DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:
Sociology 823 “Intermediate Social Research Methods” introduces students to the elementary components and key debates of research design. In this course we will learn about imagining good research questions, the strengths and weaknesses of various research approaches, the basic issues surrounding validity and measurement, and key strategies for effective conceptualization.

Socio 823 continues in the familiar tradition of “eager anticipation” of studying social research methods among graduate students. Perhaps, however, you are not feeling so eager, and your anticipation is fraught with anxiety. Do not panic! This is an intellectually stimulating and fun class! Further, this material presents really important foundational matters pertinent to good social research. I am very confident that each of you can master this material, thereby strengthening your analytical and intellectual skills.

COURSE MATERIAL:
The following books are required. Additional readings will be provided electronically.

Required Texts:
REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Assignment Summary:                        Grade Scale:
Class Participation                        A    90-100
Research Assignments                       B    80-89
Midterm                                    C    70-79
Final Exam                                 D    60-69
Research Paper                            F    0-59

CLASS PREPARATION, ATTENDANCE, ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, AND DEADLINES

You must arrive for class on time, having done all the required reading for the day, and prepared to
discuss class material.

NOTE: Material that is not covered or discussed in class is still fair game for written assignments and
exams, so it is up to you to raise questions about material you wish to discuss if they have not yet
been raised.

You may study together for daily classes and the exams, and you may consult one another on the
problem sets and small assignments, but you are not to copy one another’s work. This is your
opportunity to shine and I want to see you do it!

This is a graduate seminar. Your participation is key and part of your evaluation! Though not
required, attendance is strongly encouraged.

Please note: I want to assist you in your efforts to succeed. Therefore, any student with a disability
who needs an accommodation or other assistance in this course should make an appointment to speak
with me as soon as possible.

Statement Regarding Academic Integrity:

“Kansas State University has an Honor & Integrity System based on personal integrity, which is
presumed to be sufficient assurance in academic matters one's work is performed honestly and
without unauthorized assistance. Undergraduate and graduate students, by registration,
acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Honor & Integrity System. The policies and procedures of the
Honor & Integrity System apply to all full and part-time students enrolled in undergraduate and
graduate courses on-campus, off-campus, and via distance learning. The honor system web site
can be reach via the following URL: www.ksu.edu/honor.

A component vital to the Honor System is the inclusion of the Honor Pledge which applies to all
assignments, examinations, or other course work undertaken by students. The Honor Pledge is
implied, whether or not it is stated: “On my honor, as a student, I have neither given nor received
unauthorized aid on this academic work.” A grade of XF can result from a breach of academic
honesty. The F indicates failure in the course; the X indicates the reason is an Honor Pledge
violation.”

Grading and Course Requirements:

Grades will be determined by five course requirements: (a) class participation; (b) mini-
assignments; (c) two take-home exams; and, (d) a final research paper.
Class Participation – Class participation is STRONGLY encouraged and rewarded! This includes speaking up as we discuss readings and issues in class. In substitute of some of the mini-research assignments, I may ask students to lead discussion on certain days. You must be prepared to answer questions about the readings and contribute each and every class period. You will be called on and expected to be prepared.

Research Assignments – There will be approximately 5 research assignments. Each assignment will involve a preliminary foray into key components of your final research project. These research assignments must be typed and turned in on time.

Exams – There will be two take-home, open-resource exams -- a mid-term and a not explicitly comprehensive final. The exams will consist of a combination of essay questions and interpretation of the material covered in the lectures and readings.

Research Proposal – The research proposal can be on a topic of your choice. You are strongly encouraged to write a research proposal addressing problems you wish to investigate in your MA or PhD thesis. In these papers you should; a) Ask a reasonable and interesting sociological question; b) Produce a relevant literature review; c) Develop a thorough research design to guide your eventual investigation; and d) Discuss the likely outcomes of your study. A key step toward a successful project is the early identification of a dependent variable (which represents the “research topic” or focus of the research) and a set of independent variables believed to “influence” the dependent variable. A short, typewritten description of the topic for the research paper must be turned and approved by the professor no later than March 9th. All papers must be typed, follow a consistent professional stylistic guideline, and are due May 13 by 5 pm. Electronic copies not accepted.

Deadlines:

Policy regarding final papers and incomplete grades: Incompletes are an unbelievable nightmare for graduate students and professors alike. They haunt students in terms of funding decisions and healthy experiences in graduate school. I will only grant an incomplete under extraordinary circumstances.

Important Dates to Remember:

Mar. 4 Mid-term exam distributed
Mar. 9 Short description of research paper topic is due
Apr. 29 Final exam distributed
May 4 and 6 Student presentations of research
May 13 Research paper due
# SCHEDULE:

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<th>Week</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>19-Jan</td>
<td>No Class (University Holiday)</td>
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<td>21-Jan</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<td><strong>METHODOLOGICAL OVERVIEW</strong></td>
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<td>4-Feb</td>
<td>No Class – Work on Research Question</td>
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<td><strong>METHODS OF INTERPRETIVE SOCIOLOGY</strong></td>
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23-Feb  Ethnography
Berg, Chapter 6.


2-Mar  Interviewing
Berg, Chapters 4 “A Dramaturgical Look at Interviewing,” and 5 “Focus Group Interviewing.”

4-Mar  Review for Exam I
**Examination I Distributed at the End of Class**
**Due Mar. 9**

9-Mar  No Class
Proposal Topics Due With Examination I

11-Mar  Tips on Writing a Research Proposal
Berg, Chapter 12

16-Mar  Spring Break

18-Mar  Spring Break

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**SYSTEMATIC COMPARISON**

23-Mar  Experiments


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**SURVEYS AND SAMPLING**

30-Mar  The Ritual of the Survey


6-Apr  Validity and Reliability

8-Apr  Scale Construction
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<td><strong>Review for Exam II</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examination II Distributed at the End of Class</strong> <strong>Due May 6th</strong></td>
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<td>Student Presentations of Research Ideas</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>13-May</td>
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