



## **Research Methods**

### **Course Summary:**

In this course the student will explore and apply the fundamentals of scientific research methodology by examining a social issue. The student will develop a research question, find and evaluate existing research, and design and implement an objective research method. By the end of the course, the student will be able to

- Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamentals of qualitative research
- Design an original research question to draw valid conclusions
- Gather data using an appropriate method
- Synthesize research
- Evaluate the methodology, evidence, and conclusions of others' research
- Analyze the challenges and ethical issues in social research

### **Course Outline**

#### **1. Overview of Qualitative Research (L)**

- Compare and contrast everyday learning and a scientific approach to learning
- Describe the natural world versus the social world with respect to research methods
- Describe the role of the scientific method in social science research methods
- Describe the key elements, terms, and concepts in qualitative research

#### **2. Foundations of Social Research (L)**

- Define the roles of variables, measurements, and statistics in qualitative research
- Describe controls and random assignment
- Describe the causal law
- Describe the key elements, terms, and concepts in qualitative research
- Describe the scientific method and its role in social science research methods

#### **3. Identify the Goals of Your Research (L)**

- Describe the key elements, terms, and concepts in qualitative research
- Start to identify the goal for your research

#### **4. "Sticky" Problems in Research (L)**

- Illustrate how individual biases and beliefs affect social research
- Describe common problems in conducting educational research and how they can be avoided
- Examine the practical dilemmas and ethical issues faced by modern social researchers

#### **5. Indirect Methods of Research (L)**

- Compare and contrast contemporary records, archival and historical records, and physical traces as indirect sources of data
- Use content analysis to extract data from any of the indirect sources
- Describe the relative strengths and limitations of two indirect methods of data collection
- Conduct a literature review for your course project using the library or other Internet resources

- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of evidences used and conclusions drawn in other research

## **6. Using Direct Research Methods: Surveys (L)**

- Identify an appropriate survey type for a given social research topic
- Differentiate the relative strengths and limitations of personal interviews, telephone interviews, mail questionnaires, and Internet surveys
- Compare the strengths and limitations of survey research

## **7. Using Direct Research Methods: Questionnaires (L)**

- Develop questions for a survey
- Describe how to pretest and conduct a survey

## **8. Using Direct Research Methods: Observation (L)**

- Record observational data
- Explore the concept of gathering data indirectly
- Analyze the methodology employed by other researchers
- List various indirect sources of data

## **9. Ethical Issues (L)**

- Examine the practical dilemmas and ethical issues faced by modern social researchers
- Select the site and subjects for an observational study

## **10. Experiments and Classic Design (L)**

- Identify an appropriate strategy for initiating qualitative research for a given topic
- Understand the importance of experimental design and classic quantitative methods in qualitative research
- Define terminology used in research methodology

## **11. Research Assumptions and Issues (L)**

- Develop a comprehensive statement of the research problem

## **12. Reporting (L)**

- Collect and analyze your research findings

## **13. Selecting a Format for Your Research Paper (L)**

- Select an appropriate report format for your research paper

## **14. Impact of Technology on Sociological Research (L)**

- Describe the sociological effects of technology
- Summarize the advantages and disadvantages of the software that aid qualitative research
- Examine and discuss online journals that address the needs of qualitative researchers

## **15. Technological Resources (L)**

- Summarize the advantages and disadvantages of the software that aid qualitative research
- Discuss the impacts and implications of the software that aid qualitative research
- Examine and discuss online journals that address the needs of qualitative researchers

## **16. Finalizing Your Research Paper (L)**

- Apply all of the skills learned previously to synthesize the research paper project

## **17. Research Methods Course Review (L)**

- Review lesson objectives and key terms
- Review interactive presentations
- Utilize study guides
- Explore potential careers that involve research

## **18. Submitting Your Research Paper Final (L)**