In this course, we will critically explore various research designs and methods in the social sciences, and particularly sociology. We hope to give you understanding and practice in understanding and constructing different social science research designs and methodologies. As you are already familiar with the basics of research methods from your undergraduate coursework (in fact, this course assumes that students have already taken lower-level courses in research methods and basic statistics), in this course you will be (1) work with bibliographic and citation tools, along with qualitative data analysis software, (2) reading, understanding, and evaluating PSU Sociology faculty’s research, and (3) designing your own research project. While doing so, you will deepen your understanding of general methodological issues such as validity, reliability, correlation, causation, concepts, indicators, sampling, and generalizability.

Course Objectives
- To continue the long process of thinking, writing, and speaking like a competent social science researcher.
- To understand and critically evaluate social science research methodologies.
- To design a research project using appropriate research design tools.
- To be able to use bibliographic, citation, and qualitative analysis software for literature reviews and arguments.

Course Structure
The first two weeks will introduce research tools for bibliographies and citations along with computer based qualitative data analysis (QDAS), tools that you will continue to use throughout the term and most likely throughout your career as a researcher.
For weeks 3-8, we will have a guest lecture in each class. Before class you will read an article(s) or chapter(s) by that professor. You will also read a number of articles or chapters and perhaps watch some videos on that same methodology. In the week after the presentation, you will find an article using that same methodology, but applied it to your own research question. You will enter this article into your bibliographic software and code it with your QDAS.

Readings
- There are no books to buy for this course.
- You should have already accessed a sociology research methods textbook to review basic concepts. A textbook that you used in an undergraduate social science course is fine.
- PSU Sociology guest faculty’s research will be available on D2L or in electronic journal form on the library web site: www.library.pdx.edu
● Other readings are listed in the syllabus and still others may be assigned throughout the term.
● Each week you will have some general readings on the particular methodology of that week and a reading from a Sociology Professor who will come to class to answer questions on the methodology of their project.

Class Requirements
Requirements include but are not limited to readings, class participation, weekly individual assignments, and a final paper and oral presentation that has intermediate assignments through the term. There also may be opportunities for you to attend lectures and Master’s defenses and perhaps PhD defenses that use empirical research. My experience is that graduate students often learn more from each other than anyone else. Accordingly, participation in class discussions is essential. Also, each week you will be paired with someone so that you can each critique each other’s work for the week. These pairs will change each week so that you can get to know different people and have a variety of feedback.

- **20% Attendance/Participation:** Graduate seminars are not lecture classes. Students are expected to read the course material and do the weekly assignments before class so that they are ready and able to discuss the topic of the week in class. Students are expected to attend all of the class sessions (unless they are sick). As a part of participation, students will be asked to prepare and lead discussion in a particular class.
- **30% Assignments:** There will be weekly assignments that will involve reading and writing. All assignments are peer-reviewed and due to myself, Professor Stepick, and a classmate by 5pm the Monday before class. The assignments include routine weekly assignments:
  - Find an article in your research area that uses methodology similar to the focus of that week’s class. For example, if that week’s class is on survey research, find an article on survey research in your research area. Use Zotero for storing the citation and any notes you make to yourself on the article. Be prepared to discuss that article in class and upload the citation and abstract for your article to D2L – APA or ASA format – Monday by 5pm. Also be sure, that it is clear how this article fits the week’s methodology and your research question. It may be clear from the Title and/or Abstract that it fits the week’s methodology, but you will have to indicate how it fits your research question.
  - Zotero and Atlas-ti or other qualitative data analysis program, e.g. Dedoose, NVivo or even Excel. You will enter all of your readings into Zotero and Atlas-ti. You will use Zotero for citations and Atlas-ti for creating your literature review/argument. Atlas-ti is available with a student site license from PSU for $25.
  - Discussion Leaders: Each faculty guest lecturer will have two students who volunteer to provide a professional biography of the guest lecturer, lead the questions of the guest lecturer, and lead the discussion of the guest lecturer and the related methodologies for that week, which will take place after the faculty guest lecture. There is a minimal set of questions listed on D2L. The two student leaders will initiate the discussion, but everyone is expected to participate. As these questions are often not advanced in publications, you should be careful and sensitive to how you ask them. Indicate that you are looking for advice that will help you be a better researcher.
  - Reflections: For all of the required empirical reading (both assigned and the article you found on your own), you need to write your Reflections. Instructions and a sample reflection are posted on D2L.
  - You will have two mini-proposals, one on qualitative methods and the second on quantitative methods. Instructions are on D2L.
  - Each week you will be assigned a peer partner and you will discuss the week’s readings to prepare for the general class discussion. In the case of the two mini-proposals, you will give constructive criticism to each other.
○ **50% Final Paper and Oral Presentation:** Students will ask a research question(s) and detail a Research Proposal Paper to collect data in order to answer that question. The final paper is due during exam week. Examples of research proposals are posted on D2L.
CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1, October 1
● Introductions, Syllabus
● Bibliography, Citation Software: Librarian Michael Bowman at 3:30pm in Library
● Reading: Works emailed before first class
● Each student volunteers for class discussion during Week 2 to be “primarily responsible” for one of the following epistemologies: 1. Post-Positivist, 2. Interpretivist, 3. Critical Social Research, 4. Participatory Action, or 5. Post-Modernist epistemologies. There will likely be two people per method.

Week 2, October 8 Competing or Complementary Epistemologies: Post-positivism vs. Constructivist

Reading: See Week 2 Assignments Page

Due Monday night, October 7 @10pm before Tuesday’s class: See Assignments Page for Details
● Minimum 20 bibliographic entries in Zotero
● Reflections Readings on Epistemologies. See Assignment Week 2 for readings and information on Reflections

In class
● Discussion on alternative social science epistemologies
● Workshop on coding with Atlas-ti

Week 3, October 15 Interviewing

Readings: See Week 3 Assignments Page

Due Monday night before Tuesday’s class:
● List the names of three faculty in your Program in whose research you are interested. Indicate their research interests and how it relates to your own
● At least 10 more references for your research question in Zotero (or equivalent)
● Reflection paper on readings of this week’s methods

In class:
● Faculty presentation: Amy Lubitow
● Discussion of Interview Methods
● Literature Review/Argument discussion and Introduction to Atlas-ti Coding

Week 4, October 22 Ethnography
Faculty presentation: Aaron Roussell
Reading: See Week 4 Assignments Page

Due Monday night before Tuesday’s class. See Week 4 Assignments Page for details
- Reflections on this week’s readings
- 3 theses or dissertation
- Article using interviews in your research area
- Tentative coding categories for Atlas-ti for your Literature Review, which is for your Final Research Proposal Paper

In class:
- Faculty presentation: Aaron Roussell
- Discussion of ethnography
- In class Coding in Atlas-ti

Week 5, October 29 Mixed Methods
Faculty presentation: Maura Kelly
Reading: See Week 5 Assignments Page
Due Monday night before Tuesday’s class:
- Reflections on Mixed Methods’ Readings
- Article on similar research question to yours that uses ethnography
- Summary of Research Themes for your Literature Review/Argument for your Final Research Proposal Paper

In class:
- More Coding in Atlas-ti (or equivalent) of at least 10 of your citations.
- Faculty presentation: Maura Kelly
- Discussion of Mixed Methods

Week 6, November 5 Collecting Original Survey Data
Faculty presentation: Alex Stepick
Reading: See Week 6 Assignments Page

Due Monday night before Tuesday’s class:
- Article on similar research question to yours with mixed methods
- Mini-proposal with your research question using qualitative methods

In class:
- Peer review and powerpoint presentations of qualitative research proposals.
- Analysis in Atlas-ti
- Faculty presentation: Alex Stepick
- Discussion of Collecting Survey Data
Week 7, November 12 Secondary Data Analysis & Longitudinal Data
Faculty presentation: Heyyoung Woo

Reading: See Week 7 Assignments Page

Due Monday night before Tuesday’s class:
- Reading reflections on Secondary Data
- Article on similar research question to yours with methodology of gathering your own survey data
- Outline of literature review and argument for Final Research Proposal Paper

In class:
- Peer reviews of literature reviews and arguments Outlines
- Faculty Presentation Hyeyoung Woo

Week 8, November 19 Experimental Design
Faculty presentation Melissa Thompson

Due Monday night before Tuesday’s class:
- Article on similar research question to yours with methodology as similar as possible to last week’s faculty presentation, i.e. Secondary data analysis, preferably with longitudinal data
- Draft of literature review and argument for Final Research Proposal Paper

In class:
- Peer reviews of literature reviews and arguments drafts
- Faculty Presentation Melissa Thompson

Week 9, November 26 Quantitative Mini Proposal & Full Proposal Abstracts
No Faculty Presentation

Reading:
- Research Proposals on D2L

Due Monday night before Tuesday’s class:
- Mini-proposal with quantitative methods. See assignment page on D2L for details.

In class:
- Article on similar research question to yours with methodology as similar as possible to last week’s faculty presentation
- Peer review of Mini-proposal with your research question using quantitative methodology
- Peer review of Final Research Paper Proposal Abstracts and Outlines

Week 10, December 3 Oral Presentations of Final Research Paper Proposals
Due Monday night before Tuesday’s class:
● Powerpoint draft

In class:
● Powerpoint presentations

Exam Week
Due: Final Written Paper due on December 10 at 5pm (in D2L)