

**Research Methods in Human Ecology**  
**Course # 11-374-201**

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:**

Instructor: Dr. Cara Cuite  
Office: Cook Office Building, room 217  
Phone: 848-932-4544  
Email: [cuite@aesop.rutgers.edu](mailto:cuite@aesop.rutgers.edu)  
Office hours: Fridays 11-12 and by appointment

**TEXTS:**

Chambliss, D.F., & Schutt, R.K. (2012). *Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation*. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**LEARNING GOALS:**

This course explores how social scientists empirically investigate and quantify behavior within the social world. By the end of the course, students should be able to do the following:

- Understand general principles of scientific investigation, as well as specific challenges facing social scientists.
- Identify a range of social science research methodologies and what types of research questions each is best suited to address.
- Be an informed consumer of research information. Students should be able to critically read about research studies in the popular press, and have a basic understanding of research articles in peer-reviewed journals, and be able to explain in broad terms how the research was conducted.
- Recognize ethical issues in human subjects research, and be familiar with the institutions in place to prevent unethical research.
- Propose and conduct a small original research study, including research design, simple data analysis, and presentation.

**COURSE POLICIES:**

**Absences:** I will not be taking attendance in class but absences can count against you in class participation grade. Please use the online reporting system to register any absences.

**Assignments:** Homework and project reports are due by 12:35 PM on the date listed in the syllabus. They must be uploaded to Sakai, **and** a hard copy must be handed to me in class for it to count as complete. Homework and reports that are handed in within 24 hours of the deadline will be marked down by 50%. After 24 hours, I will not accept them, unless you have a documented absence.

**Make up exams:** Make-ups will be given only if there is a documented reason for the absence. Similarly, if you miss a class where there is an in-class assignment, you will receive a 0% unless there is a registered absence in the system.

## GRADING

Class participation	5%
Homework and in-class assignments	15%
Project report 1	15%
Project report 2	15%
Exams	25%
Final exam	25%

## SCHEDULE

Following is a *tentative* schedule of readings, exams, and project deadlines. Any of these may change, depending on how quickly we move through the material. While I will announce all changes in class, PLEASE check the Sakai page to ensure you are up to date.

	<b>Topic of class</b>	<b>Reading due</b>	<b>Special instructions</b>
	Intro to course and research methods		
	Overview of research	Chapter 1	
	Processes and problems in social research	Chapter 2	
	Ethics in research methods	Chapter 3 p 42-56	
	Conceptualization and measurement	Chapter 4	
	Conceptualization and measurement	Chapter 4	
	Sampling	Chapter 5	
	Sampling	Chapter 5	Hand out first report instructions
	Review AND observational study;	CH 9 only pgs 184-194	
	EXAM 1		Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
	GIS analysis	Chapter 6	Lucas Marxen guest lecture
	Causation and experimental design	Ch 6	
	Researching in the library—		Meet at Chang library Guest lecturer, Rebecca Gardner
	Causation and experimental design	Ch 7	First report due
	Survey design	Ch 7	Library HW due
	Survey design & elementary quantitative data analysis	Ch 8	
	Spring break		
	Elementary quantitative data analysis	Ch 8	
	Qualitative methods	Ch 9—everything but 184-194	

	<b>Topic of class</b>	<b>Reading due</b>	<b>Special instructions</b>
	Qualitative methods	Ch 10	Karen O'Neill guest lecture
	Exam 2		Chapter 6, 7, 8, 9
	Review Qualtrics survey		Meet in Blake computer lab
	Qualitative analysis	Ch 10	
	Qualitative analysis	Ch 10	
	Evaluation and policy analysis	Ch 11	
	Evaluation and policy analysis	Ch 11	Courtney McKnight guest lecture
	Writing research reports	Ch 12	
	Writing research reports	Ch 12	Second report due
	Present projects		
	FINAL EXAM	12-3PM	Cumulative with a focus on Ch 10, 11, and <u>12</u>