18: Elements of a Research Proposal

**Required:** \* Higson-Smith, C. 2000. *Writing Your Research Proposal: A Workbook for First Time and Inexperienced Researchers in the Social Sciences and Humanities*. National Research Foundation, South Africa.

## **WEEK 6: Research Framing**

*Recommended: Booth, Ch 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13*

Feb 23: Major Concepts in Research Projects

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 5 "Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement"

Feb 25: Using Indexes and Scales as Measurement Frames

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 6 "Index, Scales and Typologies".

**Assignment Due: Draft Research Paper Outline and Bibliography**

## **WEEK 7: Review and Midterm**

Mar 2: Midterm Review

Mar 4: MIDTERM

## **SPRING BREAK MAR 8-15**

## **WEEK 8: Finding Research Subjects - Sampling**

Mar 16. Non-Probabilistic and Probabilistic Sampling

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 7 "The Logic of Sampling"

Mar 18. Understanding Polling and Other Uses of Sampling Frames

**Required:** Babbie, Appendix G, "20 Questions A Journalist Should Ask About Poll Results"

**Required:** Katz, D., Ehlich, N. and Hembroff, L. 2006. "Understanding Public Opinion Surveys." Mackinac Center for Public Policy: <http://www.mackinac.org/article.aspx?ID=8011>

## **PART II - Research Methods in Practice**

### **WEEK 9-10: Qualitative Methods**

Mar 23: What is Qualitative Research and when is it used?

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 10 "Qualitative Field Research".

Discuss Practice Exercise 1: Participant Observation

Mar 25: Participant Observation

**Required:** \*Taylor and Bogdan (1998). Ch 3, "Participant Observation: In the Field". In Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods. New York: John Wiley, p. 44-85

Mar 30: Interviewing

**Required:** \*Bernard, HR (1996). Ch. 9. "Interviewing: Unstructured and Semi-structured", in Research Methods in Anthropology, p 203-239

Discuss Practice Exercise 2: Interviewing

Apr 1: Unobtrusive Research

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 11 "Unobtrusive research".

**Assignment Due: Practice Exercise 1.**

## **WEEK 11-12: Quantitative Methods**

Apr 6: Surveys/questionnaires

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 9 "Survey Research".

Discuss Practice Exercise 3: Surveys

Apr 8: Writing survey questions

**Required:** \*Fowler, FJ and TW Mangione (1990) "The Role of Question Design in Standardized Interviewing." In *Standardized Survey Interviewing: Minimizing Interviewer Related Error*. London: Sage, p 77-95.

Apr 13: Carrying out surveys

**Required:** \* Davies, M.B (2007). "Carrying out your survey." In *Doing a Successful Research Project*. New York: Palgrave, pp 70-81

**Assignment Due: Practice Exercise 2.**

Apr 15: Experiments

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 8 "Experiments".

## **PART III - Data Analysis and Presentation of Results**

### **WEEK 13-15: Data Analysis and Statistics for the Social Sciences**

*Recommended: Booth, Ch 14, 15, &16*

Apr 20: Choosing Analysis

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 13 "Qualitative Data Analysis".

Apr 22: Statistical Analysis for Social Problems

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 14 "Quantitative Data Analysis".

**Assignment Due: Practice Exercise 3.**

Apr 27: Statistics, continued

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 16 "Statistical Analysis", p. 450-459

Apr 29: Statistics, continued

**Required:** Babbie, Ch 16 "Statistical Analysis", p. 460-487

### **WEEK 18: Conclusions**

May 4: FINAL EXAM REVIEW

**Final Paper Due**

May 13: FINAL EXAM