

SOC 3048
305E312A1
Social Research Methods (1)
2025 Fall
National Taiwan University

Class: Wednesday 2, 3, 4; Practicum: Friday 8, 9
R207 for Wednesday 2, 3, 4 and Friday 8 & 9

Instructor: Meng-Jung Lin 林孟蓉 mjlinmj@ntu.edu.tw

Office hours: Wednesdays 1:00-5:00 PM in R417 or online via Google Meet (please sign up using Calendly: <https://calendly.com/mjlinmj/15min>) and by appointment

Teaching Assistants:

TBA

What is social research? How to conduct ethical and rigorous social scientific research? Where should we gather data from? What to do with the data? We will start from scratch and gain experience with doing sociological research throughout the semester. This course introduces key concepts and components of empirical studies and uses different research approaches to answer various sociological questions. Identifying research approaches, developing measures, and collecting data are the focuses of our class. While some sociological imagination and logic are required, you do not need further sociological knowledge to be successful in this class.

Goals of this course

After taking this course, you are expected to be able to:

1. Pose sociologically informed questions about society or social behavior that can be addressed empirically.
2. Identify a research approach appropriate for answering a specific question about society or social behavior.
3. Become certified in the ethical conduct of social and behavioral research involving human subjects.
4. Develop measures that are valid and reliable and to evaluate measures that others have proposed.
5. Evaluate alternative research designs in terms of their strength for drawing causal inferences.
6. Identify and ameliorate threats to the generalizability of results.

7. Identify and remedy problems with questionnaire construction.
8. Gain field experience with at least one data collection approach.
9. Construct and interpret two- and three-way tables.
10. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of research used to make empirical claims about social processes.
11. Precisely communicate about research design, measurement, and data collection in written and oral form.

We will try to accomplish these together. Sometimes, catching up with the class can be challenging if you miss a class or need clarification on just one concept. You have to let me know if you encounter problems along the way. I will enroll you in the Piazza platform for this class (piazza.com/ntu.edu.tw/fall2025/soc3048/home) soon after the first class. Please feel free to ask questions on the platform (and yes, you can do it anonymously).

Who should take this course?

This is a required course for SOCI majors. For those of other majors, I encourage you to join us if you are interested in developing skills to design and conduct ethical and rigorous social scientific research. This course is also an important foundation for data analysis and independent research projects that you might conduct through an Independent Study or an Honors Thesis.

Course Requirements

Assignments (50%): There will be 10 assignments distributed each Wednesday and be due on the following **Wednesday at 9:10 AM**. In the NTU COOL calendar, you can find the assignments' exact distribution dates and due dates. Usually, one to three problems are included in each assignment. Textbook and examples in class are the primary sources of the problems. You can collaborate with others to understand the concepts, but the submitted assignments should be your own work. Each assignment is worth 50 points. You are required to contact me beforehand if you want to hand in an assignment late, or I may not accept it.

Quizzes (5%): Quiz with 1 or 2 short question(s) for the readings of that week will be available in NTU COOL on Monday at 9:10 AM. The due time is **Wednesday at 9:10 AM**. Quizzes are open books and open notes, but you are not allowed to discuss with others. Each quiz is worth 5 points.

Exams (15%): There will be 3 **in-class** exams throughout the semester. You will be asked to answer multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions. You will have to answer the multiple-choice questions in NTU COOL. The rest of the questions will be available in a Word (and PDF) file in the same NTU COOL exam session. Be sure to attach your answer file when

you submit your exams. You have to take the exams at the designated time. All of them are open books and open notes, but you have to finish the exam **within the class period**. Remember to have your laptop ready for the exam. Makeup exams are available if you can show me the official proof, but you will have a different version of the exam, which may or may not be harder.

Final Research Proposal and Presentation (25%): You will be put into **groups of 1 to 3 people** to work on a research topic of your choice throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, you are required to do **an in-class presentation and write a research proposal**. Please develop at least one empirically testable research question and apply a research method learned in this class to try to answer your question. Pilot study and/or preliminary data analysis are also required when presenting and writing the proposal. Depending on the class size, the **final research proposal presentation** may take one or two weeks, in-person or online. You will also **finish a questionnaire** asking you to comment on at least two presentations and write a reflection on the presentations you saw. In addition, you must **submit your 10 to 15-page research proposal by December 19th**.

Attendance (5%): Every class (including practicum) counts. For the in-person sessions, I will use **Zuvio** (<https://www.zuvio.com.tw/>) to take attendance, so please install the App and check in every time you come to class. For online sessions (if necessary), I will use the Google Meet Attendance List to take attendance. Your **participation with Zuvio questions** and **worksheet submissions** will also be used to verify your attendance. Points will not be deducted if you answered the questions wrong. I will only use them to see how well you understood the materials. Worksheets will be distributed in almost every class, but you will only be asked to submit them in several classes. I will announce if you have to turn in the worksheet of the day at the beginning of the class period. You may miss 1 week of classes. **Please contact me for additional absences.** For those who have time conflicts, please let me know beforehand. Class recordings will be posted in NTU COOL. If you miss a class, you must watch the recording before the next class. The NTU COOL video manager will document your name and the time spent watching the recording, which will be counted toward your attendance.

MJ doesn't mind if you occasionally miss class, but MJ does care if you:

1. Skip classes due to mental or physical illness or emergencies.
2. Claim that MJ didn't cover material that appears on assignments or exams.
3. Realize too late in the semester that you might not pass or achieve a good grade.

If you understand all of the above but decide not to attend class on a particular day, you

can email me, saying you're tired or just need more sleep. I completely understand and won't count it as an absence, provided your absentee rate stays within the school policy limits. Thank you.

Since I plan to have you submit a research proposal by the end of the semester, **you are required to meet with me at least once during our practicum or/and my office hours** this semester to discuss your ideas. Ten points will be deducted if you fail to meet with me. You are encouraged to ask for assistance regarding any aspects (e.g., literature, study design, sampling, survey design, data collection, etc.) of your study.

Textbook

You are required to read the designated chapters/sections of the following textbook **BEFORE** each class.

The Art and Science of Social Research, Second Edition

by Deborah Carr, Elizabeth Heger Boyle, Benjamin Cornwell, Shelley Correll, Robert Crosnoe, Jeremy Freese, and Mary C. Waters

Ebook & Learning Materials ISBN: 978-0-393-53749-9

Paperback ISBN: 978-0-393-53752-9

Class Policy

1. We will be spending much time on doing exercises and brainstorming ideas in class. You **MUST read the assigned readings BEFORE** class so we can use the concepts and conduct research. **Both quizzes and assignments are based on the readings**. In addition, only will you know what **you and everybody else** are doing after finished the assigned reading.
2. **Respect others and be responsible.**
3. Use your laptop during class so we can do the worksheets together, submit them, and have records of our work. You can use smartphones to answer **Zuvio** questions if that is easier.
4. Check your NTU COOL site daily: check the assignments and quizzes pages. Assignments and quizzes will be available in NTU COOL and should be submitted through COOL.
5. Check your email account daily: When assignments or quizzes are available in NTU COOL, a notification will be sent to your email address. Any changes to the course schedule will also be announced in COOL and through notification.
6. I will try to reply to your emails within 24 hours during weekdays (Monday thru Friday). I usually answer them between 9 AM and 5 PM, so please arrange your time accordingly to ensure I have enough time to get back to you before the deadlines.
7. Please be prepared before coming to the office hours.

Honor Code

You have to complete all assignments, quizzes, and exams independently. I will make a checkbox available to you to indicate whether you do the work by yourself when you submit your works. You can familiarize yourself with the [NTU Honor Code here](#). The Honor Code of the University is in effect at all times, and the submission of work signifies understanding and acceptance of those requirements. Plagiarism and the use of online educational support platform (e.g., Chegg) will not be tolerated.

While AI tools can support learning, using them to generate assignments, bypass required readings, or replace original thought violates academic integrity. Misrepresentation of AI work as your own may be considered academic misconduct.

Please consult with me if you have any questions about the Honor Code.

Accessibility Resources

Please contact me if you need accommodations due to disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability, or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing the course. You may receive extensions to your exams or/and assignments and be allowed to make up your absences by watching recordings. We can negotiate about your accommodations depending on your circumstances.

Counseling and Psychological Services

The NTU Student Counseling Center is strongly committed to helping students with mental health problems and psychological well-being needs through consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services. Go to their website: https://scc_osa.ntu.edu.tw/ or visit their facilities at Downtown Campus College of Medicine Area C (R204-1) to learn more.

Class Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment	Quiz	Keywords
1	9/03	Introduction	Ch.1: pg.3-29	1dis	1due	sociological imagination, generalizable, agency v.s. structure basic/applied research, qualitative/quantitative methods, cross-sectional/longitudinal study, triangulation, unit of analysis, reflexivity
2	9/10	Linking Sociological Theory to Research	Ch.2: pg. 33-61	1due/2dis	2due	micro/meso/macro level, inductive, deductive paradigm, positivism, postmodernism concept, hypothesis, variables
3	9/17	Research Ethics	Ch.3: pg. 65-95	2due/3dis	3due	the Belmont Report, informed consent, institutional review board (IRB) confidentiality, debriefing
4	9/24	Exam 1	Ch.1-Ch.3			cross-sectional/longitudinal study, unit of analysis, hypothesis, informed consent
5	10/01	Hypotheses, Operationalization, and Measurement	Ch.4: pg. 99-127	3due/4dis	4due	conceptualization, units of analysis, dimensions types of variables, operationalization, ecological fallacy four basic forms of measurement
6	10/08	Reliability and Validity	Ch.5: pg. 131-151	4due/5dis	5due	reliability, internal reliability, intercoder reliability robustness, internal validity, external validity
		Sampling Strategies	Ch.6: pg.155-166			target population, probability/nonprobability sampling, simple random sampling, cluster sampling
7	10/15	Sampling Strategies	Ch.6: pg.166-185		6due	stratified sampling, weighting, nonrepresentative sample case-oriented research, purposive sampling, big data
		Communicating Research Findings	Ch.14 (Research Proposals)			research reports, research proposal, poster, oral presentation
8	10/22	Exam 2	Ch.4-Ch.6	5due/6dis		conceptualization, operationalization, reliability, validity, sampling methods
9	10/29	Survey Research	Ch.7: pg.189-225	6due (10/31)/ 7dis	7due	survey formats, cross-sectional/longitudinal survey, strengths/challenges of survey, modes of administration modes of administration, Likert scale, acquiescence effects, composite measures double-barreled question, codebook, order effects, priming effects
10	11/05	Experimental Research	Ch.8: pg.229-263	7due/8dis	8due	causality, random assignment, selection bias, laboratory experiments field experiments, survey experiments, natural experiments confederates, between-subject/within-subject design, types of dependent measures
11	11/12	Material-Based Methods	Ch.12: pg.371-408	8due/9dis	9due	macro-social phenomena, types of materials, primary/secondary information, aggregate data, micro data, historical research methods, comparative research methods, content analysis, coding scheme, quantitative data analysis
12	11/19	Evaluation Research	Ch.9: pg.267-293	9due/10dis	10due	translation, social intervention, stakeholder, treatment/control groups cost-benefit analysis, challenges of evaluation research
13	11/26	Exam 3	Ch.7-Ch.12 (excluding Ch.10 & 11)	10due		research approaches
14	12/03	Research Proposal Preparation (NO CLASS)				
15	12/10	Final Research Proposal Presentation 1				
16	12/17	Final Research Proposal Presentation 2				

Practicum Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment	Keywords
1	9/05	Introduction	Ch.1: pg.3-29	1	research interest survey, grouping (1 to 3 people in a group), research topic group discussion
2	9/12	Linking Sociological Theory to Research	Ch.2: pg. 33-61	2	your research and types of research
3	9/19	Research Ethics	Ch.3: pg. 65-95	3	your research and research ethics
4	9/26	What does a research paper look like? Library			Read a research article and think about your research.
5	10/03	Hypotheses, Operationalization, and Measurement	Ch.4: pg. 99-127	4	Form your research hypotheses and develop measures of key variables.
6	10/10	National Day (No class)		5	
7	10/17	Reliability and Validity	Ch.5: pg. 131-151		Evaluate the measurements and your study's reliability and validity.
8	10/24	Retrocession Day (No class)			
9	10/31	Sampling Strategies	Ch.6: pg.155-185	6	Journal Club: Schneider, D., & Harknett, K. (2019). What's to Like? Facebook as a Tool for Survey Data Collection. <i>Sociological Methods & Research</i> . How would you select your sample? Research Topic Decided
		Survey Research	Ch.7: pg.189-204	7	Journal Club: Schneider, D., & Harknett, K. (2019). Consequences of Routine Work-Schedule Instability for Worker Health and Well-Being. <i>American Sociological Review</i> . If your study uses a survey, how would you design the study and the survey? (Conduct a pilot study in the following weeks if you adopt the survey method)
10	11/07	Experimental Research	Ch.8: pg.229-263	8	Journal Club: Rivera, L. A., & Tilcsik, A. (2019). Scaling Down Inequality: Rating Scales, Gender Bias, and the Architecture of Evaluation. <i>American Sociological Review</i> . OR/AND Rivera, L. A., & Tilcsik, A. (2016). Class Advantage, Commitment Penalty. <i>American Sociological Review</i> . If your study uses experiments, how would you design the study? (Conduct a pilot study in the following weeks if you adopt the experiment method)
11	11/14	Material-Based Methods (or Guest Lecture)	Ch.12: pg.371-408	9	Journal Club: Wimmer, A., & Feinstein, Y. (2010). The Rise of the Nation-State across the World, 1816 to 2001. <i>American Sociological Review</i> . OR/AND Elliott, J. R., & Frickel, S. (2013). The Historical Nature of Cities. <i>American Sociological Review</i> . If your study uses material-based methods (e.g., secondary data analysis, historical research methods, content analysis, etc.), how would you design the study? (Conduct a pilot study or preliminary analysis before the final presentation if you adopt the material-based method) Research Method Chosen
12	11/21	NTU Sports Meeting (No class)		10 (11/27 due)	Literature Review Draft
13	11/28	Intro to Quantitative Data Analysis			Introduce R and Stata to you Analyze Preliminary Data
14	12/05	Research Proposal Preparation (NO CLASS)			
15	12/12	Research Proposal Preparation (NO CLASS)			

*The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.