



COURSE SYLLABUS
Fall 2016



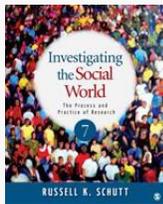
INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor:

Office:

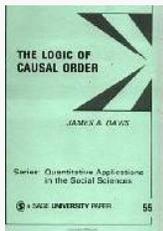
Office Hours:

MATERIALS



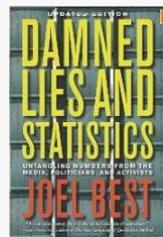
Required

Schutt, Russell K. 2015. *Investigating the Social World*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. ISBN: 978-1-4129-9980-9 (7th edition) or ISBN: 978-1483350677 (8th edition). I'm fine with your using either the 7th edition (used copies are cheap) or the very recent 8th edition.



Required

Davis, James A. 1985. *The Logic of Causal Order*. Series: *Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, A Sage University Paper*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications. ISBN: 0-8039-2553-0
Although this book costs \$16.95 retail, there are literally over 50 used copies available online for as little as \$2.00 each.



Required

Best, Joel. 2012. *Damned Lies and Statistics. Untangling Numbers from the Media, Politicians, and Activists*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press. ISBN 978-0520274709. Get the newly updated edition from 2012 rather than the old 2001 edition.

Course Website: <http://webcampus.unlv.edu> Log onto the site for grades, supplemental readings as indicated during the semester, and announcements. Check the website, and your UNLV email, every few days.

COURSE DESCRIPTION & LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Course Description

This course should serve as academic introduction to the quantitative methodologies of social science research (primarily in the sociological tradition but with consideration of interdisciplinary influences), as well a practical training experience in applying the techniques of designing and conducting scientific studies of social phenomena. We will be pursuing two main objectives: (1) to develop the practical skills needed to become a competent social researcher, and (2) to become familiar with the theoretical and analytical foundations for social science, including a little philosophy of science. The former will help to prepare you for experiences in gathering and analyzing empirical data, without inferential statistics, which can be further developed and applied toward future academic and commercial endeavors. The latter should help you to become a more informed and sophisticated consumer of social data from both academic and popular (media) sources.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the philosophy of science as related to modern social science research.
- Recognize and apply the deductive scientific process to social science research questions.
- Recall and apply the process of deriving testable hypotheses from theories.
- Demonstrate the operationalization of concepts into measurable variables in which to test hypotheses.
- Assess the validity and reliability of quantitative measures.
- Recognize the complexity of antecedent, intervening, and interacting variables, as well as the concepts of indirect effects and spuriousness.
- Determine if a relationship exists between variables when presented with simple bivariate data in a table.
- Develop a feasible quantitative social science research proposal and demonstrates understanding of the concepts learned throughout the course.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course has five components, described in more detail below in the section “Pedagogical Strategy”:

1. Twelve sections, each with readings about which you will turn in a set of notes each week.
2. A take-home midterm exam covering the first six modules.
3. A take-home final exam covering the subsequent six modules.
4. A research proposal paper – I will provide you with guidelines.
5. Class discussion/participation and lab exercises.

Evaluation

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| Weekly Notes | 20% |
| Midterm Exam | 20% |
| Final Exam | 20% |
| Research Proposal Paper | 20% |
| Class Participation / Lab Assignments | 20% |
| | 100% |

Grading Scheme

| | | | | | |
|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|------------------|
| A | [>93.00%] | B- | [80.00 – 82.99%] | D+ | [67.00 – 69.99%] |
| A- | [90.00 – 92.99%] | C+ | [77.00 – 79.99%] | D | [63.00 – 66.99%] |
| B+ | [87.00 – 89.99%] | C | [73.00 – 76.99%] | D- | [60.00 – 62.99%] |
| B | [83.00 – 86.99%] | C- | [70.00 – 72.99%] | F | [<60.00%] |

PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGY

At the end of each class meeting, I will hand out a “readings guide” that lists the next week’s readings (PDF’s to supplement the text will be available on Webcampus) and notable concepts and questions about the next module’s

material. You should be prepared to discuss the items on the guide when we meet for class. Additionally, by Monday night at 9:00pm, you should email a set of notes to me in PDF that outlines the readings for the module, as well as any lab assignments from the previous week. Your notes *may* address the items in the guide, but do *not* have to do so, and they *must* contain other points of interest. Consider your notes as a resource tool that would serve to refresh your memory of what the readings were about if you looked at them again months later. The notes can be bullet pointed, narrative, or in whatever format best assists you. Each module's notes should contain 900 to 1,500 words. Between Monday night and Tuesday morning, I will send an email to everyone containing all of the module-notes PDFs.

The midterm and final are both take-home written assignments, and will cover only material assigned in class. You will submit your exams in hard copy on the dates indicated in the Course Outline and Schedule (below). To ensure blind grading, cover sheets will NOT include names or other identifying marks.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to change with notice.

| | Dates | |
|---|---------------|---|
| Welcome and Syllabus Review | Aug 30 | |
| Introduction to Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences | Sep 06 | |
| Philosophy and Ethics | Sep 13 | ▪ <i>Class starts late (2:30pm) due to faculty senate</i> |
| Conceptualization and Measurement | Sep 20 | |
| Sampling | Sep 27 | |
| Causation, Correlation, and Research Design | Oct 04 | |
| Review/Catch-up | Oct 11 | ▪ <i>Class starts late (2:30pm) due to faculty senate</i> |
| MIDTERM EXAM | Oct 18 | ▪ <i>No class meeting – submit exams to my box</i> |
| Experiments | Oct 25 | |
| Surveys | Nov 01 | |
| Evaluation | Nov 08 | |
| Secondary Datasets & Data Organization | Nov 15 | ▪ <i>Class starts late (2:30pm) due to faculty senate</i> |
| Writing Quantitative Research Papers/Reports | Nov 22 | |
| Catch-up/Lab | Nov 29 | |
| Research Proposal Paper Presentations | Dec 06 | |
| FINAL EXAM | Dec 13 | ▪ <i>No class meeting – submit exams to my box</i> |

APPENDIX: UNLV POLICIES

Academic Misconduct— Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV’s function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct>.

Copyright—The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves **with** and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)— **Disability Resource Center (DRC)**—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

Religious Holidays Policy— Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor **within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within**

the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

Transparency in Learning and Teaching—The University encourages application of the transparency method of constructing assignments for student success. Please see these two links for further information:

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning>

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency>

Incomplete Grades—The grade of I—Incomplete—can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student’s control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

Tutoring and Coaching—The **Academic Success Center (ASC)** provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of the SSC (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TEB second floor.

UNLV Writing Center—One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student’s Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>.

Rebelmail—By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students’ Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV’s official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students’ e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu. **Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.**

Final Examinations—The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: <http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.

Library statement:

Students may consult with a librarian on research needs. For this class, the Subject Librarian is ([https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians by subject](https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians_by_subject)). UNLV Libraries provides resources to support students’ access to information. Discovery, access, and use of information are vital skills for academic work and for successful post-college life. Access library resources and ask questions at <https://www.library.unlv.edu/>.