SESP 398
Honors Program, School of Education and Social Policy
Fall 2003, Wednesdays, 2:30pm - 5:00pm.
Annenberg Hall, Rm. 301 (Dean's Conference Room)

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Course Objectives:

• To learn how to conduct social science research through the experience of designing, conducting, and reporting the results of your own research project, from start to finish.
• To familiarize you with the culture and practice of the conduct and reporting of research so that you will become an educated consumer of research.
• To give you an opportunity to participate in scholarly inquiry and research so that it might inform your later career decisions as you think about the possibility of going onto graduate school.

Requirements:

By the end of Fall quarter, you need to have written a research proposal that has been accepted by your major advisor, a second reader, and Professor Peterson and Amy Coldren. Most of you are well-positioned to do this given that you began writing a proposal in Professor Lewis’ Advanced Research Methods class last spring. Accordingly, many of you should be able to have your research proposal written by the end of October.

You thesis proposal should be 8 to 15 double-spaced pages and should be written in the style of the American Psychological Association (APA) as described in the APA Style Manual. It should include a review of the previous literature on your topic, a statement of your research question(s), a theoretical or conceptual framework where appropriate, methods including sample and qualitative or quantitative analyses you will use, expected findings and importance of this work. Before you begin collecting data for your research, you will also need to get approval from the Human Subjects Committee also called the Institutional Review Board (IRB). We will be discussing this in class on October 8th.

The final thesis should also be written in APA style and include the above sections as well as results, discussion, and conclusion sections. You should make your thesis as long as it needs to be in order to articulately and thoughtfully state your questions, review the literature, describe your methods, present results and discuss them and give your conclusions and the significance and limitations of your research. The final thesis should be written entirely by you. When using other people’s ideas or words, you should credit them by citing them and/or quoting them as appropriate.
Required Text

APA Style Manual, 5th Edition (see also http://www.wooster.edu/psychology/apa crib.html#/Examples)
The APA Style Manual is available at most large bookstores, including Norris.

Evaluation

You will be evaluated based on your participation in the seminar, the quality of your research proposal, final written thesis, and poster presentation. You will get a single cumulative grade at the end of Spring quarter. Your proposal will be evaluated by your thesis advisor, Penelope and Amy. Submission of an acceptable proposal by December 5th is a prerequisite for continuing on in the Honors Program into Winter quarter. You may decide at any time during Fall quarter that you do not wish to continue in the program and make seek approval to withdraw. You final thesis will be evaluated by your advisor, your second reader, and by Penelope and Amy.

Schedule for Fall Quarter

September 24: Introductions and Overview: What makes a good research problem? What makes a good research proposal?

October 1st: What research has been done on my research problem? What have others learned? Do they agree or disagree? What more needs to be learned? How will my research contribute something new or resolve a controversy?

Assignment for October 1st:
Read the research proposals handed out in class on September 24 and come prepared to discuss and critique them. Come prepared to answer the above questions for your project.

October 8: Research ethics, protection of human subjects, and approval for use of human subjects

Guest Speaker: Bruce Sherin, Chair, Non-Medical Behavioral Sciences Human Subjects Research Panel at Northwestern University

Assignment for October 8th:
Read the “Belmont Report” and other materials which will be handed out in class on October 1st. Here’s a link to a web site that tells about how the Belmont report came into being.


Please also go to the following links to read about the human subjects controversy surrounding the research of Michael Bailey in our Psychology Department. Here’s an article from the Chronicle of Higher Ed:

http://pubs2.uchicago.edu/butchly/report5326frm7-showMessage?topicID=628&topic

http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/LynnsReviewOrBaileysBook.html

Assignments for October 15th:

No class. Email the name of your advisor and your proposed research questions to Penelope, Susan, and Amy by October 15th.

If you are using qualitative methods in your study, schedule a time to talk with Amy about your research questions.
and methods. If you are using quantitative methods, schedule a time to talk Spyros Konstantopoulos, a new SESP professor.

October 29th: Sharing and critiquing your progress thus far...

Assignments for October 29th
Come to class with as much of your proposal as you have drafted. Bring four copies of your draft to share.

November 12: No class. Submit a complete first draft of your proposal by email or paper to Penelope and Amy and schedule a meeting with either Penelope or Amy for the week of November 17th to get comments on your draft and discuss your proposal. You should choose your second reader by this time and give the name to Penelope, Susan and Amy. Either your advisor or your second reader or both must be an SESP faculty member.

Friday, December 5: Final draft of proposal due. Submit proposal for use of human subjects to either Penelope or to the Human Subjects Review Panel to get their approval.

Schedule for Winter and Spring Quarters
Seminar meetings will be held once a month. The purpose of these meetings will be to give you a forum for sharing your progress with the others in the seminar and getting constructive feedback. Dates for these meetings will be announced at the end of Fall quarter.

May 17th: Complete thesis draft due to advisor, second reader and to Penelope, Amy and Susan by May 17th.

Wednesday, May 26th: Bring draft of poster presentation material to class for sharing and feedback.

Friday, June 4th: Give a poster presentation for SESP faculty and students on the third floor of Annenberg.