IR 211: Approaches to Research
Syllabus for Spring 2013 (Version Jan 15)
Professor: Benjamin Graham

Lectures: Tues & Thurs 11-12:20PM, VKC 100
Professor Graham’s Office Hours: SOS B9
Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:15-4:15pm and by appointment

This syllabus is current as of Jan 2, 2013. It is subject to change. You will be notified in class and/or by e-mail whenever the syllabus is updated.

Overview
This class is an introduction to social science research methodology. My main goal is to teach you the basics of creating and consuming research in the social sciences, and international relations in particular. The course will lead you through conceptualization and theory construction, the derivation of testable hypotheses, and a variety of methodologies that may be used to evaluate these hypotheses. We will discuss causal inference, observation and measurement, and other issues encompassing both qualitative and quantitative research methods. We will discuss the way in which academic articles in the social sciences are written, and how they should be read.

This course includes some very basics statistics, and requires use of Stata (a statistical software package) for some class assignments. These include some simple description and cross tabulation of data from the General Social Survey. Computers with Stata are available in an on-campus computer lab.

The textbook for the course is Russell K. Schutt, Investigating the Social World, 6th Edition. You will need to order this online, as it is not in the bookstore. I have selected the 6th edition instead of the 7th because it is substantively the same, but much cheaper. However, the 7th edition will work fine if you acquire that instead.

Requirements
Students are expected to complete all assigned readings before the class for which they are assigned, and to arrive in class and in section prepared to discuss that material. There will be a reading quiz at the beginning of most lectures.

There will be 5 homework assignments, due at the beginning of class. Late assignments are docked 50% if they are handed in the class meeting following the meeting at which they are do. Assignments later than this are not accepted. Homework assignments will only be accepted in class and may not be handed in at other times. There will also be a midterm and a final.
Grading
Five assignments, 7% each ............... 35%
Midterm ............................................. 25%
Final .................................................... 30%
Participation ..................................... 10%

Clickers:
All students in this course are required to purchase a responsecard (i.e. clicker). Students will use the clickers to answer multiple-choice questions during lecture.

The primary purpose of the clickers is to give students a chance to actively participate in the lecture and to check understanding as we proceed through the material. Clicker responses will be used to calculate participation grades for lecture. I will not deduct points for wrong answers, but students must attempt to answer the questions to receive participation credit.

Course Webpage and Blackboard
This syllabus and appropriate links are available on the course webpage at http://dornsife.usc.edu/graham. The slides from lecture will be available on the website. Whenever possible, I will post the slides before class so that students can print them out to take notes directly onto the slides. Reviewing the slides is not a substitute for attending lecture, and the slides will not include all the information covered in lecture, or all the material that will be on the exams.

While I will not use blackboard to post materials, I will use it to post grades, and you will need to use blackboard to register your clicker. (To do so, click on “IR 211” under courses, then use the “Turning Point Registration Tool” under “Tools.”)

Statement for Students with Disabilities
Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Statement on Academic Integrity
USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A: [http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/](http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/). Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/).

**Rules:**
The midterm and final are closed book. The final is cumulative, and both exams will cover material from lecture, section, and the textbook.

Homework assignments must reflect your own work. You may discuss homework assignments with other students, but if you do so, you must list the students with whom you have discussed the assignment on the top of your homework.

You must do all computer work and write all answers yourself. DO NOT hand in homework for which any of your answers are identical to your peers, even if you peers’ names are listed on your assignment. This will be considered cheating.

Students who cheat on either a homework assignment or an exam will receive an F in the course and the case will be referred to SJACs.

All homework assignments must be typed with questions and pages numbered. For assignments where SPSS is required, include the printed output in your homework submission. All assignments will be collected at the beginning of class.

**Grade Disputes**
You may contest the grade on an exam up to 1 week after it is returned. If you believe that there has been an error on your exam, submit a **written** description of the error you believe occurred along with the exam to your TA for re-grading. Clerical errors and outright mistakes will be corrected; decisions about the amount of partial credit to give for an answer will not be re-visited.
Schedule of Meetings

Tuesday, January 15
Lecture 1: Course Introduction

Thursday, January 17
Lecture 2: Science, Society, and Social Research I
Readings: Schutt, Chapter 1.

Tuesday, January 22
Lecture 3: Science, Society, and Social Research 2

Thursday, January 24
Lecture 4: The Process and Problems of Social Research I
Readings: Schutt, Chapter 2

Tuesday, January 29
Lecture 5: The Process and Problems of Social Research II
******** Assignment 1 is due at the beginning of class************

Thursday, January 31
Lecture 6: Research Ethics and Philosophies
Readings: Schutt, Chapter 3

Tuesday, February 5
Lecture 7: Conceptualization and Measurement I
Readings: Schutt Chapter 4

Thursday, February 7
Lecture 8: Conceptualization and Measurement II

Tuesday, February 12
Lecture 9: Conceptualization and Measurement III

Thursday, February 14
Lecture 10: Sampling I
Readings: Schutt, Chapter 5

Tuesday, February 19
Lecture 11: Sampling II
******** Assignment 2 Due at the beginning of Class************

Thursday, February 21
Lecture 12: Causation and Research Design I
Readings: Schutt Chapter 6

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Tuesday, February 26
Lecture 13: Causation and Research Design II

Thursday, February 28
Lecture 14: Causation and Research Design III

Tuesday, March 5
Lecture 15: Experiments and Quasi-Experiments I
Readings: Schutt Chapter 7

Thursday, March 7
Lecture 16: Experiments and Quasi-Experiments II

Tuesday, March 12
Lecture 17: Experiments and Quasi-Experiments III
**********Assignment 3 due at the beginning of class**********

Thursday, March 14
*************Midterm Exam*************

Tuesday, March 19
*****Spring Break*****

Thursday, March 21
*****Spring Break*****

Tuesday, March 26
Lecture 18: Survey Research Methods I: The Basics

Thursday, March 28
Lecture 19: Survey Research Methods II: Sensitive Questions

Tuesday, April 2
Lecture 20: Survey Research Methods III: Survey Experiments

Thursday, April 4
Lecture 21: Qualitative Methods: Intro

Tuesday, April 9
Lecture 23: In-Depth Interviews
**************Assignment #4 Due**************

Thursday, April 11
Lecture 24: Ethnography
Tuesday, April 16
Lecture 25: Comparative/Historical Methods

Thursday, April 18
Lecture 26: Quantitative Data Analysis I

Tuesday, April 23
Lecture 27: Quant II

Thursday, April 25
Lecture 28: Quant III

Tuesday, April 30
Lecture 29: Quant IV: Graphical Display of Data

Thursday, May 2
Lecture 30: Careers in Social Science Research
**********Assignment 5 is Due**************

Final Exam
TBA