

Rutgers University
Reading Social Science
790:254:MA
Spring 2020

Instructor: Rebecca Biebel
Email: rc936@polisci.rutgers.edu

Class: Tuesday/Friday 10:55am-12:15pm
Remote on Canvas

Text: Social Science Research Methods Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches by W. Lawrence Neuman

Course Topic: Prison Reform

Course Description

This course is an intensive 7 week 1.5 credit course that introduces students to social science research and teaches them how to read that research for comprehension and to write a literature review. Each section of the course will focus on a different aspect of the social science literature with readings selected by the instructor to illustrate the range of research in that subfield; possible topics include American public opinion, Islam and democracy, and prison reform. The instructor for the semester will identify the specific topic and tailor the readings to that topic while staying within the framework laid out here.

This course is especially suited for students considering embarking on a field of study that involves regular research. In the vast majority of situations the literature review provides a necessary first step in shaping the research question and provides a framework for any new research project; to develop a good literature review is often half the battle for doing quality original research. The tools acquired in this course will also prove useful for many career paths including any that involve any element of data collection and research; legislative aides, policy researchers, advocates, and marketing executives all use this type of approach to information gathering and synthesis. Reading and understanding published scientific studies is also good in itself: an informed citizenry that can understand and critique summaries of scientific studies will be less likely to fall victim to fraud and quackery.

This course contributes to three political science undergraduate learning goals

- A first hand exposure to the process of research and discovery in political science and an understanding of how political scientists develop and test new ideas or explanations.

- A wider social scientific context for understanding political science and an exposure to at least some of the range of questions that social scientists pose and the tools and approaches they use to develop answers.
- Experience in designing and completing a research project.

The course itself exposes students to many types of published research involving different social science approaches. In that exposure students should gain an understanding of how social scientists develop and test theories and hypotheses and should gain an appreciation of how different research designs and tools can be used to answer similar questions in different ways. The course does not require students to design and complete a research project- this is most strongly done in 790:300 Political Science Research Methods- but the literature review is a critical first step in that design. This course complements that course but also stands in support of courses offered in all but the political theory subfields of the political science program.

Upon completing this course students will be able to

- Identify the essential elements of a published piece of social science research;
- Assess whether a web page is likely to contain valuable and scientifically rigorous information;
- Assess whether newspaper summaries of research are accurate;
- Select appropriate articles for inclusion in a literature review; and
- Write a well-organized literature review.



Core Curriculum Learning Goals

<http://sasoue.rutgers.edu/core/core-learning-goals>

SAS Departmental Learning Goals

<http://sasoue.rutgers.edu/assessment/sas-department-and-program-assessment>

University Policies

Grading Policy and Appeals

Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale: 90 + =A; 87-89= B+; 80-86= B; 77-79= C+; 70-76= C; 60-69= D; 59 and below= F.

A student wishing to appeal any grade must make their request in writing prior to meeting with the instructor. The written appeal must be typed and clearly state the

reason(s) the student feels the grade they received is incorrect. Appeals must be made within two weeks of when the exam or assignment was originally returned to the class. Appeals simply asking for more points will not be considered. The instructor reserves the right to re-grade the entire exam or assignment once an appeal is made, which may result in an increase or decrease in the score a student receives.

Reporting Absences

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <http://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to the instructor.

Academic Honesty

Rutgers expects unwavering integrity with submitted work from its students. Acts of cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated and may be subject to disciplinary action as detailed in the student handbook. Students are expected to give credit to all individuals who contributed to the completion of any assignment. Specific resources of all information, ideas and quotations not original to the author must be referenced.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All written assignments will be submitted through Turnitin.

Since what counts as plagiarism is not always clear, I quote the definition given in Rutgers' policy:

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the use of another person's words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and both direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course.

Some common examples of plagiarism are:

- Copying word for word (i.e. quoting directly) from an oral, printed, or electronic source without proper attribution.
- Paraphrasing without proper attribution, i.e., presenting in one's own words another person's written words or ideas as if they were one's own.
- Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement.

The Camden Plagiarism Tutorial (INTERACTIVE):

<http://library.camden.rutgers.edu/EducationalModules/Plagiarism/>

Students should acquaint themselves with the college policy on plagiarism. Full text of the **Academic Integrity Policy** available at:

☞ <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

Students are also advised to refer to the Office of Student Conduct website:

<http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/>

Special Needs

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs and contact the Office for Disability Services. Also, students are also strongly encouraged to speak with the instructor whenever there is a problem. If family or work obligations, or any other extenuating circumstance threatens to interfere with the student's attendance or his/her completion of the course work, the student should notify the instructor as soon as possible.

- Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.
- Full disability policies and procedures are at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Student-Wellness Services:

Just In Case Web App

<http://codu.co/cee05e>

Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 /

www.rhscaps.rutgers.edu/

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181 / 3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 /

www.vpva.rutgers.edu/

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking to students, staff and faculty. To reach staff during office hours when the university is open or to reach an advocate after hours, call 848-932-1181.

Disability Services

(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 / <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability

services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Scarlet Listeners

(732) 247-5555 / <http://www.scarletlisteners.com/>

Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.

Course Requirements:

Attendance

Live lectures will be given during class time on Canvas (Conferences tab). Students should try to attend all lectures in order to maximize performance in our course.

Final Grade

Literature Review	30%
Draft	10%
Exam	25%
Article Templates	20%
Participation	15%

Literature Review 30% & Draft 10%

A literature review identifies, summarizes and synthesizes all the previously published work (research) on your specific topic or research question (if you were doing your own research, a literature review is the first step of the process). Your literature review (synthesis of the previous research) is key in providing new interpretations of the studies, demonstrating gaps, or discussing flaws in the existing studies. The literature review establishes your credibility to conduct the study and new research. It indicates your knowledge of the subject and how your study fits into the larger picture of your discipline.

The literature review can be organized by categories or historically.

Detailed directions for the draft and literature review are posted on Canvas.

Draft due on Canvas 12/6

Final literature review is due 12/13 on Canvas- no late papers will be accepted.

Exam 25%

The exam is open-ended questions and will cover the lectures and readings in the text on the types of science and the elements of a literature review. The exam will consist of 10 questions with 90 minutes to answer them. Students must take the

exam using ProctorTrack- make sure to take the onboarding “quiz” as soon as class starts.

ProctorTrack

Exams will be taken using ProctorTrack. You will need to take the onboarding ‘quiz’ the first week of class in order to take the midterm/final. Proctor Track requires students to take exams alone in quiet workspaces without any materials or notes. In order to remain compliant with the federal requirement of student authentication in online courses, you will take your quizzes/exams in this course using Proctortrack software, a remote proctoring service.

There is no extra fees associated with use of Proctortrack.

Technical requirements: You will need a web camera and a desktop or laptop computer. Mobile devices cannot be used. Please view the complete technical requirements here as well as the FAQ.

Detailed instructions on how to use Proctortrack are provided in the Student User Manual. You will be asked via announcement in early MONTH to set up your account profile by taking an ungraded "onboarding" quiz. This quiz is intended to identify any potential software problems.

Questions and requests for tech support should be addressed by calling (888) 326-5219(888) 326-5219 X3 or by going to www.proctortrack.com

Article templates & Discussion 20%

A blank article template is posted on Canvas, which needs to be completed for each of the 5 research articles assigned. The template will help practice note taking and evaluating the type of research, which should be used in a literature review.

Templates must be filled out in your own words- not in quotes. This is a note taking template, to help put things in your own words and avoid plagiarism.

Your grade will come from the templates and discussions on each of the readings.

Each reading/template will have a discussion board- students should post thoughts on the reading, how it relates to our course, surprising or unsurprising findings, and how the study used social science research. Students must also comment on a classmate’s post.

Participation 15%

Please be prepared for class. As a college student you are required to read and participate. Studies have shown that students that actively participate generally do better in class.

Participation will be graded based on discussion board participation. There will be a discussion for each Chapter (1, 4, 5, and 16). Students must discuss what they learned, questions they may have, how this relates to social science, etc., and comment on a classmate’s post.

Class Schedule

Week 1 10/23

Introduction to the course and literature reviews

Chapter 1- What is social science?

Discussion for Chapter 1 due 10/25

Week 2 10/27-10/30

Chapter 4- The meanings of methodology; Types of social science: positivist, interpretive, and critical.

Discussion for Chapter 4 due 11/1

Week 3 11/3-11/6

Chapter 5- The literature review

Chapter 16- The writing of a literature review

Discussions for Chapter 5 & 16 due 11/8

Week 4 11/10-11/13

Exam due 11/13- Proctortrack on Canvas

Examples of literature reviews and discussion of topics

Week 5 11/17-11/20

Readings covering public opinion and survey data. Each reading introduces a different type of research study, including but not limited to panel studies and longitudinal studies.

Article template on reading #1 & discussion due 11/17

Readings covering qualitative data. Each reading introduces a different type of research study, including but not limited to field research and historical-comparative research.

Article template on reading #2 & discussion due 11/20

Week 6 11/24

Readings covering the integration of qualitative and quantitative data.

Article template on reading #3 & discussion due 11/24

Week 7 12/1-12/4

Readings on prison as a 'dependent' and as an 'independent' variable.

Article template on reading #4 & discussion due 12/1

Article template on reading #5 & discussion due 12/4

Topics due & Discussion on elements of a literature review & the appropriate types of research to include.

Literature review draft due on Canvas 12/6

Week 8 12/8-12/11

The literature review as the stepping off point for new questions.
New readings to add to the literature review.

Final literature review due 12/13 at 11:55pm on Canvas through Turnitin. No late papers will be accepted.

Note: This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor and the needs of the class.