Fall 2015

SOC 6785

Bethany Stich

University of New Orleans

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Research Design Seminar  
(DURB 7020 & SOC 6785)  
Instructor: Bethany Stich  
Term: Fall 2015  
Telephone:  
E-mail: bstich@uno.edu  
Office (MH 370) Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 11-1 or by appointment  
Class: Monday, 7:00-9:45pm, MH 320

Course Description
The seminar covers the structure of scientific inquiry and the fundamentals of research design. It is organized in three sections. The first examines the scientific and logical foundations of social science research including research ethics. The second introduces the basic terminology of social science research design and the key elements necessary to execute a research project, including conceptualization and measurement, creating indexes, scales and typologies, and sampling. The third examines different ways of gathering data to answer research questions (experiments, surveys, field research, case studies, available data, and mixed methods) and data analysis. At the end of the course, we will return to a discussion about “making social science matter.”

Student Learning Outcomes
This course has student learning outcomes. The first is to develop an understanding of scientific inquiry, research design, and methods. The course complements courses in qualitative methods and statistical analysis. The second learning outcome is to develop the ability to critically evaluate empirical research. This will help you design good research and evaluate others’ work.

Course Requirements
In the seminar sessions, we will discuss key concepts and do exercises evaluating published manuscripts (provided by the discussion lead). The concepts will be addressed in the readings or introduced in class. A different person will be responsible for leading each class discussion. Everyone is responsible for completing the assigned reading prior to class as well as considering the review questions and exercises that follow each chapter in the principal text (Creswell). Everyone other than the discussion leader must also prepare two well-developed questions for group discussion and be prepared to talk briefly about the most important points in the reading. These will be collected each week and be part of your participation grade. The questions can raise unclear or unresolved issues in the readings or questions that the readings raised about your specific research questions of interest. The discussion lead must provide a copy of the materials to be used in their class session to the professor and class (if appropriate) at least one week prior to your scheduled session. The discussion lead must confer with the professor concerning lesson plans for their assigned session.

Attendance is required. Please phone or send me an email message if you must be absent.

Grading
Your grade will be based on the following:
1. Class participation/instruction - 30%
2. Phone Banking - 30% (3 @ 10%)
3. Final Research Design and Presentation - 40%

Late assignments and discussion materials will not be accepted. No incompletes will be given.
Course Texts


Expectations:
Behavioral Expectations: Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. In order to assure that all students have the opportunity to gain from time spent in class, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of distraction. In consideration of others, please silence all cell phones and other devices with similar potential to disrupt class. Tolerance for exploring all viewpoints will be a standard expectation for all of us. We will be hard on the issues while being respectful of ourselves during discussions. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result minimally, in a request to leave the class.

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. See the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available online at http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu.

It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to http://www.ods.uno.edu.

Course Schedule

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<td>8/31</td>
<td>Flyvbjerg Chapters 1-4 and Luker Chapters 1-3</td>
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<td>9/14</td>
<td>Creswell Chapter 1-4 and Luker 4 &amp; 5</td>
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<td>10/12</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/19</td>
<td>Flyvbjerg 10 &amp; 11, Luker 11</td>
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<td>Peer Review of Research Design</td>
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<td>11/30</td>
<td>Class Presentations</td>
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<td>12/7</td>
<td>Field Trip</td>
<td>2523 Gen. Pershing St</td>
<td>Final Research Design Due</td>
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