Social Ecology 10 
RESEARCH DESIGN

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COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES:
This course will systematically cover the basic elements of social science research methodology. We will learn about the necessary components of research methods to understand, critique, design, and carry out sound research. In this course you will learn how to: critically read research on social ecology issues; conceive a workable research question; select an appropriate social science method for the research question; design a research study; understand the ethical issues that arise in social science research and how they are minimized; and make sense of research findings. You will learn about the major qualitative and quantitative approaches used by researchers interested in topics addressed within the School of Social Ecology, including experiments, surveys, ethnographic field research, content analysis and other unobtrusive measures, and program evaluation.

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to: identify, locate, read, and utilize scholarly published research on social science issues; understand which methods are appropriate for different kinds of research questions; pose a research question and design an appropriate study to answer that question; and evaluate and critique social science research.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
This course is taught ENTIRELY ONLINE through the course website at Canvas website (https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/). We have an intense schedule since we have to cover a quarter-long course in 5 weeks. Each week, you will read 2-4 assigned chapters and/or articles; read 2 full lectures; respond to 2 discussion questions; and take 2 quizzes. Every week after the first week, you will also have to turn in a written assignment. I recommend that you do the readings, postings and quizzes sequentially, so take the relevant quiz after reading the lecture and chapter/article relevant to the topic and after posting on the board for a given lecture. Quizzes are open book, but you only have 30 minutes to complete each one so make sure you are prepared to take them when you open them. DO NOT LEAVE THE WEEK’S WORK UNTIL THE LAST DAY!!
It is a course requirement that you respond to the two weekly discussion questions by the due dates, and **no late posts** will receive credit. Your responses should be relevant to the course material and of a sufficient length to convey your thoughts. This would generally mean a MINIMUM of 100 words per discussion section. The discussions should be viewed as a central tool for you in this class—in the absence of meeting in person, we will be creating a virtual classroom through the discussions, and I encourage all of you to use the discussion forum above and beyond the required use. It is also a place to post questions if you need clarification on anything, seek advice from your peers or from us on your project topic, share resources and explore ideas. In all discussion posts, it is important to be respectful of others, even if you have a different or conflicting perspective on an issue.

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

There also 5 required articles, available on the course website (except the first one, which you need to find and download yourself), that illustrate how different methods are used in actual research.

**GRADING & ASSIGNMENTS POLICY**
The assignment and quiz deadlines are FIRM deadlines. Assignments are to be uploaded on the course site by the posted deadlines. Please make sure your NAME is on each assignment document! **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED & NO LATE QUIZZES CAN BE TAKEN UNLESS YOU PROVIDE DOCUMENTATION OF A LEGITIMATE ABSENCE THAT PREVENTED YOUR COMPLETION OF THE QUIZ OR ASSIGNMENT DURING THE ENTIRE WEEK IT WAS DUE.**
Legitimate absences include serious documentable illness, travel on a UCI sanctioned trip for school related business (i.e., for athletics), and/or death in the immediate family. Again, you must post to each week’s discussion questions by the weekly deadline. You can post your own questions or discussion outside of the required discussion at any time. Because this course is online, and you have considerable flexibility within each week to do the required work, excused absences will generally be ones that were unanticipated, unavoidable, and of significant duration. Your best strategy to avoid situations in which you may not be able to finish the work, but where you will not be able to demonstrate a legitimate excuse, is to plan ahead, begin to work on the course well before the weekly deadlines, and spread the workload over the entire week.

If you have a documented disability that requires assistance, you will need to go to the Disability Services Center (DSC) for coordination of your academic accommodations (email: dsc@uci.edu). Please notify us as soon as possible if you plan to use these services.

Academic integrity is presumed and expected in this course. Please familiarize yourself with the university policy at: http://senate.uci.edu/uci-academic-senate-manual/part-iii-appendices-of-the-irvine-division/appendix-viii-uci-academic-senate-policy-on-academic-honesty/ if you have not done so already. You may also view the video tutorial on what constitutes plagiarism and dishonesty at: http://cast.oit.uci.edu/tltc/Production/TLTC/DUE_Plagiarism_Tutorial/Plag_Tutorial.htm. Anyone who is found to have cheated on any assignments or quizzes and/or to have plagiarized work will earn an automatic F for the assignment, and potentially faces failure for the course, depending upon the circumstances. The student may also face additional discipline from the university, again depending upon the circumstances.

Your final grade for the course will be based upon your performances on the online quizzes, participation in online discussions, and performance on assignments, as follows:

- **Online quizzes**: 500 points maximum (10 @ 50 points each)
- **Assignments**: 200 points maximum (4 @ 50 points each)
- **Discussion**: 300 points maximum (10 partic. @ 30 points each)
- **Total possible**: 1000 points

A range = 900 points or above
B range = 800-899 points
C range = 700-799 points
D range = 600-699 points
F = 599 points or below

**PLEASE NOTE THAT ADDS, DROPS, AND GRADE OPTION CHANGES MUST BE SUBMITTED BY YOU VIA EMAIL TO ME (lynchm@uci.edu) AND TO SUMMER SESSION (summer-session@uci.edu)**
SCHEDULE OF TOPICS / ASSIGNMENTS / DUE DATES (may change if necessary):

WEEK 1: Introduction to asking and answering research questions. The scientific method; theory in social research; reading social science research; Introduction to the UCI Library. By Sunday, August 9, BEFORE 11:30 PM.
READ: Chapters 1 & 2, Lectures 1 & 2; explore course website. 
RESPOND: To discussion forum under “Discussion 1” & “Discussion 2.”
QUIZZES: Take orientation quiz, under "Quizzes" section & Quiz 2 (this covers Lectures 1 & 2).

WEEK 2: Causation in research; introduction to research design & measurement issues in social research. By Sunday, August 16, BEFORE 11:30 PM.
READ: Chapters 4-6 (NOTE: Chapter 3 will be read next week); Lectures 3 & 4, and the online article: Cross, J., Zimmerman, D. & O’Grady, M. (2009). Residence hall room type and alcohol use among college students living on campus. Environment & Behavior, 41, 583-603. This article is available in full text through Sociological Abstracts using the UCI library databases. You should be able to find this article in full text after you read Lecture 2.
RESPOND: To discussion forum under “Discussion 3” & “Discussion 4.”
QUIZZES: Take Quiz 3 & Quiz 4
ASSIGNMENT #2: Answers to questions about online article, as directed in “Assignment 1,” must be uploaded by Sunday, August 16, before 11:30 PM. PLEASE MAKE SURE THE ASSIGNMENT IS SAVED AS A .doc or .docx DOCUMENT, NOT as wpd.

WEEK 3: Ethics and research & Experimental designs
By Sunday, August 23, BEFORE 11:30 PM.
READ: Chapters 3 & 8 “Experiment article” under Lesson 6 on course website; Lectures 5 & 6.
RESPOND: To discussion forum under “Discussion 5” & “Discussion 6.”
QUIZZES: Take Quizzes 5 & 6.
ASSIGNMENT #2: Research question and justification, and list of 5 scholarly references relevant to your research project in APA format due using MS Word, uploaded no later than August 23 before 11:30 PM; Research question (without references) may also be posted on discussion forum under "Lesson 6." PLEASE MAKE SURE THE ASSIGNMENT IS SAVED AS A .doc or .docx DOCUMENT, NOT as wpd.

WEEK 4: Survey research: questionnaire construction and administration; defining a population and selecting a sample using probability sampling; nonprobability sampling & field research.
By Sunday, August 30, BEFORE 11:30 PM.
READ: Chapters 7, 9-10; Lectures 7 & 8; "Field methods article" under Lesson 8 on course website (you already read a survey article for your first assignment).

RESPOND: To discussion forum under “Discussion 7” & “Discussion 8.”

QUIZZES: Take Quizzes 7 & 8.

ASSIGNMENT #3: (single article summary in APA format) uploaded no later than August 30, before 11:30 PM, submitted as MS Word attachment. PLEASE MAKE SURE THE ASSIGNMENT IS SAVED AS A .doc or .docx DOCUMENT, NOT as wpd.

WEEK 5: Unobtrusive research methods, program evaluation and policy analysis; analyzing data
By Sunday, September 6, BEFORE 11:30 PM.

READ: Chapters 11-12; "Content analysis article" under Lesson 9 and "Program evaluation article" under Lesson 10 on course website; Lectures 9 & 10.

RESPOND: To discussion forum under “Discussion 9” & “Discussion 10.”

QUIZZES: Take Quizzes 9 & 10.

ASSIGNMENT #4 (your research design) must be uploaded as MS Word document by September 6 before 11:30 PM. PLEASE MAKE SURE THE ASSIGNMENT IS SAVED AS A .doc or .docx DOCUMENT, NOT as .wpd.

CONGRATULATIONS! You have completed all of the requirements for this course!