

## Research Methods in Family and Consumer Studies

FCS 3200-090 Online

**Instructor:** Zhou Yu, PhD

**When and where:** online



**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 a scientific perspective, and gain experience in reading, analyzing, and utilizing research.

**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 smartphones have granted us unprecedented access to research and scholarship—all at our fingertips. In fact, we have reached the opposite end of the challenge: We are constantly bombarded by new information and conflicting findings. Therefore, we have to become "discerning consumers" of social science to make the most effective use of research findings. A basic understanding of the strength and the limitation of social science research is fundamental to our educational endeavor.

**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 (3 lowest will be dropped), 5 exams (the lowest one will be dropped), 2 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, the analysis of individual cases, and the evaluation of competing plans.

### Grading:

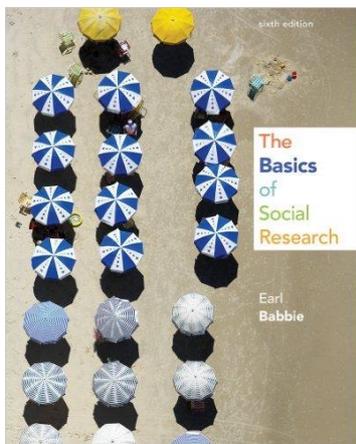
*% of the final grade*

Quizzes (2% each. The lowest 3 scores will be dropped) x11	22
Exams (11% each. The lowest score will be dropped) x4	44
Assignments (4% each.) x2	8
Online discussions (4% each.) x5	20
Class participation	6
(Visit the course website at least THREE time per week on TWO different days.)	

<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) or at the university bookstore:

- ♦ Earl R. Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, Cengage Learning, 2013. ISBN-10: 113359414X. ISBN-13: 978-1133594147. (We use the 6th edition to save your money on textbooks. Feel free to use other editions if you prefer. Page numbers and content may be different.);



and

- ♦ Newspaper clips, research articles, and video clips will be posted in Modules or Announcements as **additional** materials to compliment the textbook.

**Who:** Zhou Yu, PhD; Email: 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.

If you are the sort of student who relies 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. The department offers an off-line section of this class. Please consider taking the in-class section instead.

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