

**Advanced Research Methods  
FYC 6802, Section 802A  
Spring 2022**

**Instructor: Mickie Swisher**  
e-mail: [mesw@ufl.edu](mailto:mesw@ufl.edu)  
Office: 3026 McCarty Hall D

**Class Meetings**

**Wednesday: Period 3 (9:35-10:25 AM), 215 Rinker Hall**

**Friday: Periods 3-4 (9:35-11:30 AM), 101 Flint Hall**

**Office Hours: BY APPOINTMENT.** Call or e-mail requesting an appointment. I will meet at time I am free in person, by telephone or by video conference. **Please request meetings one day in advance.** A telephone call is often *much less intrusive for me* than an e-mail. I can often clear misunderstandings or explain something that is confusing in just 5-10 minutes on the phone. Responding by e-mail or Zoom takes considerably longer. I will give you my personal telephone number when class starts. **All course correspondence must occur through Canvas or your UFL e-mail account. UF does not permit student-faculty correspondence through other venues.**

**Course Description:** This course will provide a solid foundation in the principles of measurement in the social sciences – both qualitative and quantitative – and explore some typically used methods. You will learn how to use different research methods to produce valid and reliable research results. We will examine several commonly used data collection methods, but the course does not present all the methods that are available to a social scientist, nor does this course provide the in-depth knowledge of each method we discuss. There are entire courses and books about each method of data collection we will study. Treat this course as a starting place for our exploration of research data collection.

**Course Goals:** The goals of this course are to improve your ability to assess, apply and create scientific research findings in your professional and personal life.

**Course Objectives:** After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Assess the degree to which research data are based on valid, reliable, and sufficiently precise research instruments to warrant confidence in the findings
- Judge when instrumentation is sufficiently robust to justify applying research findings in your professional work
- Select appropriate instruments for data collection, based on an understanding of the nature

- of the data that each instrument generates
- Create your own social research instruments for research and evaluation

## Approach and Expectations

Overall assessment criteria:

- Comprehension and ability to apply key concepts of measurement in the social sciences
- Demonstrates analytical and critical thinking skills
- Ability to identify strengths and weaknesses in research methodology in research publications
- Capacity to develop research instruments like interview protocols, scales, and questionnaires
- Actively seeks out and uses a broad range of materials about research methods, including the materials provided in the course and materials that you find for yourself
- Ability to play a positive role in team tasks

## Textbook

Bernard, H. Russell. (2013) *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Second Edition. Sage Publications. **Any edition including the e-textbook is fine for you to use.**

*How to Use the Textbook.* Bernard is an outstanding researcher and was a faculty member in anthropology at UF for many years. His experience shines through in the textbook, which we use as a starting point for learning about research methods. Bernard's book is clearly written and easy to understand. Even if you have been exposed to a method of data collection, there is no guarantee that the ideas you learned are what I would like for you to learn in this class. Therefore, I suggest that you read the textbook selections for each week *first* and then move on to the more advanced materials that I provide each week. However, do not treat this book as an all-purpose citation that will fulfill the requirement to explore the research methods literature. We will discuss the assigned materials in the textbook in class on some occasions or when students raise questions or discussion points about the material. **You should cite and reference Bernard in your assignments only when you use specific ideas from the textbook and include the page(s) that you are citing, e.g., (Bernard, 2013:31-33).**

## Other Materials

**One of the assessment criteria for your performance on most assignments is that you provide evidence that you made extensive use of research methods literature in developing your responses to my questions. You MUST extend the literature you use beyond required materials.** You do **not** need to spend hours looking for materials. In addition to the required materials (Bernard and other references), I provide extensive additional resources at the website for almost every topic in this class. **Consult, cite and reference** these materials in your assignments. If you find other materials, that is excellent. You get extra credit for doing so if you share those materials with the rest of us through Canvas. There are instructions about what to include – these submissions via a Canvas discussion board are not long and they are easy to complete.

Most of the additional required materials for the course consist of research journal articles. Some are chapters of books on e-reserve. If you do not know how to get materials from e-reserve, consult the UF libraries website for instructions. You may also need to find material about your research topic. Please consult the document Where to Find Materials about Your Research

Topic linked at the course home page if you need help with this.

### **Grading Philosophy and Policy**

I award grades not to punish poor performance, but rather to help you understand and master the material we are covering. My goal is for every student to earn an A in this course. I expect to see increased comprehension and mastery of the concepts and ideas that we discuss during the course. Expectations grow as the semester progresses and what was an acceptable or adequate response on an early assignment will most likely not be acceptable on a later assignment. I expect to see increasing sophistication in your answers. I do consider improvement over the course of the semester in assigning a final grade. However, my grading on each assignment is rigorous because I use assignments as away for you to improve your mastery of the material in the course. For this to occur, you need my honest assessment of your performance. I do not consider major or class standing in grading.

### **Teamwork is key to success**

Learning to work effectively in teams is a critical professional skill. Almost any professional position requires that you work as part of a team. I incorporate learning how to work as a *team member* in all of my courses. I think almost all graduate students will find themselves working in teams once they take their first professional position. As a result, I have made teamwork a bigger part of my courses over the years. To my surprise I must admit, I have found Zoom is good for teamwork in several respects. Perhaps most important, it's easier to share documents and we do not have four or five teams in a big room all trying to talk. Everyone gets their own breakout room. We will spend every Wednesday on group projects. After our initial class meeting, you will have the entire Wednesday class meeting every week to work with your team. Where and how to meet will be your choice – in person in our classroom or via Zoom. I will be available via Zoom every week so that you can ask questions and get information.

You will complete all of the assignments as a team and I will probably select the team members unless you disagree. Since many of you have had a course together you may prefer to select your own teams. We can discuss this and make a decision. In the professional world, you are expected to work out problems on the teams as a team – complaining to your boss about your colleagues is not the norm and often backfires. I will provide some materials to help us create a productive team environment. This is a change in my instructional approach that I have made over the past several years. Now I am glad I started down this road.

### **Late Submission Policy**

The assignments in this course are sequential. You therefore need to complete assignments in a timely manner. I will not accept assignments submitted after the due date unless the delay meets UF requirements for late submissions. All due dates are given at the class web site. Submit all assignments through Canvas – not e-mail. You also need to submit some other materials for class preparation on Canvas. There are discussion boards for these submissions. Timely submission is critical.

Requirements for class attendance and assignments and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

## General Grading Criteria

***I list the criteria that I use to grade each assignment at the end of the assignment.*** Consult those criteria and ***respond to the questions in the assignment based on the specific criteria for each assignment.*** The following ***general criteria*** are components of my approach to assessment.

Ability to apply the concepts learned in class. You must demonstrate that you understand the key concepts about measurement in social science and that you can apply what you have learned to your own work. **Concentrate on explaining how you are applying the concepts, not on repeating phrases from our discussions or from the literature.** Do not repeat generalities.

Evidence that you use additional materials about social research methods (beyond the assigned materials). I expect you seek out and read additional material about research methods and instruments. Cite these materials in your assignments, explain ***how*** you used them, and include them in the references. ***Go beyond my “cheat sheets” or the textbook. Even if you cite Bernard and Swisher many times, you will receive few points for the assessment criteria related to using the research methods literature.***

Be specific in your responses, focusing on the decisions you make as you develop research protocols. Ask specific questions in each assignment. I try to make these as clear as possible and to give you guidance about how to answer each question. Make sure that you answer each question completely. ***I am more interested in how you arrived at a decision – what you considered -- than in whether I agree with your conclusion or not.***

Use your own words. Using your own words to answer questions helps me assess your mastery of the material we cover. ***Do not write long paragraphs -- use bullet points. I want focused responses specific to your research project.***

## Distribution of Grade

Component	Points
Class Preparation and Participation	100
Ethics Training & IRB Registration	100
Group Project: Index	250
Group Project: Interview Protocol	250
Reflection: Key Lessons Learned	100
Reviews of Research Methods Articles	150
Team Member Assessments	50
<b>Total Required Points</b>	<b>1000</b>
Extra Credit for Reviews of the Literature Beyond the Required Reviews	50
<b>Total Potential Extra Points</b>	<b>50</b>

## Grading Scale

<b>A</b>	95 – 100%	<b>A-</b>	90-94%			
<b>B+</b>	87-89%	<b>B</b>	83-86%	<b>B-</b>	80-82%	
<b>C+</b>	77-79%	<b>C</b>	73-76%	<b>C-</b>	70-72%	
<b>D+</b>	67-69%	<b>D</b>	63-66%	<b>D-</b>	60-62%	<b>E</b> <60%

**Schedule of Topics – Subject to Revision as Needed Assignments**  
**Due on FRIDAY at 11:59 PM Unless Otherwise Indicated**  
**Late Submissions Not Accepted**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Submission</b>
1	Jan 05	Introductions & Course Overview	
	Jan 07	Data Collection in the Research Cycle:	
2	Jan 12	First Team Member Meeting –I	Proof of Ethics Training
	Jan 14	Principles of Measurement	
3	Jan 19	Team work on Assignment 1 (Consult assignment 1 instructions)	Canvas Posting: Individual definitions of constructs
	Jan 21	Measurement Procedures	
4	Jan 26	Group develops definitions of constructs	Post group definitions on Canvas team discussion board, 11:59 PM on Jan. 26
	Jan 28	Key Concepts Questionnaires, Indices, and Scales	
5	Feb 02	Identify variables to represent constructs before class and assign team members to develop items for each variable	Review individual submissions of items associated with each variable
	Feb 04	Procedures for testing: questionnaires, indices and scales	
6	Feb 09	Select items for each variable (see resources for this week)	Compile into an on-line (Qualtrix) or pencil & paper format
	Feb 11	Review & Discussion of ways to improve questionnaires, indices and scales	
7	Feb 16	Conduct expert review and cognitive test of instrument	Post complete instrument to canvas available to testers during class
	Feb 18	TBD	
8	Feb 23	Final work session for Assignment 1	
	Feb 25	Mixed Methods Research	Group Project Due by 11:59 PM
9	Mar 02	Meta-Analyses, Systematic Reviews, and Scientometric Analyses – Guest Speakers	
	Mar 04	Presentation of research methods reviews	
10	Mar 09	<b>Spring Break</b>	
	Mar 11	<b>Spring Break</b>	
11	Mar 16	Determine topic for interview assignment	
	Mar 18	Interview & Focus Groups – Part 1	
12	Mar 23	Develop draft questions for each topical area	
	Mar 25	Interview & Focus Groups – Part 2	
13	Mar 30	Develop a questioning route for your instrument	
	Apr 01	Conduct cognitive test of your proposed instrument	
14	Apr 06	Finalize Assignment 2	

	Apr 08	Direct and Indirect Observation	Assignment 2 due before class
15	Apr 13	Present Research Reviews	Post Research Methods Reviews beforeClass
	Apr 15	Domain and Network Analyses	Post Research Methods Reviews beforeClass
16	Apr 20	Time to Reflect	Reflection: Key Lessons Learned due (Graded Submission)

### **Class Preparation & Participation (100 points)**

**Objective:** Help ensure that the time we spend together in the classroom will allow you to extend your mastery of the material covered and practice your ability to apply the concepts to the evaluation and/or development of research instruments.

Take class preparation and participation seriously. I assess this portion of your grade based on (1) demonstration of preparation when you are asked to complete specific activities prior to class, such as taking a quiz on Canvas or making a list of questions, (2) the degree to which you play a leadership role in class activities, and (3) how well you respond to questions and offer comments in our discussions. I do NOT award class participation and preparation grades simply based on attendance. See the document "Class Participation and Preparation Assessment Criteria" at the course website to see the assessment procedures.

### **Ethics Training & IRB Registration (100 points)**

**Objective:** Secure required training for all social science research and register with UFIRB.

In order to apply for IRB approval at the University of Florida, you must complete an on-line training program. You cannot submit a request for IRB approval, nor can your professor include you in any research or project that will involve human subjects, until you can show proof of this training. You must get a score of at least 80% on the test to meet this requirement (the minimum passing score at UF). To complete the training, go to the [IRB-02 page](#) at the IRB website. Once there, click on [Required Training for IRB-02](#). Follow the instructions provided to complete the training. Even if you are using a UF computer, you will have to activate your VPN connection to login to my.ufl for the training. Submit a scanned (pdf) document showing your scores on the training. If you completed the training prior to this class, submit the record of your training.

### **Reviews of Research Methods Articles (150 Points, 50 per Review)**

**Objective:** Facilitate your exploration of the research methods literature and provide materials critical to the successful completion of assignments.

Purpose. I know that your time is limited and that this can limit your ability to explore the research methods literature. We cover only a few methods in detail in the course. There are *many more* ways to collect data. The reviews provide all class members with a reference library that will deepen our exploration of the literature. ***The materials you and others review, including the required research reviews, meet the requirement to use research methods literature in the assignments.*** The reviews will summarize key concepts about research methods, sometimes concepts that apply generally to all instruments and sometimes concepts that are particularly important for a specific method of data collection. Sharing materials saves everyone effort and improves your grades. See the instructions for submission and an example of a completed review linked on the course home page called Key Documents.

**Group Project – Index (250 Total Points)**  
**200 points for Group Document, 50 for Individual Postings**

**Team Project.** This is a team project. You will work in a team of three or four people. I will assign the members of your team.

**Objectives: Employ techniques to produce original research design instruments that meet high standards for rigor and reliability.**

1. Develop robust definitions of theoretical constructs
2. Identify variables that researchers have used to represent theoretical constructs
3. Identify items that others have used in their research.
4. Apply the concepts of reliability, validity and discriminatory power to your decisions about how to create or “borrow” items to use in your research
5. Use various techniques to evaluate the reliability, validity and discriminatory power of the sets of potential items you have selected and/or developed and to eliminate or alter items that are not useful
6. Convert ordinal responses to individual items to summative interval scores for variables

**Individual Postings to Discussion Board (50 points)** You need to submit individual contributions on Canvas Discussion Boards for this project on several occasions. The quality of your submission and timeliness in submission are critical because failure on your part will damage the entire group effort. I will therefore assess these submissions individually.

**Group Final Submission (200 points).** I will assign you to a team of three to four individuals. I will assign the specific theoretical constructs that you must operationalize for this assignment. The assignment involves several steps and I provide a full explanation of each component in the document [Instructions for Index](#). Note that one-half of the points are based on your final submission which is your reflection on this learning experience. Individual contributions to the project are critical. All of you will get the same grade on the group submissions.

**Peer Assessment (50 points).** Your contribution to the group project will also be assessed by your fellow team members. The assessment has a maximum of 50 possible points. I will provide instructions for completing this assessment at the course website and on Canvas.

**Partners Project: Individual Semi-Structured Interview Protocol (250 points)**  
**200 points for Group Document, 50 points for Individual Contributions**

**Objectives: Be able to conduct interview, focus groups and other forms of data collection using open response exchanges with participants in ways that ensure the participant can respond fully and openly.**

- Use interviews and related research methods (like focus groups or group interviews) to gain insights into complex thought processes and concepts of respondents;
- Assess the value of using interviews and related methods in combination with other instruments like indices or scales to gain a more complete understanding of a phenomenon (e.g., apply a mixed methods approach to research);
- Apply key principles of research methodology relating to validity, reliability and discriminatory power to the development of protocols for interviews and similar instruments; and
- Apply appropriate practices to enhance respondent participation and power in the interview process



Form partnerships of two people, one from your team and one from another team, from your team for the Group Project (index). There are 14 in the course, so we should have 7 teams. Your task is to develop and conduct one cognitive test of the protocol for an individual semi-structured interview. You will use the same theoretical constructs that you used for the index. We will *skip expert review* in the interest of saving time and effort.

### **Lessons Learned (100 Points, Individual Assignment)**

**Objectives: Reflect on the lessons learned and value (or not) of the learning experience in this class.**

We spend the first half of this course focusing on key concepts of research methodology. We practice two key methods of collecting data used in the social sciences – one that is generally considered a “quantitative” method (development of an index) and one that is usually considered “qualitative (an interview or focus group).” We then examine a number of other methods of data collection that are frequently used. You will develop three reviews during this latter part of the course. In this final submission, the reflection, I am asking you to consider what you learned during this course – what you take from the course that you will use in your own professional work. The assignment is to submit a document with three components: (1) key concepts and techniques that you think you need to use consistently in your research, (2) how (if at all) this course changed the way you assess and evaluate the social research literature, and (3) key lessons learned about research that you would stress in a presentation to undergraduate students taking a basic research methods class.

### **University of Florida Policies**

#### **Attendance Policy, Class Expectations, Make-Up Policy and Submission of**

**Assignments** Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies available at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx> Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and require appropriate documentation.

Additional information can be found in [Attendance Policies](#). This class employs UF policy covering the student's responsibility for informing the professor of planned absences and illness. <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

All assignments are due on or before 11:59 PM on the date indicated on the course web site and Canvas. Submit all assignments through Canvas. **You will not be able to submit assignments after the due date because the system will not allow you to upload them. I will award zero (0) points for any assignment that is submitted after the due date if you fail to meet UF policy for excused absences.**

Class preparation and participation is an important component in this class. I award 0-10 points for your preparation and participation in the class. The number of points awarded is based on **active participation** in the class period. I will record the class sessions. If you cannot attend, complete all class activities through the weekly discussion board on Canvas *prior to the time the class meets through Zoom*.

***Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to use for reference and for enrolled students who are unable to attend a class session to have***



**access to the materials covered.** *Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.*

If you must miss a class altogether (cannot attend and cannot respond prior to the class meeting on Canvas, let me know in advance if you can. Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and require appropriate documentation. Additional information can be found in [Attendance Policies](#). Please turn your cell phone off during class meetings.

### **Attendance and Make-Up Work**

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/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

### **Online Course Evaluation Process**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/](http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [ufl.bluer.com/ufl/](http://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/](http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/).

### **Academic Honesty**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions ([sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/](http://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/)). Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

### **Software Use**

All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

### **Services for Students with Disabilities**

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within

the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation 0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/). Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester

## **Campus Resources - Health & Wellness**

- ***U Matter, We Care:*** If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352- 392-1575, or visit [umatter.ufl.edu/](http://umatter.ufl.edu/) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- ***Counseling and Wellness Center:*** Visit [counseling.ufl.edu/](http://counseling.ufl.edu/) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- ***Student Health Care Center:*** Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or visit [shcc.ufl.edu/](http://shcc.ufl.edu/).
- ***University Police Department:*** Visit [police.ufl.edu/](http://police.ufl.edu/) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- ***UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:*** For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center](http://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center).

## **Academic Resources**

- ***E-learning technical support:*** Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).
- ***Career Connections Center:*** Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services [career.ufl.edu/](http://career.ufl.edu/).
- ***Library Support:*** [cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask](http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask) various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- ***Teaching Center:*** Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. [teachingcenter.ufl.edu/](http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/)
- ***Writing Studio:*** 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. [writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/](http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/)

## **Student Complaints**

***Student Complaints On-Campus:*** [sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code/student-conduct-code/](http://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code/student-conduct-code/)

***On-Line Students Complaints:*** [distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process/](http://distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process/) /