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COMM SCI 301—spring 2012 FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

Foundations of Social Research is a comprehensive overview of the ways scientists and historians study social life. Course materials and lectures explore ways of knowing and understanding, the ethics and politics of science, and several qualitative and quantitative research strategies including content analysis, experimentation, ethnographic (field work), historical-comparative analysis, participatory research action, survey design, and use of archival data. The course goal is to further the development of scientific literacy among college students. There are two objectives for achieving this goal: (1) identify on quizzes and two examinations information covered in course materials and lectures; (2) demonstrate a grasp of the scientific method by producing two written works, a research proposal on an approved topic in the social sciences and a qualitative research project.

Course materials All items listed are required. The primary textbook is Earl Babbie's *The Basics of Social Research*, fourth edition, available at the Phoenix Bookstore. Articles, essays, and book chapters are obtainable on the course D2L site (see schedule). PowerPoint files used during lecture also appear on D2L after lectures are delivered in class. Style manuals identified in the syllabus are accessible at the library or in bookstores worldwide. Other materials (syllabi, writing guides, study guides, etc.) are found on the course web page: <http://www.uwgb.edu/austina/courses/rm/main.htm>. Class time is primarily structured as a series of lectures. To encourage active thinking among students, lectures are often not explicitly tied to specific textual material. Students are expected to keep up with and integrate readings with lectures.

COURSE COMPONENTS

Online Quizzes (25 points) Quizzes designed to facilitate the reading portion of the course are administered through D2L and cover all assigned readings. Most every week opens with a quiz, which is available for 72 hours and accessible at 8:30 the morning of the first day and closing at 8:30 the morning of the fourth day. For example, a quiz that opens on Monday morning will close the same time Thursday morning. In some weeks two quizzes may appear, with the second quiz becoming available on the second day of the week. Each quiz, comprised of five questions, in multiple-choice and true/false format, is timed for 10 minutes and is worth 5 points. The number of quizzes is determined by the pace of the semester. Only the five highest scoring quizzes are retained for the final quiz grade; all others are dropped. Quizzes cannot be made up for any reason. A missed quiz either becomes a dropped quiz or earns a zero (depending on whether the student has accomplished at least five quizzes). An announcement in the course email clarifies what readings the quiz covers each week if we fall behind the schedule. Regular emails review items from quizzes following administration. Quiz review emails are sent only once; students are responsible for retaining copies.

Examinations (75 points) Exams cover all course material. Students take exams in class without benefit of notes or texts. A number two pencil and student ID is required. Students must place notebooks, book bags, and other items under the desk or behind or under their chair while exams are in progress. Students may not wear hats or sunglasses during exam. Cell phones and other electronic devices must be

turned off (unless there is a legitimate request for accommodation). Students should shield their answers from other students. If space permits, there should be a chair's distance between test takers. I may use different versions of the exams for security purposes. Cheating on an exam will result in a zero for that exam and referral to the Dean of Students. Please leave quietly after finishing. I do not return exams to students. I post scores on D2L. The midterm exam is worth 25 points. The comprehensive final exam is worth 50 points.

I have identified a date for the mid-term exam in the schedule; however, due to the emergent pace of lecture that date is subject to change. The university determines the final exam schedule. See the schedule below or consult the official university schedule for that date. Students may not reschedule a missed exam except in the case of a legitimate and verifiable emergency, such as a car accident, death of a close family member, or sudden serious illness. A compelling and verifiable reason must accompany a request for rescheduling an exam prior to its scheduled administration and should be processed through the Dean of Students. I use my discretion in judging the merits of cases. Any request to take the exam under different circumstances on the grounds of disability must be officially recognized and arranged several days before exam time, preferably at the beginning of the semester.

Research Proposal (50 points) A research proposal is a plan to conduct research on a topic in the domain of the social sciences or relevant practical field. Research is rigorous experimentation or investigation for the production of generalized knowledge aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, testing of hypotheses and revision of accepted theories in the light of facts, or practical application of new or revised theories. The social sciences typically include the disciplines of anthropology, criminology, economics, geography, political science, and sociology. Some definitions also include certain approaches in the disciplines of history, linguistics, and psychology (please consult the instructor before proceeding in one of these disciplines). A relevant practical field includes community organizing, education, and social work. Students will not conduct actual or mock research for this assignment. There can be no original human subjects data gathered for this project. For purposes of this project, exploratory research or fieldwork based on the constant comparative or similar methods are considered inappropriate, since these methods are covered by the other written assignment for this class. Students are to read and follow the online guide for all written work in this class:

URL: [http://www.uwgb.edu/austina/courses/guide to writing/Guide to Writing.htm](http://www.uwgb.edu/austina/courses/guide%20to%20writing/Guide%20to%20Writing.htm)

A proper research proposal contains the following components organized in sections: (1) *Title page*. The proposal must have an original, informative, and engaging title. (2) *Executive summary* (or project summary) page. (3) *Introduction*, which introduces the subject, generates reader interest in the topic, poses a research problem/question, places the study in the context of the scholarly literature, identifies the theoretical approach and its attendant method, and addresses the relevance and importance of the planned study. (The executive summary is a shortened version of an introduction.) (4) *Literature review* (not "literary" review), which consults a minimum of eight relevant scholarly (academic) full-text sources (peer-reviewed articles, books, and/or reports) specifying a theory, isolating key concepts (dependent, independent, and mediating variables), and defining terms. (5) Explanation of planned *methodology*, including operationalization of concepts/variables, presentation of hypothesis or hypotheses, description of population and (if used) sampling strategy, instrumentation (e.g. survey instrument), procedure and time frame, and data analysis (e.g. significance tests). This component must address validity and reliability, make assumptions plain, identify limitations and delimitations, and address any ethical issues associated with the study. (6) *Conclusion* in the form of a summary of the proposal and restatement of purpose and significance of planned research. (7) *Works cited page*, which includes only those sources cited in the proposal (students are encouraged to go beyond the required eight). (8) *Appendices*, if

needed, for charts, diagrams, sample instrumentation, etc. (9) *Photocopies* of the first (and only the first) pages of eight required articles and/or books cited in the proposal. Search engine generated results are unacceptable. A student must be in possession of the article or book to use it. An example of a proposal can be found on the course web page:

URL: http://www.uwgb.edu/austina/courses/rm/proposal_example/example_proposal.htm

Prospectus: For purposes of this assignment a prospectus is a preliminary statement, comprised of 150-200 words and at least two scholarly sources, describing the topic of the intended proposal. Students submit to *both* D2L and instructor email (austina@uwgb.edu) by Friday, February 10, 4:30 pm or sooner the prospectus in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat (PDF) formats, using at least two peer-refereed social science journal articles. If unfamiliar with these formats, please call the Help Desk CIT at 465-2309 or search online to find out (students are expected to make the effort to answer for themselves such questions). The prospectus must have an original and engaging title, conform to American English rules of grammar, punctuation, and spelling, and follow the on-line writing guide. The prospectus is not a graded assignment. However, failure to submit a prospectus with substantive content by the deadline will result in a five point reduction in the final point total.

Successful submissions demonstrate relevance and importance of proposed topic, which must fall within the domain of the social sciences as identified above. Proposals are accepted, rejected, or returned with request for clarification and/or modification communicated through email. Allow a few days for processing. Consult Babbie's chapter 15, "Reading and Writing Social Research," for help with planning the proposal. Because of the amount of work involved in this project, it is important to start preparing the prospectus right away. Often, finalizing a topic takes several iterations. An example of a prospectus can be found on the course web:

URL: http://www.uwgb.edu/austina/courses/rm/proposal_example/01_title_prospectus_example.pdf.

After instructor approval, students have most of the remainder of the semester to complete the assignment. Students are expected to take full advantage of the many services offered by the Cofrin Library. The proposal shall be between 1000-1500 words (approximately 4-6 doubled-spaced pages, 12-point Times New Roman, double spaced throughout). The proposal shall not substantially exceed nor fall short of the word count. The word count refers only to the body of the paper; title page, executive summary, works cited page, or appendices are *not* included in the word count. Students are to use the author/date (or scientific notation) system of the *Chicago Manual of Style* for citing references (do not use the *Chicago Manual of Style's* documentary note system, which is intended for the humanities). Psychology and social work students may use the latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (the APA manual is based on the *Chicago Manual*).

This is a science class at a public institution in a secular community, thus arguments and methods must conform to the rules of logic and enjoy empirical support, written in standard scientific language. Sources used on the production of the proposal must be relevant to its topic and theme. Outside textbooks are disallowed and no reading for this class can be used as a required source. Except for electronic resources at the Cofrin Library (which can be accessed online), students may not use Internet web pages for authoritative sources. This prohibition includes Wikipedia and other informational web pages, such as online encyclopedia, as well as course, professor, or departmental web pages. Do not use a standard dictionary to define a scientific term (scientists typically are not consulted in the production of dictionary definitions). Scientific terms are defined in the scholarly literature used in production of the proposal. If any student feels the need to deviate from these restrictions, please consult the instructor.

The student researcher must accurately cite all sources used in any work for this class. Plagiarism in any amount or degree will result in a zero for the assignment and the student will not be allowed to repeat the assignment (since the deadline will have passed). Ignorance is no excuse for plagiarism; plagiarism does not depend on what one intends, but what one does. For information on what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the following URL: <http://www.plagiarism.org/>. Study the information contained therein. Papers purchased from essay mills, previously used in this class, used in other classes, or written by others are reported to the Dean of Students for academic misconduct.

Upload the final proposal to D2L along with one electronic copy to instructor email by 4:30 pm Wednesday, April 18. Waiting until right before the deadline is not recommended, as I do not accept technological failure as an excuse. Only under extreme circumstances (serious illness, accident, or death in immediate family) will a late submission be considered for a grade. Documentation must be provided in consultation with the Dean of Students who must be able to verify its veracity. Do not follow up submissions to the email with addenda. Proposals must be complete by the deadline. Submissions must be formatted as if they were hard copies and must be submitted in the appropriate format only. An assignment that cannot be read will receive a zero.

A hard copy of the proposal is not required, however students must provide photocopies of the first pages (and only the first pages) of the required eight sources, either the front page of the journal article with the title, abstract, and opening paragraph, or the title page of the book. Bibliographic information returned by an electronic search is insufficient and will be treated as missing sources. Bring copies to class on the following day (Thursday, April 19) and turn them in at the end of the period or leave them in the plastic pocket by my office door before 11:00 Thursday, April 19, stapled together with full name and class title on each page in legible handwriting (do not request a stapler and do not turn them in unstapled).

I post grades on D2L when I have finished grading all proposals. I do not return essays, but make comments in D2L. Allow several days for grading (grades are usually not posted until the week of finals). It is important to recognize that this is a student-led project and that the instructor cannot tutor students individually in writing. At the same time, the instructor expects college-level competency in writing. If a student is struggling with writing, she is directed to seek help from tutors in the Writing Center.

Ethnography (25 points) Ethnography, or field research, is the first-hand account of a social setting (a workplace, marketplace, etc.) or cultural phenomenon (music culture, social movement, etc.), the purpose of which is to describe facts and interpret the meaning of social activity and its products within a rigorous analytical framework. Ethnographic approaches range from strict observation with little direct interaction with research subjects to total immersion in on-going social activity.

An ethnographic study typically involves the following steps: (1) *Select a research area or subject.* (2) *Review the literature* concerning that area or something approximating it. (3) *Identify variables that are of interest* to the researcher and of importance to the subjects under study. (4) *Enter the field and gather data.* Gathering data requires taking careful field notes of observations and, sometimes, interviews with research subjects. One of the hallmarks of strong ethnographic research is consideration of the world from the perspective of the participants, what anthropologists call the *emic* (or “inside”) perspective. (5) *Analyze the data and write a report.* After completing the data collection phase, the researcher produces a thick description and analyzes it for patterns and meaning. It is crucial, as with any research project involving human or nonhuman animal subjects, that the researcher carefully considers any ethical issues that may arise during the study.

It is not possible to produce a rich ethnographic study in the span of a semester-length college course. The goal of this assignment is rather to produce an ethnographic experience. Reserve some part of a day or two to gather data. Because there will not be time to secure approval from the Institutional Review Board, this study cannot be used for any purpose other than the present course. This is strictly a course assignment and must be unobtrusive. To use unauthorized human subjects data for any other purpose than a classroom assignment constitutes serious misconduct not only under the rules of the university but under federal law.

The final analysis shall be between 750-1000 words (3-4 pages) and conform to all the rules for preparing and submitting manuscripts detailed in the proposal section of this syllabus (see above). Upload the ethnography paper in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format to the course D2L site and send a copy to instructor email for credit before 4:30 pm on Wednesday, April 25. The analysis must be accompanied by field notes with all identifying subject information redacted. Bring the field notes to class on Thursday, April 26 and give them to me at the end of the period or leave them in the plastic pocket by my office door before 11:00 am Thursday, April 26, stapled together with full name and class title on each page in legible handwriting (do not ask me for a stapler; do not turn them in unstapled). I do not return field notes; so make a copy for your records. Standard organization of elements is required, i.e., title page (on separate page), abstract (on separate page), introduction, body, conclusion, and works cited (works cited on separate page), and appendices and charts. The policy concerning deadlines for submissions from the previous section concerning the proposal applies here, as well. I post grades on D2L when I have finished grading all assignments. I make comments in D2L. Allow several days for grading.

Grading Scale:

90% A (157 points)	70% C (122)
87% AB (152)	67% CD (117)
80% B (140)	60% D (105)
77% BC (135)	Below 60% is failing

OFFICE LOCATION AND HOURS

My office is located on the third floor of Mary Ann Cofrin (MAC) Hall, Room 326A. I am willing to meet with students to clarify assignments, lectures and readings, study guides, and missed exam questions. Office hours are listed at the top of this syllabus. I am available by appointment, but because of my schedule, I ask that students try to meet with me during my office hours. I have been able to resolve most matters through email (see below).

TECHNOLOGY

Course Email Associated with this course is email that provides instructor and students access to all students in the class. The address is listed at the top of the syllabus. A student must have a valid UWGB account to receive mail from the course email. The course email is a requirement and the university signs up enrolled student for it automatically. I use this service to alert students to updates to the course page, events on campus of interest, and emergencies, address questions about course material or other pertinent inquiries, conduct discussions concerning relevant subject matter, review study guides and quizzes, report exam performance, and post news stories relevant to topics covered in the class. There are rules to using the course email: (1) email contributions shall substantively relate to the theme of the course; (2) email contributions shall be thoughtful and productive and written in a civil tone; (3) course email shall not be used for student grievances (professor email and office hours are the proper places

for student grievances). All students are responsible for information I send to course or personal email whether they check their campus emails or not.

Professor Email My email is listed at the top of this syllabus. Email allows students to ask questions or voice concerns 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I find that most issues are resolved through email, saving everybody considerable time. Please note that if I answer emails after business hours (4:30 pm) or on weekends, it is because I choose to do so, not because I am required to do so. If I do not respond within 24 normal working hours, please resend the email. I get a lot of email over the course of a day and I don't want to miss any. Again, students are responsible for information I send to course or personal email whether or not they check their campus email.

Web Page The address to my web page is listed at the top of the syllabus. Pages associated with my web site contain syllabi, instructions for constructing essays, links to our library and other web pages (if relevant), study guides, and on-line readings. There are also links to other courses I teach, as well as a link to the Social Change and Development web page, where students can learn about the Democracy and Justice Studies major and minor, as well as the Sociology minor.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS AND RULES OF CONDUCT

Reasonable Accommodations As required by federal law and UW-Green Bay policy for Individuals with disabilities, students with a documented disability who need accommodations must contact the Disability Services Office at 465- 2841 or 465-2849. I can make reasonable accommodations unless they alter the essential components of the class. Contact the instructor and Disability Services Coordinator in a timely manner to formulate alternative arrangements.

Academic Integrity A diploma from an institution of higher learning signals to others that the holder of the degree has obtained the privilege through hard work and honest effort. By honest effort it is understood that examinations are performed without the unauthorized assistance of others or the use of material disallowed by the teacher; that essays, term papers, and research projects are unique compositions by the student wherein great care has been taken to properly attribute all derived thought to its original authors; that any requests for special assistance or consideration in completing course work rest on legitimate grounds and are based on truthful claims (UWS 14.03[2]). I treat acts of academic dishonesty as a serious matter and in accord with this institution's rules and procedures.

Classroom Decorum Behavior that disrupts the learning environment of my classroom will not be tolerated. Examples of disruptive behavior include but are not exhausted by talking with others when the instructor is speaking to the class or students are involved in discussion (this includes passing notes), inappropriate or off-topic monopolization of discussions to the exclusion of other students, irrelevant questions and comments, distracting or inappropriate expressions, gestures, or body language that hamper the conduct of the class. This list of behaviors to avoid is nonexhaustive: Turn off cell phones at the beginning of class. This includes vibration and visual settings. Students should not text message in my class. No laptops or other handheld devices in operation during class. No listening to anything through headphones, headsets, earbuds, etc., during class time. No reading material (newspapers, etc.) other than assigned course material during class time. I prefer students not eat in class, but if they must, select quiet foods and packaging and sit in the back when eating. Research shows that human beings are incapable of dichotic attention. Translation: if an individual's attention is somewhere else, he will not learn the material.

Classroom Discussion This is primarily a lecture course. To foster intellectual development, discussion in the classroom will abide by the following rules: (1) generally limit questions during lecture to seeking

clarification of a point or meaning; (2) save substantive questions or comments appropriate to discussion of the material covered in class for time allotted either before lecture begins or after lecture is completed. Please reserve questions appropriate to discussion until those times I call for questions and comments on the material.

On the Use of Audio and Video Recorders in the Classroom The Board of Regents has determined that a teacher, for reasons concerning pedagogical practice and academic freedom, may forbid use of tape or digital recorders in the classroom. The professor of this course expressly forbids students to make audio and video recordings in the classroom. Exception: "Regent Resolution 1556 provides that prohibitions of tape recorders in classrooms may not be imposed upon qualified students with disabilities who must utilize tape recorders because of the nature of their disability to effectively participate in a class provided such students have signed agreements that they will not release the tape recording or transcription to others."

On Bringing Guests and Minors to Class I do not have a blanket objection to students bringing guests into the classroom. However, I require students notify me and obtain permission 24 hours prior to bringing guests to the classroom and I ask that the guests be aware of the rules of my classroom. Moreover, I cannot take questions or comments from guests during class time. As a parent of two children, I know how conflicting schedules can sometimes mean that children will accompany parents to various daily functions. For parents who bring their children to class, please be aware that I often present material that may be unsuitable for children. Graphic pictures and discussion of such subjects as genocide, lynching, slavery, torture, unethical medical experiments, and war typically disturb children. Indeed, it may traumatize them. Because of time pressures, I cannot alter my presentation to accommodate children. I therefore cannot be responsible for what children see and hear in my classroom. If a situation arises wherein children must be with parents, I advise parents to sit in the back of the class by the door and remove children when the material becomes objectionable. These instances must be an exceptional character. Students are expected to make childcare arrangements, as they would in other walks of life.

BY REMAINING ENROLLED IN THIS CLASS, YOU HAVE ACCEPTED THE TERMS OF THIS SYLLABUS.