

Research Methods in Family and Consumer Studies

FCS 3200-090 Online

Instructor: Zhou Yu, PhD



When and where: online (While there are no regular office hours in the summer, the instructor will promptly answer questions by phone and by email.)

What: This four-unit course exposes undergraduate students to the basic research methods employed in social sciences. Students will learn to step outside their own experiences, look at the world from the perspective of a social scientist, and gain experience in reading, analyzing, and utilizing research.

Why: Social science research is a pillar of our modern society. With modern technology such as the Internet, access to research is no longer a barrier. Because of the overwhelming number of choices available to students, however, students will have to become a discerning "consumer" to make the most effective use of research. A basic understanding of the strength and the limitation of social science research is key to our educational endeavor.

Key topics: 1. basic research designs; 2. ethics in social science research; 3. analysis of quantitative and qualitative data; 4. measurement techniques; 5. methods of data collection; and 6. critique of research findings.

Class participation is a critical component of the learning experience. Students are required to: 1. Actively contribute to the course by checking the course website site at least **three** times and **two** different days per week; 2. Participate in online discussions and share with other class members their personal experiences on social science research (post at least two original posts and four responses per discussion topic); and 3. Use library resources (both online and offline) to conduct research and to develop self-learning skills.

How: There will be four learning modules, which are Introduction to Inquiry, the Structuring of Inquiry, Modes of Observation and Analysis of Data. There will be 14 quizzes (3 lowest will be dropped), 5 exams (the lowest one will be dropped), 2 written assignments, and 3 online discussions (each original post of Discussions 2 and 3 is due Wednesday and four comments due Sunday). Quizzes and exams are designed to help you understand and remember key concepts and important procedures, while discussions and assignments will encourage higher-order thinking, such as the application of the knowledge learned in the class, the analysis of individual cases, and the evaluation of alternative proposals.

Grading:*% of the final grade*

13 Quizzes (2% each. The lowest 3 scores will be dropped) x10	20
5 Exams (14% each. The lowest score will be dropped) x4	56
5 Discussions and Assignments (4% each.) x5	20
Class participation	4

<u>Grade Scale (%)</u> :	93.0+	A	89.0-92.9	A-
84.5-88.9 B+	78.0-84.4	B	74.5-77.9	B-
72.0-74.4 C+	64.5-71.9	C	62.0-64.4	C-
59.5-61.9 D+	53.0-59.4	D	50.5-52.9	D-
(Below 50.4 is E)				

Course Requirements: You are expected to read one or two chapters of the textbook and a number of newspaper articles and research papers per week. The textbook is available for purchase online (e.g., half.com and amazon.com):

- ♦ Earl R. Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research*, 5th Edition, Wadsworth Publishing, 2010. ISBN: 0495812242 (we use the 5th edition to save you money on costly textbook purchases.);



and

- ♦ Newspaper clips, research articles, and video clips will be posted online in Modules and in the Announcement section on CANVAS as **required** materials.

Who: Professor Zhou Yu; Email: zhou.yu@fcs.utah.edu or the course CANVAS site;
Questions? Send me an email! Do not be shy!

Warning: This course requires 33% more effort than a regular 3-unit course. The summer schedule is more intensive and compressed than that in the spring or fall semester.

Online courses are NOT for every student. Be prepared to accept the instructor as a facilitator to the class instead of a director of class activities. To be successful in an online course you must: 1. Be able to read college-level texts with good comprehension; 2. Be well organized and self-disciplined; 3. Be an independent learner; 4. Be familiar and comfortable with the use of computers, e-mail, word processing programs, and the Internet; 5. Be proactive and ask questions.

If you prefer to rely on lectures and classroom presentations as an important part of your learning style (and many students do) then an online course may not be the best option for you. We have a face-to-face section of this class offered regularly in the department. Please consider taking the face-to-face section instead. I'm looking forward to working with you during the semester. I hope you will have an enjoyable and enlightening course.