SESP 398
Honors Program, School of Education and Social Policy
Fall 2005, Wednesdays, 2:30pm – 5:00pm.
Annenberg Hall, Rm. 301 (Dean’s Conference Room)

Program Director
Penelope Peterson
Annenberg Hall, Rm. 252
Phone: (847) 467-1190
E-mail: p-peterson@northwestern.edu

Teaching Assistant and Methodological Consultant:
Tiffany Simons
Annenberg Hall, Rm. 307
Office phone: (847) 467-1869
E-mail: t-simons@northwestern.edu

Program Coordinator
Susan Johnston
Annenberg Hall, Rm. 122
Phone: (847)491-4663
E-mail: sjohnston@northwestern.edu

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 Tiffany Bernstein. Most of you are well-positioned to do this given that you began writing a proposal in the 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 6th.

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 peoples’ 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](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 Tiffany. 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. Your final thesis will be evaluated by your advisor, your second reader, and by Penelope and Tiffany.

**Schedule for Fall Quarter**

**September 21st:** Introductions and Overview: What makes a good research problem? What makes a good research proposal?

**September 28th:** 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 September 29th:**
Read the research proposals handed out in class on September 22 and come prepared to discuss and critique them. Come prepared to answer the above questions for your project.

**October 5th:** Research ethics, protection of human subjects, and approval for use of human subjects

**Guest Speaker:** Bruce Sherin, Ph.D., Chair, Institutional Review Board (IRB), Office of the Protection of Human Subjects, Northwestern University.

**Assignment for October 5th:**
Read the “Belmont Report” and other materials which will be handed out in class on September 28th. Here’s a link to a web site that tells about how the Belmont report came into being.


**Assignments for October 12th:**

**No class. Email the name of your advisor and your proposed research questions to Penelope, Susan, and Tiffany by October 12th.**

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

**November 2nd:** Sharing and critiquing your progress thus far.

**Assignments for November 2nd**
Come to class with as much of your proposal as you have drafted. Bring four copies of your draft to share.
Submit proposal for use of human subjects to either Penelope or to the Human Subjects Review Panel to get their approval.

**November 9th:** No class. **Submit a complete first draft** of your proposal by email or paper to Penelope and Tiffany and **schedule a meeting** with either Penelope or Tiffany for the week of November 14th to get comments on your draft and discuss your proposal. You should chose your second reader by this time and give the name to Penelope, Susan and Tiffany. Either your advisor or your second reader or both must be an SESP faculty member.

**Friday, December 2nd:** Final draft of proposal due.

**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 15th:** **Complete thesis draft due** to advisor, second reader and to Penelope, Tiffany and Susan by May 15th.

**Wednesday, May 24th:** **Bring draft of poster presentation** material to class for sharing and feedback.

**Friday, June 2nd:** **Give a poster presentation** for SESP faculty and students on the third floor of Annenberg.