Stony Brook University
Spring 2014
Course: CEI 505
Research Methods in the Social Sciences
3 Credits

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

The course explores the relationship between facts and theories in the social sciences. Various approaches to identifying research questions, applying or building relevant theory, and formulating and testing hypotheses are examined. Emphasis is placed on logical reasoning rather than technical (mathematical/statistical) sophistication.

Course Specific Learning Outcomes

Overall, to understand and apply a unified approach to research methodology in the social sciences, including how to:

- Identify and formulate a research question
- Understand and evaluate the effectiveness of a descriptive argument, including its criteria and measures
- Understand and evaluate the effectiveness of a causal argument, including its criteria and measures

Course Requirements

- 40% - Class participation:

You are expected to be an active participant in the learning process and contribute to all on-line discussions. Each week is worth 4 points. Your grade is based on the number and quality of contributions you make to the on-line discussion. You will receive your weekly grade before the close of the subsequent week.

THREE is the minimum number required by SPD; however, making only three posts per week will not yield you with the highest number of points. The expectation is that you will present answers to posted, instructor-raised questions early in the week, and will comment on others’ views and positions until the week ends. The goal is to promote a constructive conversation, if not a dialogue. Comments should go beyond short statements, such as “I agree” or “Good point.” Posts should be free of grammatical and spelling errors. When asked for your opinion or perspective, your posts should be supported by evidence from the assigned readings or other literature in the field. See the rubric (adapted from Online Discussion Protocols and
Rubrics, Dabbagh, N. Copyright 2000-2003) below for a more detailed discussion of how weekly participation will be evaluated. Please note that no points will be awarded for a week in which you have not posted.

**Rubric for Assessing Weekly Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>1 point</th>
<th>2 points</th>
<th>3 points</th>
<th>4 points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication of ideas</td>
<td>Minimal organization, purely anecdotal or exclamatory, generalizations without supporting evidence</td>
<td>Basic organization of ideas but with limited evidence</td>
<td>Organized argument with good supporting evidence from the readings</td>
<td>Well-organized, persuasive argument with ample &amp; accurate, supporting evidence that furthers our discussion</td>
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<td>Responsiveness within class community</td>
<td>Sporadic interaction with little reference to others in the class</td>
<td>Discussion not entirely centered on topic</td>
<td>Discussion focuses mostly on readings and topic</td>
<td>Refers to others’ opinions and questions as well as readings in discussion</td>
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<td>Thoughtful Interaction that fosters engaged discussion</td>
<td>Failed to comment on classmates’ postings, or provided no support when challenging someone else’s view</td>
<td>Responded to classmates, but provided little support for your viewpoint</td>
<td>Referred to classmates responses with adequate support</td>
<td>Created strong arguments for/against classmates postings with ample support material</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posting frequency</td>
<td>1-2 times each week</td>
<td>3 times but clustered on a day or two</td>
<td>3-4 times throughout each of the weeks</td>
<td>&gt;5 times throughout each week</td>
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- 25% - Paper 1. See description below.
- 35% - Paper 2. See description below.
- **Note:** Papers must be thoughtful, well-written, and well-edited.

**Course Grading**

- A, 94-100
- A-, 90-93
- B+, 87-89
- B, 83-86
- B-, 80-82
- C+, 77-79
- C, 74-76
- C-, 70-73
- F, less than 70
Academic Honesty

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of all academic and scholarly work. Therefore the University views any form of academic dishonesty as a serious matter and requires all instructors to report every case of academic dishonesty to the SPD Committee on Academic Standing, which keeps records of all cases. All work submitted or posted by students in this course must be their own. Submission of writing or ideas which are not the original work of the student (and not properly referenced) is considered plagiarism. Unintentional plagiarism is still plagiarism, so if you have any questions about the proper acknowledgement of sources, be sure to ask your instructor who can advise you about various electronic tools available to assist you in self-screening your work.

For detailed information, refer to SPD’s “Policies and Procedures Governing Academic Dishonesty” available at www.stonybrook.edu/spd/assets/pdf/dishonesty.pdf.

The College of Business Statement Regarding Academic Dishonesty

The College of Business regards any act of academic dishonesty as a major violation punishable by severe penalties, including dismissal from the University. University policy requires that instructors and GAs and TAs report all suspected cases of academic dishonesty to the appropriate Academic Judiciary Committee, which is empowered to take strong action against violators. Under no circumstances will the College of Business permit cheating of any kind. Many activities constitute academic dishonesty. The following list is not inclusive, only suggestive:

- Cheating on exams or assignments by the use of books, electronic devices, notes, or other aids when these are not permitted, or by copying from another student.
- Collusion: two or more students helping one another on an exam or assignment when it is not permitted.
- Ringers: taking an exam for someone else, or permitting someone else to take one’s exam. Submitting the same paper in more than one course without permission of the instructors.
- Plagiarizing: copying someone else’s writing or paraphrasing it too closely, even if it constitutes only some of your written assignment.
- Submitting the same paper in more than one course without approval of the instructors.
- Falsifying documents or records related to credit, grades, status (e.g., adds and drops, P/NC grading), or other academic matters.
- Altering an exam or paper after it has been graded in order to request a grade change.
- Stealing, concealing, destroying, or inappropriately modifying classroom or other instructional material, such as posted exams, library materials, laboratory supplies, or computer programs.
- Preventing relevant material from being subjected to academic evaluation.
Stony Brook University Disability Support Services Statement

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services (631) 632-6748 or dss@stonybrook.edu or visit their website at Disability Support Services. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

On Campus Support

Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information go to the following website: Evacuation Guide for People with Physical Disabilities

Critical Incident Management

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures.

Course Content

Course material accessed from Blackboard, SB Connect, SB Capture or a Stony Brook Course website is for the exclusive use of students who are currently enrolled in the course. Content from these systems cannot be reused or distributed without written permission of the instructor and/or the copyright holder. Duplication of materials protected by copyright, without permission of the copyright holder is a violation of the Federal copyright law, as well as a violation of Stony Brook's Academic Integrity and Student Conduct Codes.

Texts:

- Required Text:

- Recommended/Optional Texts:

Please note that additional, required short readings and articles will be assigned during the semester.
The Class Week

Please note that class formally begins each week on Monday. The class week ends on Sunday, at 6:00 PM. The Forums for discussion will remain open once the class week closes, but posts after 6:00 PM on Sunday will not count toward your grade for that week.
### Weekly Outline, Topics and Discussion Questions, Required Readings and Assignments

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topics and Discussion Questions</th>
<th>Required Readings/Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>- Introduction Week</td>
<td>- Here is the link: <a href="http://youtube.com/watch?v=WJzYTxXH7R0">http://youtube.com/watch?v=WJzYTxXH7R0</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Discussion Questions:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1) How familiar you are in general with the topic of research methods in social sciences?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) Please share any comments of reactions you might have regarding this video on the research process. Clay Christensen is the speaker and he is a well-known HBS professor. Clayton makes a number of good points, which we will come back to throughout the semester.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>- Social Science Methodology Overview</td>
<td>- Gerring: Chapter 1</td>
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<td><strong>Discussion Questions:</strong></td>
<td>- <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ni-8q0ZFu8">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ni-8q0ZFu8</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Given the differences in the various social sciences, why even attempt to look at them holistically? How does the video for this week support this notion?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Based on the first chapter, how does the author of our text convey that the book is useful for practitioners?</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>- Beginning the Process</td>
<td>- Gerring: Chapters 2 &amp; 3</td>
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<td><strong>Discussion Questions:</strong></td>
<td>- Mone – London Organization Model (in Documents)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Watch the videos in the order suggested, and share your reactions to the advice for creating a good research question.</td>
<td>- View in this order: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89NonP_iZZo">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89NonP_iZZo</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. We all have, in one way or another, generated a hypothesis or research question about our work, or the world in general. Please share with us a research question you have been thinking about (it does not have to be perfect)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BObOQHvFQ">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BObOQHvFQ</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJfIS33JWw">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJfIS33JWw</a></td>
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and tell us how you came up with the idea – was it in any of the ways Gerring describes? For example, I have been thinking lately that transformational leadership can have a greater effect on employee engagement levels than transactional leadership; most likely a result of my study of the tradition.

3. Take a look at the Mone-London Organization Model, which is an argument about how leaders drive results in organizations. Pick 2 or 3 criteria for an argument and tell us the extent to which you think it meets those criteria.

4. Seeking Information

Discussion Questions:

1) Tells us in your own words what Gerring means by “design trumps analysis” and “description [is] a distinctive and essential task of social science.”

2) Within the field of Human Resources, there are many concepts, such as leadership, coaching, talent management, etc., that lack, like democracy, a true consensus about their definitions? What concepts in HR or the Social Sciences do you find lacking consensus? Does that impact your work in any way?

3) The following is the Mone & London (2010) definition of the concept employee engagement: “an employee who feels involved, committed, passionate and empowered and demonstrates those feelings in the workplace.” Let’s discuss the following:
   a. What can we say about its resonance and domain?
   b. Will the attributes in the definition make it more likely to encompass more or
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<th>5</th>
<th><strong>Theory and Fact Finding</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion Questions:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Discussion Questions:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1) View the video. The speaker is a typical consultant, one you might come across brought in by the senior management in your organization. Does the speaker clearly define the two major concepts about leadership? What type of typology for leadership does he describe? Do you think it is all inclusive when it comes to leadership?</td>
<td>1) Given the following causal argument, “company stock price changes cause</td>
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<td>3) View the website and share with us any comments or reactions you have to the multitrait-multimethod matrix.</td>
<td>Why?</td>
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<th>6</th>
<th><strong>Research Design Overview</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion Questions:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Gerring: Chapter 8</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1) Given the following causal argument, “company stock price changes cause</td>
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**Gerring: Chapters 6 & 7**

**Question 1 Video:** [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqOjO-g6QI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqOjO-g6QI).

**Question 3 website:** [http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/mtmmmat.php](http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/mtmmmat.php).
changes in employee satisfaction," what issues do we see in terms of *manipulation*?

2) Which hypothesis works better from a *separation* point of view, and why: a) changes in employee morale cause changes in employee satisfaction, or b) changes in senior leadership causes changes in employee satisfaction.

3) Working with the idea of foundational causes, which makes the better causal argument and why:
   a. Supervisor Training (A) > Overall Supervisor Competence (B) > Employee Satisfaction Levels
   b. Overall Supervisor Competence (A) > Supervisor Training > Employee Satisfaction Levels

### Analysis of Published Studies

**Discussion Questions:**

1) Only read pp 251-254. What comes across as the valued-added impact of this study? Does it aid in the cumulation of knowledge about the subject (is it commensurable)?

2) Only read pp 887-896. What comments or reactions, in particular do you have to the Methods and Data Analysis section?

3) Only read pp 440-445. In general, what comments do you have? In specific, what do you think of the various hypotheses?

### Research Design: Methods and Strategies

**Discussion Questions:**

For Questions 1) and 2), refer back to the LDP data you have. You decide you want to compare a random sample of non-LDP GHIs with a random sample of LDP GHIs who have participated in the LDP program. Your hypothesis

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Gerring: Chapters 9 & 10
is that LDP participants will be better small team leaders than non-LDP participants.

1) Provide an example of how endogeneity, an assignment bias, might impact this study. What is a possible covariate in this study that might impact team leader performance?

2) What might be possible problems conducting this study in terms of both contamination and noncompliance?

3) Which research designs presented in Chapter 10 do you feel lend themselves to your social science discipline or field of study and why?

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<th>9</th>
<th>Social Science Methodology: Going Forward</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion Questions:</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) What are your comments and reactions to Gerring’s discussion of multimethod research?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Overall, do you think Gerring’s arguments are too critical or too optimistic of the profession.</td>
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<td>3) In what ways do Rodgers perspective and arguments tend to align with Gerring’s overall perspective?</td>
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<tr>
<th>10</th>
<th>Final Paper Feedback</th>
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<td><strong>Discussion Questions:</strong></td>
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<td>We will focus on your final papers this week.</td>
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<td>1) First post, your abstract, and tell us why you chose this topic.</td>
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<td>2) Restate your topic and position. Then: a. Briefly describe your research design</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Tell us why you chose your design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Describe the concerns you have about your design.</td>
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- Gerring: Chapter 14
- Readings based on your final papers.
See the presentation in Documents which contains the results of the administration of a personality assessment, the NEO – PI-R, to groups of a for-profit company’s highest potential employees, who were selected to participate in a leadership development program, tailored differently for each group.

The Band J group is composed of employees who held the title of VP. The 104 employees were selected from an overall population of 650 VPs based on several criteria.

The Bands GHI group contains, in essence, the next level down of employees who held various titles, including senior director and senior manager. The 121 employees were selected from an overall population of 2000 employees at the same level, based on several criteria (both different from and similar to the Band J criteria).

The NEO is based on the five-factor model of personality, which includes emotional stability, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness. Each of these five factors is composed of six subcategories or facets. The graphs show the results for each of the facets for each factor, displaying the average T-score. As you might expect, some score above the average (>55), some in the average range (45-55), and some score below average (<45).

Overall, your job at the company requires you to determine how to identify and develop potential leaders, and you are intrigued by this data and how personality, leadership potential and leadership might be connected. So you decide you will explore this further and ultimately will need to develop a methodology for doing so. Your assignment:

1. Identify the concerns you might have about making any arguments or hypotheses based on this data.
2. What is one high-level research question or argument based on the overall data you would feel comfortable making. Explain why.
3. Identify one possible hypothesis/argument based on the results for Band J you would feel comfortable making. Explain why.
4. Identify one possible hypothesis/argument based on the results for Bands GHI you would feel comfortable making. Explain why.
5. Identify one possible hypothesis regarding the differences between the two groups you would be comfortable making. Explain why.

Overall, this paper should be about 5-8 pages long, double-spaced, 12 point font.

Grading Criteria:
1. 60% - completion of requirements identified for the assignment
2. 30% - understanding and application of course material; demonstrate that you understand and have used the concepts presented in the course as part of your paper
3. 10% - writing style; a paper well receive more weight if it is well-organized (edited) and well-written in terms of syntax and usage.
Paper 2 – Research Paper

Must be submitted by end of Week 9.

Write a research paper, choosing one of the topics provided below. The paper should include the following sections:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Hypothesis/Hypotheses
- Research Design

Although in some publications these sections may be intertwined, they are separated here for this paper to foster clarity in thinking about each aspect of writing a research paper. This paper should be about 8-12 pages in length (not counting the bibliography, and it should follow APA format, including using 12 point font and double-spaced). Overall, your paper should cite at least 5 published resources. Downloaded published journal articles are acceptable; however, Internet references to blogs, wikis, etc., are acceptable, but only limited to a maximum of 2 citations.

Section Descriptions:

Abstract:
This is considered a summary of your paper, as you have seen in the articles we have reviewed. You should write this section last, after you know the contents of the paper. It should reflect accurately what is in the paper. It should include a statement of the study topic, your hypothesis(es), your design and how you will control the threats to validity.

Introduction:
Introduce the reader to the general topic and explain why the topic is important or significant. This section is both a general and high-level overview.

Literature Review:
For this paper, you need to take a stand on the topic, showing whether you support or dispute the topic you chose. Your literature review should help to clarify why your study is of value, for example, this could be the result of the fact that you found that the topic is insufficiently studied, there are important questions that need to be resolved, that the general thinking might be wrong, that the authors failed to consider plausible alternative explanations, or the results are limited by time or space, etc. In your review, you want to capture and report the more substantive points or issues or methods used, and cite authors accordingly, rather than cite/list just a number of authors. In other words, you have to bring a perspective to the topic. In the end, this section sets up and helps to justify the next section of the paper.

- Requirement: Your review should show at least two different research methodologies or designs were used for the topic or at least two different social science disciplines have studied the topic.
Hypothesis(es):
In this section, you should clearly identify your research hypothesis(es) and the specific propositions you want to test via your research design.

Research Design:
Here is where you describe how you would support your opinions (position) by giving an overview of the new research you would discuss and the form of analysis that you will use to test your hypothesis(es) and propositions. Clearly describe the methodology or research design you would use, the population you would study, and the data collection techniques you would use. Explain why you decided on your approach (how does it differ/not differ from other authors, why this design over others, etc.). Finally, discuss the possible weaknesses of your design (all designs have weaknesses); acknowledge any flaws or limitation to the design. Describe how you will attempt to minimize any threats to validity.

Statements/Topics:
The following are the statements (topics) to choose from:

1. The case-study method is a legitimate technique of causal inquiry in the social sciences.
2. Cooperation among social scientists of different disciplines leads to important discoveries.
3. Population increase causes innovation in technology.
4. Surrounding yourself with positive people leads to better mental health.
5. A successful marketing campaign can beat out a superior competitor.
6. Personality determines leadership style.
7. Transformational leadership is more effective than transactional leadership during times of revolutionary change in organizations.
8. Organizations with engaged employees are highly successful.
9. Performance-based pay plans for teachers leads to higher student achievement levels.

Grading Criteria:
1. 60% - completion of requirements identified for the assignment
2. 30% - understanding and application of course material; demonstrate that you understand and have used the concepts presented in the course as part of your paper
3. 10% - writing style; a paper well receive more weight if it is well-organized (edited) and well-written in terms of syntax and usage.