Evaluation of Evidence
(Sociology 5)
Spring 2016

Professor Daniel Schneider
Office: Barrows Hall 480
Email: djschneider@berkeley.edu
Class: Tuesday and Thursday 2PM - 3:30PM, 390 Hearst Mining
Section: Twice per week either M/W or T/Th
Office Hours: Wed 2:15-4:15PM (Sign-up)
Course Website: https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/courses/1409312

Course Description

People today are barraged by information - a torrent of facts, opinions, and analyses that appear in books, in newspapers and magazines, on radio stations, through television broadcasts, on computer screens, and on phones. The pressure to make sense of that information has never been greater. This course will introduce you to the major types of data and analysis used by sociologists, and seeks to make students better consumers of social scientific research reported by the media or used in political or policymaking debates. This course will give you an overview of the tools used by social scientists and a sense of what distinguishes good research from bad. By the end of the semester, you will be able to assess the soundness of research by evaluating research designs and data-collection strategies in light of research questions and theory.

Enrolling in the Course

Each student must be registered for the lecture course and one of the sections listed below.

Section	Time	Room	GSI
101	T/Th 9-10AM	55 Evans	TBD
102	T/Th 10-11AM	180 Dwinelle	TBD
103	T/Th 12-1PM	45 Evans	TBD
104	T/Th 1-2PM	45 Evans	TBD
105	M/W 2-3PM	104 Barrows	TBD
106	M/W 3-4PM	51 Evans	TBD
107	M/W 4-5PM	72 Evans	TBD
108	M/W 5-6PM	106 Wheeler	TBD

Note: First section meetings will be Monday, February 1st/ Tuesday February 2nd.

Waitlist: There is a waitlist for the course. For those enrolled, you must attend lecture the first three classes to confirm your enrollment. I will take roll! If you are on the waitlist, you must also attend the first three classes. **You have a better chance of getting into the class if you pick a section with a shorter waitlist.**

If you would like to be in a different section than the one you are assigned to - talk with your current GSI and the GSI leading the section you want to switch into. The GSIs will work with you to try to accommodate your preference. But, there is no guarantee that it will be possible to switch.

Required Readings

The readings offer you the chance to learn how working social scientists actually DO research, especially how they gather data. You are expected to do assigned reading before class. To help focus your reading, the schedule of classes includes questions to consider for each set of readings. Think through these questions carefully, as they will inform the quizzes, midterm, and final exam.

The reader is available from Copy Central on Bancroft. I have also posted PDFs of each of these readings on the bCourses site.

There is one required textbook: Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, 14th Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. ISBN 978-1-133-04979-1. The book is available at the ASUC bookstore. It is very expensive - $250 for the print version. It's by far the best book by far on this topic, which is why I chose it, despite its cost. You can find used versions of it at the ASUC store, at Moe's on Telegraph, or online through Amazon, Abe Books, or other sites. Or you can use the ebook or rent the book through the ASUC bookstore or the publisher at this web site: http://www.cengagebrain.com/shop/isbn/9781305104945) Finally, you can purchase a second-hand copy of any editions between 9th and 13th (even the foreign edition) because the material is substantially the same in all these editions. But if you choose a different edition than the 14th, you should make sure that you're reading the right chapters - the chapter order varies from edition to edition. I have put copies of the book (13th and 12th edition) on 2-hour reserve in Moffitt.

Lecture

The lectures will explore the philosophical underpinnings of research design and describe the many different ways of gathering and evaluating evidence. You are responsible for all material discussed in lectures, as well as any announcements made there.

Course Assignments

Students will be evaluated and graded based on two examinations, five research projects, five online quizzes, and their participation and attendance at lecture and in discussion sec-

tion. The table at the end of this section notes the due dates for each assignment and the percentage of the final grade that each assignment is worth.

Exams

There will be two in-class closed-book examinations. The mid-term examination will be held on February 25th during the normal class time (2PM - 3:30PM) in our normal classroom. The final will be held on Monday, May 9th from 11:30-2PM (location TBD). The final will also cover material from lecture and readings. It will focus on the topics covered after the mid-term, but all course material is eligible for inclusion.

Research Projects

A key part of understanding research methods is through learning-by-doing, that is, applying textbook or lecture knowledge to the real world. Your GSI will instruct you to load projects to bCourses or submit them to your GSI's mailbox in 410 Barrows Hall. Late projects will be graded down a full letter grade for each day late (e.g., An A- becomes a B-). Note that if your GSI instructs you to hand assignments in at 410 Barrows, they will be due there by 3pm; anything submitted after then will be considered a day late. Detailed information on each project, including deadlines, is found after the schedule of readings.

In short, there are two individual assignments (assignments #1 and #2) and three group assignments (assignments #3, #4, and #5). You may not submit these group assignments individually. A lot of sociological research is coauthored; doing this work in groups gives you a sense of what it is like to work on a research team. It also allows you to learn from each other. Your GSI will assign you to your research project groups in section. There is a peer evaluation form on bCourses in the assignments section, which allows you to evaluate other group members' relative contributions to your project. Every group member should fill in this form and hand it in to your GSI with every group assignment.

Quizzes

I will post 5 quizzes to bCourses over the semester. Your best 4 scores will be counted. Each quiz is worth 3% of your final grade for a total of 12%. Quizzes will be available for 24 hours starting at 6pm Thursday on days I specify in lecture and via email. They will ask 5-15 multiple choice or short answer questions based on lecture and readings. My aim is to keep you on track with course material. Quizzes are open-book and can be done in discussion with a study group. BUT if I think someone is taking quizzes for you - for example, if your quiz scores are very different from the rest of your performance - I will quiz you orally in my office.

Participation and Section

Sections are an indispensable part of the course. They provide you with opportunities to ask questions about the readings or lectures, and otherwise engage the material actively, which

is hard to carry off in a large lecture. Sections begin Mon. 1 Feb. (for M/W sections) or Tues. 2 Feb. (for Tu/Th sections).

Sections are led by Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs). Section meetings and your GSI's office hours are your main points of contact. Each GSI has a mailbox in 410 Barrows. The course GSIs are:

Name	Email
Andrei Boutyline	boutyline@berkeley.edu
Mario Castillo	mdcastillo@berkeley.edu
Fabiana Silva	fabiana.silva@berkeley.edu
Adam Storer	adamstorer@berkeley.edu

In consultation with me, your GSI will assign 15% of your grade, based on your participation in section, lecture, and office hours. Participation involves attending section meetings, contributing to discussions, asking pertinent questions, and answering questions asked by GSIs. The quality of your contribution is far more important than the quantity.

Key Assignments, Weights, and Due Dates

Assignment	% of Grade	Due Date
Quizzes and Exams		
Quizzes on-line, best 4 of 5	12%	Take online
Mid-term Exam	15%	In-class Exam February 25th
Final Exam	15%	In-Class Exam May 9th
Research Projects		
Project 1: Identifying Variables & Units of Analysis	5%	February 9th
Project 2: Identifying Dependent & Independent Variables	5%	February 18th
Project 3: Data Analysis	11%	March 15th
Project 4: Designing a Survey	11%	April 5th
Project 5: Doing Participant Observation	11%	April 21st
Participation	15%	Semester-basis

Course Policies

Readings and Lecture

Students will be responsible for both material in the readings and material covered in lecture. I will post slides from lecture on the bCourses site. However, these slides are designed to be rhetorical aids and not comprehensive records of all that was said in class. Please do all of the readings in a timely fashion. Each lecture date has one or two readings associated with it. You will get the most out of lecture if you do these readings before the class for which they are assigned.

Accommodation

I will provide accommodation to any student who provides me with a written letter from a DSP Specialist. Please speak with me after class, send me an email, or come to office hours so that we can make appropriate arrangements. Please do so as early in the semester as

possible. I will also provide accommodation for observation of religious rituals. University policy is that such requests should be made by the second week of the semester. Please submit them by email, cc'ing your GSI.

Late Work

There are several written assignments for this course. The precise due dates and where the assignments should be handed in are noted above. Assignments turned in late will be penalized one letter grade for every day late (e.g. one day late makes a B a C). If you have a real emergency, email Professor Schneider and your GSI about it at least 24 hours before the deadline. Exams will be given on the posted dates (February 25th and May 9th). If you know now that you will have a conflict with the scheduled exam times, either do not take this course or speak with me as soon as possible so that we can work out an accommodation. If you have a true unforeseen emergency that prevents you from attending the exam, contact Professor Schneider and your GSI as soon as possible to discuss an accommodation.

Grading Policy

If you wish to contest a grade, please first speak with your GSI for the course and outline in writing (1) what assignment you are contesting, (2) the grade you received on the assignment, and (3) the reason(s) why you believe the grade you received is unfair. The GSI will consider your appeal and, in consultation with Professor Schneider, may decide to re-grade your assignment. Please note, a re-grade likely involves closer scrutiny of the work and so may result in an increase or a decrease in your grade. Whatever the outcome, the score from the re-grade will be final. The grade appeals process should be initiated within seven days of receiving the grade in question.

Academic Honesty[1]

The UC Berkeley Honor Code states that, "As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others." (http://asuc.org/honorcode/index.php). I expect that you will adhere to these principles in your conduct in the course. You may not copy specific text or ideas from others, whether from fellow students, from authors of our readings, or from authors of material you find on the internet, without specific attribution. To do otherwise is to plagiarize. You may not cheat on any of the exams by bringing in outside material, copying from fellow students, or engaging in other dishonest practices. You may of course discuss the lectures and readings with your fellow students. But, the assigned papers and your written responses to exam questions must reflect your own independent work. Violations of these rules will result in a failing grade on the assignment and possibly on the course and may result in you being reported to University authorities.

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[1]Text is adapted from the ASUC honor code guide.

Email

Email should not be used for substantive questions about the reading or course materials. Please ask such questions in class or sign-up for office hours. I will endeavor to respond to other email messages within 24 hours.

Office Hours

I very much encourage you to sign-up for office hours at least once during the semester. You may also just "stop-by" my office during office hours and if I don't have another student scheduled, I'll be happy to talk with you. Office hours are a good time to just introduce yourself, to talk about ideas that you find particularly engaging or difficult, or to discuss problems that you may be having in the course.

Technology Policy

You are permitted to use a laptop during class for the purpose of note taking or consulting the readings. Please do not use your cell phone during class. Please do not text, chat, surf the web, read the news, or watch videos during class! I have asked the GSIs to (politely) ask students who are not engaged in class-related activities on their laptops to stop.

Course Outline and Weekly Readings

Jan 19: Overview of the Course & Logistics
What are the goals of this course? What do I have to do to get a good grade? What should I do if I'm on the wait list?

Jan 21: What is Science? What is Sociology?
What is social science? What does science do?

1. Babbie. Chapter 1. Human Inquiry and Science

Jan 26: The Creation of Sociological Knowledge
How is scientific knowledge organized? What are the elements of scientific theories? How does scientific knowledge evolve?

2. Collins, Harry, and Trevor Pinch. 1993. "The Sex Life of the Whiptail Lizard." Chapter 6 in *The Golem: What Everyone Should Know about Science.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jan 28: Sociological Data and Methods
What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of the various types of data and methods used by sociologists? Make sure you understand the main parts of an academic research article and why they are important: introduction, theory/literature, methods and research design, data collection, data analysis, and discussion of results. Identify these elements in the Saperstein and Penner article.

3. Liahna Gordon. 2016. Real Research, Chapter 1, pp. 1-19.
4. Aliya Saperstein and Andrew M. Penner. 2012. "Racial Fluidity and Inequality in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 118(3): 676-727.

Feb 1st and 2nd: First Section Meetings

Feb 2: Research Design
What are the main purposes of sociological research? How do we know that X causes Y? What kinds of entities should we study ? people, informal groups, organizations, social artifacts? How should we time our observations of those entities?

5. Babbie Chapter 4. Research Design.

Feb 4: Inductive Research: Generating Hypotheses
How do sociologists come up with new ideas? How do they develop novel explanations from observing the social world? Why can we say that Becker's article takes an inductive socio- logical approach? What role does theory play in his argument? In what ways does he provide an example of pure inductive research, and in what way does he deviate from pure induction? How might you build on Becker's findings to study drug users today?

6. Ian Dey. 1999. "Introduction." Chapter 1 in *Grounding Grounded Theory: Guidelines for Qualitative Inquiry* pp. 1-12. New York: Academic Press.
7. Babbie. Chapter 13. Qualitative Data Analysis (read only the first 3 sections - introduction, linking theory and analysis, and qualitative data processing).
8. Howard S. Becker. 1953. "Becoming a Marihuana User." *American Journal of Sociology* 59 (3): 235-242.

Feb 9: Deductive Research: Testing Hypotheses
How do sociologists test predictions derived from theory? How do they relate empirical observations to theoretical concepts? How do we know that X causes Y?

9. Arthur L. Stinchcombe. 1968. "Fundamental Forms of Scientific Inference." Chapter 2 in *Constructing Social Theories.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
10. Crabb, Peter B. and Deb L. Marciano. 2011. "Representations of Material Culture and Gender in Award-Winning Children's Books: A 20-Year Follow-Up." *Journal of Research in Childhood Education* 25(4): 390-398.

Feb 9: Research Project #1 Due

Feb 11: Deductive Research: Testing Hypotheses
How is Pager's article an example of a deductive sociological approach? Identify one of the theories she discusses and the related hypotheses. How does she test these hypotheses?

11. Devah Pager. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108: 937-975.

Feb 15/16: No Section - Presidents' Day

Feb 16: Measurement: Conceptualization, Validity, and Reliability
How do we translate theoretical concepts into observable phenomena we can measure? How do we know that our measures of theoretical concepts are valid and reliable?

12. Babbie Chapter 5. Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement.
13. Christopher Jencks. 2015. "The War on Poverty: Was It Lost?" *New York Review of Books.*

Feb 18: Measurement: Indicies, Scales, and Typologies
Why and when do sociologists use composite measures? What is the difference between a scale and an index? How do you construct them? How do you construct typologies?

14. Babbie. Chapter 6.

Feb 23: Mid-Term Review

Feb 25: In Class Mid-Term

Feb 24/25: No Section

March 1: Data Analysis and Statistics (I)

What are the basic ways to summarize quantitative data? How sure can we be about the conclusions we draw from gathering and analyzing data? How should we read tables of quantitative data and interpret them? How should we construct data tables?

15. Babbie. Chapter 14. Quantitative data analysis.
16. Jane Miller. 2004. "Creating Effective Tables." Chapter 6 in *The Chicago Guide to Writing about Numbers.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

March 3: Data Analysis and Statistics (II)

How do we quantify the relationship between two or more variables? How do we draw inferences from our samples to the populations from which they are drawn?

17. Babbie. Chapter 16. Statistical Analysis. (Read only the sections up to and including "Inferential Statistics." Do not read the section on "Other Multivariate Techniques.")

March 8: Sampling Plans

What should our unit of analysis be? How should we select units to observe ? from what universe or population should we sample? How many observations should we take?

18. Babbie. Chapter 7. The Logic of Sampling. (Also review chapter 14.)

March 10: Experiments (I)

What are the features of a good (laboratory or field) experiment? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this research design? What can we learn from this research design that we cannot learn from other research designs?

19. Babbie. Chapter 8. Experiments.

March 15: Experiments (II)

What hypotheses did the authors set out to test? In what ways did they make sure that their methods and results were scientifically sound?

20. Robb Willer, Christabel Rogalin, Bridget Conlon, and Michael T. Wojnowicz. 2010. "Overdoing Gender: A Test of the Masculine Overcompensation Thesis." *American Journal of Sociology* 118(4): 980-1022.

March 15: Research Project #3 Due

March 17: Surveys (I)
What does it take to design and construct a good survey? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this research design? What can we learn from this research design that we can?t learn from other research designs?

21. Babbie. Chapter 9. Survey Research.
22. Howard Schuman. 2002. "Sense and Nonsense about Surveys." *Contexts* 1: 40-47.

March 22 and March 24: No Class - Spring Break

March 29: Surveys (II)
What theory is Fligstein trying to test? Identify the IV(s), DV(s), and any moderator or mediator variables. What is his unit of analysis and sampling method? How does he measure his variables? To conduct a similar study on Americans, what kind of data would you gather?

23. Neil Fligstein. 2007. "Who are the Europeans?" Chapter 5 in *Euroclash: The EU, European Identity, and the Future of Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Read pages 121-145 [theory and results] and pages 158-159 [data sources].)
24. Selections from Eurobarometer 61, Basic English Questionnaire. (on bCourses) (The complete survey instrument is available at http://www.za.uni-koeln.de/data/en/eurobarometer/questionnaires/ZA4056_bq_en.pdf)

March 31: Class Cancelled - Work on Research Project #4

April 5: In-depth Interviews
What are structured interviews, and what is the best way to conduct them? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this research design? What can we learn from this research design that we can?t learn from other research designs?

25. Babbie. Chapter 10. Qualitative Field Research.
26. Also review Babbie. Chapter 9 "Interview Surveys" section pp. 267-271 in 14th Edition and Babbie. Chapter 13. Qualitative Data Analysis, pp. 380-392 in 14th Edition.
27. Robert S. Weiss. 2004. "In their Own Words: Making the Most of Qualitative Interviews." *Contexts* 3(4): 44-51.

April 7: Interviews and Ethnography and Direct Observation
What is Reed et al's research question? What method do the authors employ? What do you think the authors learn from using in-depth interviews that they could not learn from a survey? How does in-depth interviewing differ from ethnographic methods? When might one approach be more appropriate than the other?

28. Joanna Reed et al. 2015. "Consistent and Inconsistent Contraception Among Young Women: Insights from Qualitative Interviews." *Family Relations* 63: 244-258.
29. Patricia Adler and Peter Adler. 2003. "The Promise and Pitfalls of Going into the Field." *Contexts* 2(2): 41-47.
30. Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Field Notes*, pp. 48-52. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

April 12: Ethnography: Sidewalk (FILM)
What is Duneier's research question? In what way is his study inductive? In what way is it deductive? How did he gather data? Why did he choose that method? How did he summarize his data? How generalizable are his findings? What conclusions does he draw?

31. Mitchell Duneier. 1999. *Sidewalk*. pp. 3-14, 43-80, 157-187.
32. Mitchell Duneier. 1999. *Sidewalk*. "Methodological Appendix." pp. 333-357.

April 14: Saying and Doing
On what basis do Jerolmack and Khan criticize interview data? Identify a few specific critiques, and evaluate whether you agree. What is Vaisey's response, in defense of (survey-based) interview data? How should a researcher decide between observation and interviewing?

33. Jerolmack, Colin and Shamus Khan. 2014. "Talk Is Cheap: Ethnography and the Attitudinal Fallacy." *Sociological Methods & Research* 43(2): 178-209.
34. Vaisey, Stephen. 2014. "The "Attitudinal Fallacy" is a Fallacy: Why We Need Many Methods to Study Culture." *Sociological Methods & Research* 43(2): 227-231.

April 19: Comparing the Different Ways to Gather Data

What are the pros and cons of each way of gathering data? What kinds of research questions are best answered using which data-gathering method?

April 21: Ethics
How can we be sure to conduct research ethically? What special requirements for ethics must we fulfill if our research involves human subjects?

35. Babbie. Chapter 3. Ethics.

April 21: Research Project #5 Due

April 26: Ethics

How can we be sure to conduct research ethically? What special requirements for ethics must we fulfill if our research involves human subjects?

April 28: Summing-Up and Final Exam Review

May 9: Final Exam

11:30AM - 2:30PM. Location TBD

Research Projects (Individual and Group)

Project 1: Identifying Variables and Units of Analysis
Due Tuesday. 9 February. 5% of Final Grade. Individual Project

Go to bCourses and download this article: Small, Mario Luis, and Monica McDermott. 2006. "The presence of organizational resources in poor urban neighborhoods: An analysis of average and contextual effects." *Social Forces* 84:1697-1724.

Most studies have only 1 unit of analysis; a few have 2 or more. What is the unit of analysis for this study? Copy and paste/type a short passage from the article to justify your answer.

Most studies focus on multiple variables that describe their unit of analysis. Identify 2 variables and give a complete list of their attributes, as described in the article. Copy and paste/type a short passage from the article to justify your answer. This project could be done in about a half-page but you can take up to 2 pages maximum.

Project 2: Identifying Independent and Dependent Variables
Due Thursday. 18 February. 5% of Final Grade. Individual Project

Go to bCourses and download this research article: Correll, Shelley J., Stephen Benard, and In Paik. 2007. "Getting a Job: Is there a Motherhood Penalty?" *American Journal of Sociology* 112:1297-1338.

Identify 1 dependent variable and 1 independent variable. Make sure that these 2 variables are predicted to be related to each other. Copy and paste (or type) into a word document one or more short passages from the article to justify your choices of variables. Explain, in your own words, how the independent variable is related to the dependent variable. This project should be 2 pages maximum.

Project 3: Constructing and Analyzing Data Tables
Due Tuesday. 15 March. 11% of Final Grade. Group Project

The Occupy movement's slogan "We are the 99%" has made Americans more conscious of inequality and social class. Of course, sociologists have long been interested in inequality and class. Indeed, there is a lot of debate among sociologists about whether class is really just about income. You will analyze data from the most recent General Social Survey (GSS) to investigate the association between income (total family income) and class (subjective class identification).

To do this, you will download 2 files from bCourses: "GSS_data.xlsx" and "GSS_data_codebook.pdf." The spreadsheet (the file ending with .xlsx) contains data from the General Social Survey, downloaded from http://sda.berkeley.edu/archive.htm. The first tab of the spreadsheet contains the data you are to analyze - a subset of variables on 200 observations taken from the 2010 survey. The second tab of the spreadsheet contains data on all observations from the 1972 to 2010 surveys (in case you're interested in doing further analysis on the GSS - for example, for your honor's thesis). The codebook lists the variables and explains what each means and how each is coded.

Note: In the GSS, 4 codes are used for different forms of missing values: IAP = inapplicable, DK = don't know, NA = not available, and REFUSED. For CLASS, there's also a code for NO CLASS. Before you start tabulating the data, check the coding scheme for each variable to make sure your tables don't include observations with missing values on either variable.

- Create 2 tables to display the distributions of 2 variables: INCOME06 and CLASS. Since INCOME06 has a large number of categories (25, plus missing values), you should recode this variable into a smaller number of categories - I'd suggest 5-6 at most. Choose wisely - you will be graded on the reasonableness of your categorization scheme.

- Create another table (a cross tab) to show the bivariate association between these 2 variables. Again, you recode INCOME06 into a smaller number of categories (a maximum of 5-6).

- In your report, describe the level of measurement for each variable.

- In your report, describe the central tendency of each variable. Be sure to use measures that are appropriate for each variable, given its level of measurement.

- In your report, describe the association you observe between the two variables (the direction and your assessment of its strength).

This project should be 3-4 pages long - 4 pages maximum. Your group should turn in a single copy to your GSI. Each member of your group should also turn in the peer assessment form.

Project 4: Designing a Survey
Due Tuesday. 5 April. 11% of Final Grade. Group Project.
You will design a questionnaire that might be used in a survey to assess people's attitudes toward inequality. Your questionnaire should obtain the following from each respondent:

- Their age, gender, race/ethnicity, and occupation;

- Whether or not they voted in the last election and, if so, whether they voted for Obama, Romney, or someone else (a 2-part contingency question); and

- their attitude toward economic inequality in the form of a matrix question, using Likert-type responses to five statements.

This project should be 4-6 pages long - 6 pages maximum. The first page should be the questionnaire laid out in the format you would use if you were actually conducting the survey. Make sure that the format will be easy to read and will not be difficult for respondents to answer. Be sure to provide appropriate spaces for respondents to check or write-in their answers.

Question wording should be simple and straightforward: avoid double-barreled questions, loaded terms, and negations. Justify your choice of open or closed-ended question. For closed-ended questions, response categories should be exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Matrix questions using Likert-type responses should have a consistent scale.

In the following 3-5 pages, discuss these issues:

- Question wording: For each question, why are you asking this question? What concept or aspect of a concept do you hope to measure? Why did you word it this way? Why did you measure as an open- or closed-ended question?

- Question type: For each closed-ended question, state the concept or dimension of a concept tapped by each question; also identify the level of measurement and explain why it is appropriate.

- Question order: Why did you put the questions in this order?

Project 5: Doing a Participant-Observation Study

Due Tuesday. 21 April. 11% of Final Grade. Group Project.

One of the central concerns of sociology is the idea of social hierarchy. How is hierarchy manifested in our social world? For this project, we will define social hierarchy as differential access to some thing, to public space, to people's concern or attention or to a social position based on observable characteristics.

For this project, start by picking a public location where you might see examples of social hierarchy in the way people interact with each other. For example, you might wish to observe the area in a local coffee shop where people jockey for cream, sugar, cup tops, etc. Who moves to the front of the counter, and who stays back? Who politely asks for a place, and who just barges in? What are people's reactions to those around them? Do they vary by gender, race, age, style of clothing? Alternatively, you might wish to observe a busy store entrance (who walks through the door first?) or observe a crowded bus at rush hour (what is the reaction of those already on the bus to those entering the bus?). You may pick any location you wish as long as it is public and you can witness a variety of people using that public space. (You will want variety among a number of dimensions. Consider gender, age, ethnicity/race, class, etc.)

Each student must observe your social location at least twice for 30 minutes each time. Different team members can visit the site at different times; you need not all visit the site at the same time. In fact, it may be advantageous to vary the time and/or day that you go to this place since different people might use different public spaces depending on the day of the week or the time of the day.

While you are at the location, unobtrusively write short notes to yourself, if you can. These will then form the basis for detailed field notes that you will write after leaving the site. For some social situations, you might not be able to write notes until after you leave the scene. In both cases, write up your field notes immediately after leaving the field of study. Read through your field notes and code (with a different colored pen or pencil) important observations that highlight social hierarchy.

Working with the other members of your group, combine your field notes and write a 3-5 page report (5 pages maximum) outlining:

- where you did your participant observation;

- why you chose this location;

- how you identified social hierarchy (what did you look for as markers of social hierarchy?);

- what your observations imply about hierarchy in social interactions.

In projects like this, agreement among observers is an indicator of inter-rater reliability. What you all agree you see is reliable evidence; what you disagree on is less reliable. Therefore, your points of (dis)agreement should be discussed in the paper. You must hand in your report and all your rough and typed field notes, no matter how messy, along with your theoretical memos. You will be graded on submitting your field notes, showing that you have thought systematically about your notes by coding them in theoretical memos, and on your final discussion of what you saw.