I. Course Information

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II. Course Prerequisite:

Introductory course in any of the social sciences.

III. Course Description:

Course introduces basics of research in social sciences. Content includes research design, methodology, simple statistical analysis of data and interpretation of empirical social data. Students design, conduct, and interpret short survey.

IV. Learning Objectives:

A. The student will understand the proper role of research in the social sciences.

B. The student will understand the various steps involved in doing social science research.

C. The student will be able to interpret the results of social science research.

D. The student will demonstrate what he/she has learned by designing their own research project.

V. Academic Integrity:

Students and employees at Oakton Community College are required to demonstrate academic integrity and follow Oakton’s Code of Academic Conduct. This code prohibits:

- cheating,
- plagiarism (turning in work not written by you, or lacking proper citation),
- falsification and fabrication (lying or distorting the truth),
- helping others to cheat,
- unauthorized changes on official documents,
• pretending to be someone else or having someone else pretend to be you,
• making or accepting bribes, special favors, or threats, and
• any other behavior that violates academic integrity.

There are serious consequences to violations of the academic integrity policy. Oakton’s policies and procedures provide students a fair hearing if a complaint is made against you. If you are found to have violated the policy, the minimum penalty is failure on the assignment and, a disciplinary record will be established and kept on file in the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs for a period of 3 years.

Details of the Code of Academic Conduct can be found in the Student Handbook.

VI. Outline of Topics:

A. The Contribution of Research to Social Policy

B. Problems of Measurement: Accuracy
   1. Reliability
   2. Validity
   3. Random and nonrandom errors

C. Problems of Measurement: Precision
   1. In measures
   2. In measurements

D. Causal Thinking and the Design of Research
   1. The subjective nature of causation
   2. Eliminating alternative causal interpretations

E. Basics of a Research Design
   1. Deciding what to investigate
   2. Formulating hypothesis and exploratory questions
   3. Selecting a method
   4. Developing the research design
   5. Pre-testing the design
   6. Collecting data
   7. Interpreting the data: Statistics
   8. Writing up the results
   9. Planning for further research

VII. Methods of Instruction:

Independent study.
VIII. Course Practices Required:

This course relies on the student's ability to read and understand college-level text material. Students will be required to write for the class the equivalent of 12-15 typed pages of material that will be graded. This writing may take the form of a research or term paper, summaries of journal articles, and/or a series of shorter, analytical paper.

IX. Instructional Materials:


X. Methods of Evaluating Student Progress:

One major research project.

XI. Other Course Information:

A. If you have a documented learning, psychological, or physical disability you may be entitled to reasonable academic accommodations or services. To request accommodations or services, contact the ASSIST office in the Learning Center. All students are expected to fulfill essential course requirements. The College will not waive any essential skill or requirement of a course or degree program.

B. Attendance

C. Class policy on make-up exams, late assignments, etc.

D. Important dates

SEE ATTACHED
Introduction to Social Research  
Dr. Robert Frank

This class is an independent study, where the student will work on his/her own. It will be unlikely that we will meet as a group. The main goal of the class is to do your own research project.

To begin: Please read The Elements of Social Scientific Thinking 9th edition, By Kenneth Hoover and Todd Donovan.

After reading the book, you will hand in a proposal on the research project you are thinking of doing. You must follow the APA style on all your work. You will find everything you need for writing the paper at the link below. Please follow it exactly!

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/apa/index.html

The research project will be graded on your ability to pick an appropriate topic, research the topic, design a research method, analyze the data and discuss the results appropriately.

It is unlikely that you will finish this class in time for me to post a grade for you. Therefore, I will assign you an “I” (incomplete) for the class. Here at Oakton incompletes turn into “F” after 6 weeks. Don’t worry about the “F”, once you complete the class I will replace the “F” with the appropriate grade.