

FYC 4801: Applied Social Research Methods

Section JOHN (Class #12149), 4 credit hours
Instructor: Tracy L. Johns, Ph.D.
Office: MCCD 3041-B
e-mail: tjohns@ufl.edu

Tuesday 7th – 8th & Thursday 7th – 8th
Classroom: MCCB1108
Phone: 352-273-3505
Office Hours: Monday 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm
& by appointment

Course Description

Students taking this course will “understand and apply the principles of social science research methods, learn a variety of research methods, and have hands-on experience with data collection and analysis.”

About the course. Applied Social Research Methods introduces Family, Youth and Community Sciences students to empirical social science research. The course provides a fundamental understanding of the research process that will help students to both competently answer their own inquiries using sound research methods, and to understand and evaluate research done by others. This course emphasizes the overall research process, beginning with asking questions, and moving through research design, data collection, the basics of data analysis, and data reporting and presentation. Ultimately, students should develop a set of tools for “methodological thinking” that provide a unique perspective on conducting research about the social world.

Prerequisites: FYC 3001 with a grade of ‘C’ or better or STA 2023.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand and apply the fundamental elements and procedures of social science research designs.
2. Select the research method best suited to collecting data to answer a given research question.
3. Conceptualize, operationalize, and measure research variables.
4. Select the data analysis process best suited to a research question and method of data collection.
5. Understand basic practices for conducting and interpreting various types of data analysis.
6. Write and present research.
7. Apply this knowledge of research methods to better understand and evaluate the research conducted by others (both academic and applied).

Course Materials & Technology

Required Text:

- Dixon, J. C., Singleton, R. A., & Straits, B. C. (2022). *The Process of Social Research* (3rd ed.) Oxford University Press. (ebook only: EISBN13: 9780197613757). This book is available through UF All Access. Please visit the UF All Access website at <https://www.bsd.ufl.edu/AllAccess> to opt in. If you need assistance opting in to UF All Access, please contact the UF Bookstore.

Statistical Software:

- This course will use SPSS Statistics for data analysis, which is available for free to all UF students via UF Apps (info.apps.ufl.edu). If you prefer, you may purchase the software from the HUB for \$35 (helpdesk.ufl.edu/software-services/spss/) for install on your personal computer (which may be more functional).

All other materials will be provided by the instructor and will be available in Canvas.

FYC 4801: Applied Social Research Methods

Course Requirements & Grading Policies

Exams

You are required to complete two exams (100 points each) during the semester that account for 20% of your final grade (10% each). Exams are open-book and must be completed within the designated time interval on or before the due date specified in Canvas.

Research Labs

You are required to complete 10 of the research lab assignments offered during the semester that account for 25% of your final grade (25 points each). If you complete all 12 of the labs, your 10 highest grades will count towards your final grade.

Research Projects

You are required to complete four research projects and a presentation during the semester that account for 50% of your grade (points vary by project). Projects must be completed within the designated time interval on or before the due date specified in Canvas.

Attendance & Participation

You are expected to demonstrate your preparation for class and understanding of course materials through active participation and engagement in class. Participation will be evaluated via in-class activities, pop-up attendance, class discussion, and similar metrics.

Evaluation of Grades

Assignment	Total Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Attendance & Participation	50	5%
Research Lab Assignments	250	25%
Research Projects	500	50%
Exams	200	20%
Total	1000	100%

Grading

Grade	Points	Grade	Points
A	920 – 1000	C	720 – 779
A-	900 – 919	C-	700 – 719
B+	880 – 899	D+	680 – 699
B	820 – 879	D	620 – 679
B-	800 – 819	D-	600 – 619
C+	780 – 799	E	599 or fewer

For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

FYC 4801: Applied Social Research Methods

Course Policies

Contacting Me

The best way to reach me (outside of in-person office hours) is email. As UF policies prohibit me from discussing your grade through any other mail servers, please email me through Canvas or using your UF email account only. You can expect a response within 24 hours during the week and by the next business day if you email over the weekend.

Attendance & Make-up Work

Class attendance is extremely important, and it is essential that you keep up with research lab assignments and readings as each week's material builds on the previous week. In addition, the work we do in labs (during Thursday classes) is directly tied to the larger projects that compose the bulk of your grade in the class. If you need to miss class for some reason, please contact me ahead of time. Students who miss a quiz, lab, or project for a reason consistent with UF's excused absence policy will receive a reasonable amount of time to make up that assignment.

You are responsible for completing the assigned readings before class, as this will facilitate your understanding of lectures, participation in discussion, and lab instruction. All materials beyond the required text will be provided on Canvas (and on the R drive). Assignments and quizzes will be posted and submitted via Canvas, and discussion boards for student interaction will be available there as well.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

Academic Honesty

Research is often collaborative in academic and other work settings, and I encourage you to study with students outside of class. However, on exams and individual independent assignments, you should work independently. The exams are open book/note. However, Chat GPT and other similar generative AI should NOT be used in any format, for any of the quizzes, labs, or projects, unless instructed otherwise.

If generative AI is used with my permission on a course assignment, the content produced by generative AI must be cited using APA 7th edition guidelines. Using generative AI without my permission, in ways not explicitly permitted, or failing to properly cite material created by generative AI falls under the university [Student Code of Conduct academic integrity policy](#).

Students agree that by taking this course all required work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com or other plagiarism detection services (directly or via a learning management system, i.e. Canvas) for detection of plagiarism. All submitted work will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purposes of detecting plagiarism of such papers.

Classroom Expectations

Course Decorum. This course includes class discussion of a variety of research topics related to the social sciences. Everyone's opinion, as well as cultural background, is to be respected in these discussions, even though your values and opinions may differ. In response to challenging material,

FYC 4801: Applied Social Research Methods

everyone is encouraged to ask honest questions and thoughtfully engage one another's ideas. However, hostility, disruptive and disrespectful behavior, and provocation for provocation's sake have no place in the classroom; reasonable people disagree reasonably. Treat others as you hope to be treated; follow rules of common courtesy. Also avoid behavior that is disrespectful to the instructor and other classmates including, but not limited to: excessive talking with a classmate (excluding in class activities); texting; premature packing of personal belongings.

Please discuss any issues with me so that problems can be dealt with immediately. Repeated violations of course etiquette may result in a grade reduction for participation.

Technology. All cell phones, tablets, laptops, etc. (and anything else that makes noise) must be set to silent during class.

Written Work

Use the APA Style Guide, 7th Edition to complete all assignments in this course. Use proper APA formatting for all components of an assignment including in-text citations, tables and figures, appendices, section headings, title, abstract and references. The FYCS Department has chosen to use the Professional title page guidelines, not the student title page format. Guidelines for formatting can be found in:

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7 ed.). (2020). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Note: There are many citation generators and APA guides available online. While these can be good resources, they often produce citations that are incomplete or incorrectly formatted. If you use a citation generator for your work, it would be wise to review the references to ensure they are formatted correctly before submitting your assignment. **The only source that ensures 100% compliance with APA is the APA Style Guide itself.**

SPSS Statistics

This course will use SPSS Statistics for data analysis, which is available for free via UF Apps (info.apps.ufl.edu). To use SPSS on your laptop hard drive, you may choose to purchase the software from the HUB for \$35 (helpdesk.ufl.edu/software-services/spss/) for install on your personal computer. We'll discuss the pros and cons of these options in class.

How to Access UFApps:

1. Go to <https://apps.ufl.edu>
2. Login using your Gatorlink credentials
3. Install the Horizon Client (or opt to use the HTML Version)
4. Launch your desired application by clicking on the icon/name

University Policies: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>

FYC 4801: Applied Social Research Methods

Course Outline

The schedule below is subject to change with proper advance notice to students. Links to lecture slides and instructional slides, key ideas, handouts, and supplemental readings and materials are available on Canvas. Links to datasets used in instructional slides and lecture examples are available in the R drive.

All assignments are due, along with any supporting materials (like SPSS output), by the due date listed, as stipulated in the Course Outline and in the Canvas Assignments section.

Critical Dates:

- February 22, Project 1 due
- March 1, Exam 1 due
- March 22, Project 2 due
- April 12, Project 3 due
- April 19, Exam 2 due
- April 21, Presentations (Project 4)
- April 26, Project 5 due

Course Outline: Spring 2026

Week	Topic	Readings*	Assignments Due
1	Introduction to the Course, Scientific & Ethical Contexts of Research	Dixon, Singleton, & Straits (DSS) Chapters 1 --3	Lab 1
2	Beginning the Research Process	DSS Chapter 4	Lab 2
3	Measurement	DSS Chapter 5	Lab 3
4	Sampling	DSS Chapter 6	Lab 4
5	Research Designs	DSS Chapter 7	Lab 5
6	Surveys	DSS Chapter 8	Project 1
7	Unobtrusive Research (Social Indicators)	DSS Chapter 10	Exam 1
8	Unobtrusive Research (Content Analysis)	DSS Chapter 10	Labs 6, 7, 8
9	Qualitative Methods	DSS Chapter 9 & 13	Lab 9, Project 2
	SPRING BREAK		
10	Quantitative Analysis (Descriptive)	DSS Chapter 12	Lab 10
11	Quantitative Analysis (Inferential)	DSS Chapter 12	Lab 11
12	Multiple/Mixed Methods	DSS Chapter 11	Project 3
13	Writing & Presenting Research	DSS Chapter 14	Lab 12, Exam 2
14	Presentations		Projects 4 & 5

**Readings from the required text are noted here, further materials may be included for each week's module on Canvas.*