
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF CONTINUING STUDIES

Fall 2017

Time and Location: Mondays, 6:30 pm, C221

BLHS 101: Introduction to the Social Sciences

Overview

What does it mean to be a member of a particular society? How is it that individuals both form and are formed by a society? Who exercises power and in what ways? While all Core Courses address these questions in some way, it is especially the social sciences that are designed to explore them in depth. This course introduces students to the basic theories, methods, and particular contributions of anthropology, demography, economics, linguistics, political science, psychology, and sociology in attempting to answer such questions. It will provide students with a better understanding of the social and cultural worlds they inhabit and offer needed tools for analyzing the material covered in other Core Courses as well. It also provides important concepts that are essential to developing critical thinking skills in an interdisciplinary program.



Note: This class is held on campus in a classroom with lecture and discussion. However, each week will also have parallel lectures posted online via Canvas and can be taken either as a hybrid (i.e., attending some sessions and doing others online) or entirely online. All work for the class will be submitted via Canvas regardless of how you choose to take the class.

Faculty

Mark M. Gray, Ph.D.

Research Associate Professor

Telephone: 202-687-0885

Email: mmg34@georgetown.edu

Office hours: Fridays, 1 pm to 4pm, with appointment

Jonathon L. Wiggins, Ph.D.
Research Associate Professor
Telephone: 202-687-1290
Email: jlw8@georgetown.edu

Mark Woodson, MA
Teaching Associate

Learning Objectives

After completing this course a student should be able to:

1. Compare/evaluate social scientific research and the alternatives
2. Explain the limits/weaknesses of research approaches to knowledge
3. Identify various types of social research and describe their strengths/weaknesses
4. Describe the process of scientific inquiry
5. Describe how theory and research complement one another
6. Able to recognize ethical issues in social scientific research
7. Recognize the purpose of a literature review
8. Formulate a testable hypothesis
9. Compare quantitative and qualitative approaches to measurement
10. Discuss validity and reliability for measurement
11. Explain the basic purpose, strengths and limits of sampling
12. Execute a short survey
13. Propose an effective experimental design
14. Conduct a short content analysis
15. Design a simple field research project
16. Propose a research project using historical-comparative methods
17. Interpret the statistical significance of a finding
18. Identify the conditions of proving causality

Textbooks (required)

The Basics of Social Research

Earl R. Babbie

Wadsworth Publishing; 7 edition (January 1, 2016)

ISBN-13: 978-1305503076

ISBN-10: 1305503074

Philosophy of Social Science

Alexander Rosenberg

Publisher: Westview Press; Fifth Edition, 4 Edition (July 28, 2015)

ISBN-10: 0813349737

ISBN-13: 978-0813349732

Grading

The final grade will be determined as follows:

- 93% to 100% = A, 90% to 92% = A-
- 87% to 89% = B+, 83% to 86% = B, 80% to 82% = B-
- 77% to 79% = C+, 73% to 76% = C, 70% to 72% = C-

- 67% to 69% = D+, 60% to 66% = D, Below 60% = F

Work in this course is designed around the idea of you experiencing social science as a direct and hands-on experience. Grades will be based on a combination of assignments, an exam, and a project:

Class assignments represent **20%** of your overall grade. One exam will be given during the semester gauging your grasp of the material. This is **25%** of your grade. The examination is open-book and open-note. The centerpiece of the course is a research project. These can be done individually (single-investigator) or in groups (i.e., co-investigators). The topic, methods, and area of social science you work in will be determined by you or your group in consultation with your professor. Each project will be summarized in a “research note,” describing your research methods and results. Throughout the semester we will be discussing and developing these projects together as a class. Results will be presented at the end of the semester in an informal presentation session. This presentation and other in-class participation will account for **15%** of your grade. Following the last class each project will be summarized in a final written research note report (including any feedback or changes derived from in-class discussion). The paper should consist of a minimum of 2,500 words.¹ The written research note is worth **40%** of your grade.

Please use APA citation in your work. If you have any questions about this style please do not hesitate to ask your instructors.

Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 or arc@georgetown.edu.

Turnitin.com

Students acknowledge that by taking this course all required papers can be submitted for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Extreme weather, Emergencies, and Instructional Continuity

During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check the university’s Web site or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. If the university is closed, this class will meet through distance means such as online videoconferencing; check your e-mail for a message from me on how we will proceed in that situation. Due dates for written assignments submitted through Blackboard will not be changed due to campus closings.

The university recently has acquired the capability to send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up on MyAccess.

¹ The paper should use a 12-point Times New Roman font and be double spaced with standard margins (1” top and bottom and 1.25” left and right). With these parameters a 2,400 word paper will be approximately 8 to 9 pages in length. Papers produced by co-investigators must be proportionately longer.

Georgetown Honor System

All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at www.georgetown.edu/honor, and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is Plagiarism, Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process. Papers in this course will all be submitted to turnitin.com for checking.

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

Plagiarism

In accord with university policy, all incidents of suspected plagiarism or other Honor Code violations will be reported to the Honor Council without fail.

If the Honor Council finds that a student has plagiarized or has violated the Honor Code in any other way, the student will receive a grade of F for the course.

Policy Accommodating Students' Religious Observances

The following is university policy: Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.

Attendance is very important. If you are going to be missing a class please let the instructor know ahead of time. You are responsible for obtaining course material missed during any absence. Excessive absences can result in a poor grade.

Class and topic	Primary readings, assignments, exams
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aug. 30 (Wed): Introduction to the social sciences, the course, and each other; the social scientific method	Babbie Ch. 1, Rosenberg Ch. 1 <i>Journal Article:</i> Vindicating Anthony Downs [provided by professor] <i>Assignment:</i> Science and Mythbusting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sept. 11 (Mon): Paradigms & theory; ethical considerations in social scientific research; basic data description	Babbie Chs. 2-3, Rosenberg Ch. 2 <i>Journal Article:</i> No Booze? You May Lose: Why Drinkers Earn More Money Than Nondrinkers [provided by professor] <i>Assignment:</i> Synthesis of Alcohol Articles

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept. 18: Research in Economics; research design; conceptualization, operationalization & measurement; the visual display of quantitative data 	<p>Babbie Chs. 4-5, Rosenberg Ch. 6 <i>Journal Article:</i> Clio and the Economics of Qwerty [provided by professor] <i>Assignment:</i> General Social Survey Crosstab</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept. 25: Research in Political Science; sampling & survey research; basic inferential statistics and their interpretation 	<p>Babbie Chs. 7 & 9, Rosenberg Ch. 4 <i>Journal Article:</i> Some Like it Hot: Individual Differences in Responses to Group Feeling Thermometers [provided by professor] <i>Assignment:</i> Corporation Critique</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct. 2: Research in Sociology; creating indexes, scales, & typologies; patterns of association 	<p>Babbie Ch. 6, Rosenberg Ch.5 <i>Journal Article:</i> The Strength of Weak Ties [provided by professor] <i>Assignment:</i> Scatterplot</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct. 16: Research in Linguistics; content analysis and unobtrusive research; correlation 	<p>Babbie Ch. 11, Rosenberg Ch. 7 <i>Journal Article:</i> Hospital Slang for Patients: Crocks, Gomers, Gorks, and Others [provided by professor] <i>Assignment:</i> Data Coding and Crosstab</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct. 23: Research in Psychology; experiments; linear estimation; data and library resources 	<p>Babbie Ch. 8, Rosenberg Ch. 8 <i>Journal Article:</i> On Being Sane in Insane Places Science [provided by professor] <i>Assignment:</i> Super Size Me?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct. 30: Research in Anthropology; qualitative field research; APA citations; plagiarism 	<p>Babbie Ch. 10, Rosenberg Ch. 9 <i>Journal Article:</i> Ethnography for the Digital Age [provided by professor] <i>Assignment:</i> Your Place in History</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nov. 6: Basic Statistics Review 	<p>Rosenberg Ch. 3 <i>Assignment:</i> Measures of Association</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nov. 13: Historical-Comparative research; evaluation research 	<p>Babbie Ch. 12, Rosenberg Ch. 10 <i>Assignment:</i> Project Proposal</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nov. 20: Qualitative and quantitative research 	<p>Babbie Chs. 13-14, Rosenberg Ch. 11 <i>Assignment:</i> Project Graphics</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nov. 27: Postmodernism; how social science is published, disseminated, and read; effective presentation of research 	<p>Babbie Ch. 15, Rosenberg Ch. 12 <i>Journal articles:</i> "Fashionable Nonsense" articles; Sokal 1996a, 1996b), Robbins & Ross (1996) [provided by professor]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dec. 4: Final Project Presentations, How social science is published, disseminated, and read; effective presentation of research 	<p>Babbie Ch. 15, Rosenberg Ch. 13 Statistics and writing workshop <i>Assignment:</i> Project Outline</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA: Final Exam meeting 	<p>During scheduled time of finals week Final Papers due Dec. 23 (electronic submissions suggested)</p>