

PTRM 500 - Conservation Social Science Methods

The University of Montana, Fall 2016

Instructor:

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Course Description:

Methods and theoretical approaches used in social science research.

Course Overview and Goals:

This class is designed for graduate students wanting an introduction to social science research methods. Beginning with an introduction to the philosophy of science, we consider what is science, why it is a favored form of knowledge, and some of the common criticisms of the scientific method. We then move into design of research including carefully defining what is being measured and consideration of different approaches to that measurement. The class then spends equal amounts of time on qualitative methods (focusing on the grounded theory approach of Corbin & Strauss) and on quantitative methods (focusing on the psychology of how respondents answer our questions). Three textbooks and a range of articles are read throughout the semester with plenty of discussion in class.

Required Textbooks:

- Babbie, E. R. (2015). *The Practice of Social Research, 14th Edition*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning. [ISBN: 978-1-305-10494-5]
– I recommend you consider **renting** this textbook for the semester (prices on Amazon can be as low as \$31)
- Chalmers, A. F. (2013). *What is this thing called Science? Fourth Edition* Indianapolis, IN: Hackett. [ISBN: 978-1-62466-038-2]
- Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory (Fourth Edition)*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. [ISBN: 978-1-4129-9746-1]

Readings (will be provided on Moodle):

- Clayton, S. and G. Myers. (2009). *Attitudes, values and perceptions*. Conservation Psychology: Understanding and promoting human care for nature. New York: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Cohen, J. (1994). The earth is round ($p < .05$). *American Psychologist*, 49, 997-1003.
- Dillman, D.A., Smyth, J.D. and L.M. Christian (2014). *Internet, Phone, Mail and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The tailored design method*. Fourth Edition. New York: Wiley
- Gibbs, J.P. (1989). Conceptualization of Terrorism. *American Sociological Review*, 54, 329-340.
- Hagen, R.L. (1997). In praise of the null hypothesis statistical test. *American Psychologist*, 52, 15-24.
- Henderson, K.A. (1991). The philosophy of recreation, parks and leisure research. *Dimensions of Choice: A qualitative approach to recreation, parks and leisure research*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.
- Hudson, L.A., and J.L. Ozanne (1988). Alternative ways of seeking knowledge in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14, 508-521.
- Krosnick, J.A., Judd, C.M., and B. Wittenbrink. (2005). The measurement of attitudes. In D. Albarracín, B.T. Johnson, and M.P. Zanna (Eds.) *The Handbook of Attitudes*. (p. 21- 76). New York: Psychology Press.
- Patterson, M.E., and D.R. Williams (1998). Paradigms and problems: the practice of social science in natural resource management. *Society and Natural Resources*, 11, 279-295.
- Press, E. and J. Washburn (2000). The kept university. *The Atlantic Monthly*, March, 39-54.
- Robbins, B., and A. Ross (1996). Mystery science theatre. *Lingua Franca*, July/August, 54-64.
- Sokal, A. (1996). A physicist experiments with cultural studies. *Lingua Franca*, May/June, 62-64.
- Vaske, J.J. (2008). Writing and constructing surveys. *Survey Research and Analysis: Applications in parks, recreation, and human*

dimensions. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.

Assignments:

1. The mid-term and final exam will be of a comprehensive nature, covering all of the course readings, lectures, and discussion. They will be taken in the form of take-home examinations, and could include 2-3 questions each requiring a 4 or 5 page answer. Students will have about one week to complete the exam.
2. The course will operate as a student-centered seminar. The instructor will provide introductions to the course and to particular topics, and will also provide additional substantive material as appropriate. Students will meet twice each week for a discussion. Students are expected to be prepared to discuss the weekly assigned material in detail. An important component of your evaluation will be the *quality* of your weekly preparation and participation. As you prepare, also keep a track of questions you would like to ask of the author, questions of the material you would like clarified, critical questions, etc. This will help us tailor discussions to your interests and needs.
3. Each student must complete the RCR (Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research) self-study course available under “Compliance” on the UM Research & Sponsored Programs website. ([Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative](#)) Create a username/password and select “Social & Behavior Research – Basic/Refresher, Basic Course”, which should take 4 – 6 hours to complete. Please list the University of Montana as your affiliation and provide me a copy of the certificate you receive upon completion of the course. Please complete this before December 1, 2016, although I recommend you complete this much earlier in the semester.
4. Each student is expected to submit a term paper. The paper is to be an in-depth examination of a topic or issue related to research methods. It should be about 16-20 pages long, and should not duplicate papers written for other classes or by other students. It is not unusual for students to reference 15-20 sources for this paper. Due date: November 29, 2016.
 - a. The **first** option is for the student to lay out the philosophical assumptions (epistemological, axiological, and ontological) of a particular approach to science.
Example paper topics include:
 - Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR)
 - Critical theory
 - Discourse Analysis
 - Evaluation research
 - Hermeneutics
 - Existential phenomenology
 - Ethnomethodology
 - Extended case (study) method
 - Feminist research methods
 - Mixed Methods research
 - Participatory action research (PAR)
 - Semiotics
 - Structural functionalism
 - Symbolic interactionism

OR

- b. Students may research a general topic on research methods, preparing a review of the literature and a discussion of one of the major issues confronting researchers. Example paper topics include:
 - Humans Subjects Committees / Institutional Review Boards
 - Indirect Cost Levies
 - The Ecological Fallacy
 - Tenure and its effect on research
 - Evaluating college teaching
 - Citizen science
 - Incommensurability
 - The use of the internet for survey research
 - Mixed methods research
 - Issues of cross-cultural research

Table 1. Grading distribution for PTRM 500, Fall 2016.

ASSIGNMENT	POINTS
Final exam	30
Term paper	30
Mid-term exam	20
Class participation	10
Completion of RCR self-study	10 (P/F)

Policies:

1. Any student with learning disabilities or disadvantages needing special dispensation or assistance will inform the instructor immediately following the first class. *The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommason 154 or 406 243 2243. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate modification.*
2. It is expected that all work tended for evaluation will be professionally presented. Written assignments are to be laser printed. Proof-read and spell-check your documents. Folks reading your work assume you mean to present it the way that you do. Points will be deducted for spelling or grammatical errors. Please use **1.5 spacing**, as that gives room for me to write comments when I'm grading. (This paragraph is 1.5 spacing)
Please submit all work as a hard copy (i.e. turn in a printed copy). That way you control the way it prints out. Double-sided printing is OK. You should save copies of all your work - one good way is to email yourself with a copy attached.
3. Late submissions are not encouraged. A standard policy of subtracting 10% per day (or part of day) late is fair to everyone (students, instructors, and administration). Extraordinary circumstances (such as a death in the family) should be discussed with the instructor in advance. Leave from college due to medical conditions should be documented with doctor's certificates.
- 4.
5. Attendance is expected, though not required for all classes. It is the student's responsibility to make up, through their own alternative learning activities, the material missed due to absence.
6. All course activities are governed by the Student Conduct Code, which embodies the ideals of academic honesty, integrity, human rights, and responsible citizenship. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. It is available online at [Student Conduct Code](#)
7. You must give due credit to other people's ideas by referencing or quoting the source. I prefer you follow **APA** style guidelines – i.e. the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition.
8. Should students cite **Wikipedia**? No. While Wikipedia is a very useful resource, particularly as a starting point for your research, it is not always accurate nor valid. Additionally, it is always changing and so it is not reliable. You should only cite primary or secondary source material – that is, go to the original source whenever possible.

Also, graduate students shouldn't be citing the **dictionary** (online or book) as you are more advanced in your thinking than generic sources such as that.

9. Please be respectful of others and turn your cellphones off or to vibrate during class. I ask that you refrain from texting during class. Not only do I find cellphones very distracting, but so do other students. I am happy for you to use laptop computers in class, but limit your use to class-related activities. However, research suggests handwritten note-taking leads to better recall and deeper cognitive processing than does taking notes on a laptop (e.g. Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014; Gurung & McCann, 2011).
10. This course will be using a plus/minus grading system (Traditional letter grade only). Valid grades and their grade point values per credit are shown below:

Table 2. Grading System: PTRM 500, Fall 2016

Grade	Points	GPA	Grade	Points	GPA	Grade	Points	GPA
A	94 – 100 %	4.0	C+	77 – 79%	2.3	D-	60 – 62%	0.7
A-	90 – 93 %	3.7	C	73 – 76%	2.0	F	< 60 %	0.00
B +	87 – 89 %	3.3	C-	70 – 72%	1.7			
B	83 – 86 %	3.0	D+	67 – 69%	1.3			
B-	80 – 82 %	2.7	D	63 – 66%	1.0			

Important Dates Restricting Opportunities to Drop a Course Fall 2016:

Day	Process	Date
To 15 th instructional day	Students can drop classes on Cyberbear	September 19 @ 5pm = last day
16 th to 45 th instructional day	Drop requires form with instructor and advisor signature, a \$10 fee from registrar’s office, student will receive a ‘W’.	September 2 through October 31 @ 5pm
Beginning 46 th instructional day	Students are only allowed to drop a class under very limited and unusual circumstances. Not doing well in the class, deciding you are concerned about how the class grade might affect your GPA, deciding you did not want to take the class after all, and similar reasons are not among those limited and unusual circumstances. If you want to drop the class for these sorts of reasons, make sure you do so by the end of the 45 th instructional day of the semester.	November 1 through December 12 @ 5pm

For more details on adding, dropping and changing grading options see: [Official Dates and Deadlines for Autumn Semester 2016](#)

Draft Course Schedule: PTRM 500, Fall 2016.

- August 30 – Introduction to the course
- Sept. 1 – Science, theory & observation (read Babbie, Ch. 1 & 2)
- Sept. 6 – Observation (read Chalmers, Ch. 1 & 2)
- Sept. 8 – Theory (read Chalmers, Ch. 3 & 4)
- Sept. 13 – Falsification (read Chalmers, Ch.5 & 6)
- Sept. 15 – Research paradigms (read Chalmers, Ch. 7 & 8)
- Sept. 20 – Relativism (read Chalmers, Ch. 9 & 10)
- Sept. 22 – Realism & Truth (read Chalmers, Ch. 13, 14, & 15, plus epilogue, postscript)
- Sept. 27 – Assumptions of research (read Hudson & Ozanne, 1988; Patterson & Williams, 1998)
- Sept. 29 – Mid-term Exam handed out
- Oct. 6 – Mid-term Exam due
- Oct. 11 – Research designs (read Babbie, Ch. 4; Corbin & Strauss, Ch. 3)
- Oct. 13 – Conceptualization & Operationalization (read Babbie, Ch.5, Gibbs)
- Oct. 18 – Social Science Constructs (read Clayton & Myers)
- Oct. 20 – Psychometrics & Sampling (read Babbie, Ch. 6 & 7)
- Oct. 25 – Survey Research (read Babbie, Ch. 9; Vaske)
- Oct. 27 – Questions about attitudes, feelings & behaviors (read Krosnick, Judd & Wittenbrink)
- Nov. 3 – Experiments (read Babbie, Ch. 8 & 12)
- Nov. 8 – Introduction to qualitative methods (read Babbie, Ch.10, Corbin & Strauss, Ch. 1 & 2)
- Nov. 10 – Grounded Theory (read Corbin & Strauss, Ch. 3, 4 & 5)
- Nov. 15 – Coding procedures (read Corbin & Strauss, Ch.6 & 7; Babbie, Ch. 11)
- Nov. 17 – Qualitative analysis I (read Corbin & Strauss, Ch. 8 & 9; Babbie, Ch. 13)
- Nov. 22 – Qualitative analysis II (read Corbin & Strauss, Ch. 10 & 11)
- Nov. 24 – Thanksgiving
- Dec. 1 – Postmodern Hoaxes (read Sokal, 1996; Robbins & Ross, 1996)
- Dec. 6 – Ethics of research (read Babbie, Ch. 3; Press & Washburn, 2000)
- Dec. 8 – Course review, evaluation. Final exam available.
- Dec. 14 – Final exam due.