**Academic Skills,POLS 152**

**Spring, 2022-2023**

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This course aims at developing students’ basic academic skills. Over the course of the semester, students will learn how to formulate a research question, and collect and analyze data to answer that question, as well as learning how to write official correspondences, developing debate and presentation skills. The course emphasizes critical thinking about the empirical research presented in everyday life, as well as preparation for more advanced research courses. This course will help prepare students for the different expectations they will come across in future courses. The first half of the course will focus on what research in the social sciences entails. We will focus on 1) types of research 2) sources of knowledge including library, internet and database searches and 3) forming a research question and conducting an analytical literature review. In the second part, we will scrutinize various kinds of quantitative and qualitative research methods covering survey, content analysis, experimental methodologies, interviewing, ethnographic research, historical-comparative and archival research. After their introduction, each method will also be supplemented with an exemplary text to show students how they are employed in social scientific practice.

Developing these skills will be key for social sciences students throughout their undergraduate education. It will help them to critically engage with the course materials they come across, as well as to conduct research themselves. This course serves both as an introduction to future methods courses but also provides the necessary academic skills for a wide range of expectations students will encounter in required and elective courses in the department.

*Textbooks*: 1) Lawrence Neuman, *Basics of Social Research*, 3rd Edition. 2) Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 4th Edition.

*Grading*: Your final grade for this course will be based on: i) your attendance at, and participation in class (15%); ii) your midterm exam grade (35%); and iii) your final exam grade (50%).

*Academic Honesty*: If you are unclear how to cite properly, please consult me or a tutor at the writing center. Plagiarism carries severe consequences including, but not limited to, failure from the course.

**Tentative Course Schedule:**

**Week 1- Introduction**

**Week 2– The *Science* in Social Science**

Bryman, Ch 1; King, et all., Ch. 1

**Week 3 – Theory and Social Research**

Neuman, Ch 3; Mills, *The* *Sociological Imagination*, Introduction.

**Week 4– Literature Review**

Neuman, Ch 4; Becker, *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book or Article*, pp. 135-149; Excerpts from Feak & Swales, *Telling a Research Story: Writing a Literature Review*.

**Week 5- Sampling in Quantitative and Qualitative Research**

Bryman, Ch 8

**Week 6– Analysis of Quantitative Data**

Neuman, Ch 10

**Week 7– Survey Research**

Neuman, Ch 7 & KONDA Survey Report

**Week 8 – Midterm Exam**

**Week 9 –Experimental Research**

Neuman, Ch 8; Pager, Devah. (2003) “The Mark of a Criminal Record”, American Journal of Sociology, 108(5):937-975.

**Week 10 – Content Analysis**

Neuman, Ch 9; Excerpts from Tilly, Ch 1-2 in Contentious Performances.

**Week 11 - Field Research**

Neuman, Ch 11; Mears, Ashley(2011), Pricing Beauty: The Making of a Fashion Model, p.18-43.

**Week 12 – Historical Comparative Method and the Use of Counterfactuals**

Skocpol and Somers, (1980), “The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 22(02):174-97.

**Week 13 - Library Visit**

**Week 14 - Presentation Skills and Official Correspondences**