

FCS 3200-090 **Research Methods in Family and Consumer Studies (CW)**

**Fully Online**



**Instructor:** Zhou Yu, PhD

**What:** This course exposes students to research methods in the social sciences. Students will learn to think like scientists, developing skills in reading, analyzing, and using research. We will also be experimenting with generative AI, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT ([chat.openai.com](https://chat.openai.com)) and Google's Bard ([bard.google.com](https://bard.google.com)). This course demands a more intensive schedule compared to a regular three-unit course. According to University Policy 6-100, students are expected to dedicate at least 12 clock hours per week to this course.

**Why:** Social science research is a pillar of our modern society. While people in the past had a hard time getting quality information, modern technologies such as the Internet and generative AI have given us unprecedented access to research and scholarship—all at our fingertips. In fact, we have reached the opposite end of the challenge: We are inundated by new information and conflicting findings, to the point where we may become disengaged. Instead of seeking truth, we sometimes end up seeking affirmation. To address this issue, we must become discerning consumers of social science research. This means understanding the strengths and limitations of social science research.

**Major topics:** 1. Basic research designs; 2. Ethics in social science research; 3. Measurement techniques; 4. Methods of data collection; and 5. 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 asking and answering questions online; 2. Check the course website site at least three times and on two different days per week; 3. Participate in online discussions and share with other class members their personal experiences on social science research (post at least one original post and four responses per discussion topic); and 4.

Use library resources (both online and offline) to conduct research and to develop self-learning skills.

**How:** There will be FOUR learning modules: 1. Introduction to Inquiry; 2. the Structuring of Inquiry; 3. Modes of Observation; and 4. Analysis of Data. There will be 14 quizzes (4 lowest will be dropped), 5 exams (the lowest one will be dropped), 3 written assignments, and 5 online discussions. 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 and the analysis of individual cases.

<b>Grading:</b>	<i>% of the final grade</i>
14 Quizzes (1% each. The lowest scores will be dropped) x10	10
5 Exams (10% each. The lowest score will be dropped) x4	40
3 Assignments (10% each.) x3	30
5 Online discussions (3% each.) x5	15

Class participation (visiting the course website on CANVAS at least three times on two different days per week; posting four substantive comments on articles posted in Announcements)

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<b>Grade Scale (%)</b> :	93.0+	A	89.0-92.9	A-	
	84.5-88.9	B+	78.0-84.4	B	B-
	72.0-74.4	C+	64.5-71.9	C	C-
	59.5-61.9	D+	53.0-59.4	D	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) or at the university bookstore:

- ♦ Earl R. Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research*, 7th Cengage Learning. Print ISBN: 9781305503076, 1305503074; eText ISBN: 9781305856318. All-inclusive access. (Feel free to use other editions if you prefer. But page numbers and content may differ.);



and

- ♦ Students are required to acquire free access to **New York Times:** [attheu.utah.edu/announcements/access-the-new-york-times-online](http://attheu.utah.edu/announcements/access-the-new-york-times-online) OR [accessnyt.com](http://accessnyt.com) and **Wall Street Journal:** [WSJ.com/UofUtah](http://WSJ.com/UofUtah) OR [education.wsj.com/search-students](http://education.wsj.com/search-students) and regularly check out news reporting on social science research; and
- ♦ Newspaper clips, research articles, and video clips will be posted in Modules or Announcements as **additional** materials to complement the textbook.

**Who:** Zhou Yu, PhD; Email: [zhou.yu@utah.edu](mailto:zhou.yu@utah.edu) or the course CANVAS site; Questions? Send me an email! Do not be shy!

**Caveat:** 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 be willing to ask questions; and 6. Collaborate with your classmates in a virtual environment.

I'm looking forward to working with you during the semester. I hope you will have an enjoyable and enlightening course.

**This schedule is tentative and subject to change!**