



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)**