Part 1- Methodology

Courses

* Socl 345

Key concepts:

Logical explanations are what theories seek to provide

* Theories prevent our being taken in by flukes
* Theories make sense of observed patterns
* Theories shape and direct research efforts
* Macro theory- aimed at understanding the big picture of institutions, whole societies and the interactions among societies
	+ Ex: class struggles, international relations
* Micro theory- aimed at understanding social life on the intimate level of individuals and their interactions
	+ Ex: dating behavior, jury deliberations
* Meso theory- referencing an intermediate level between macro and micro: studying organizations, communities and social categories

Methodology

* Knowledge from agreement reality
	+ Assertions must be both logical and empirical
	+ Science examines how things are and why
	+ Epistemology: the science of knowing

Ordinary human inquiry:

* Humans want to predict the future why?
	+ We recognize that the future is caused in part of the present
	+ Cause and effect patterns are probabilistic in nature
* Errors in inquiry and some solutions
	+ Inaccurate observations
		- Measurement devices offer accuracy
	+ Overgeneralizations
		- Large and representative samples are a safeguard against overgeneralization
	+ Replication
		- Repeating a research study to test and either confirm or question the findings of an earlier study
* Concepts and variables
	+ Variable—logical groupings of attributes
	+ We study variables to understand the relationships between them
	+ Attributes—characteristics or qualifies that describe an object
* Independent variable
	+ A variable that values things that are not problematical in an analysis but are taken as simply given
* Dependent variable
	+ A variable assumed to depend on or be caused by another

Purpose of research

* + The purposes of social research
		- Mapping out a topic that may warrant further study later (exploratory)
		- Describing the state of social affairs (descriptive)
		- Providing reasons for phenomena, in terms of causal relationships (explanatory)

Ethical issues in social research

* Conforming to the standards of a conduct of a given profession or group

The basics

* Voluntary participation
* Informed consent
* Anonymity and confidentiality
* Deception
* Analysis and reporting

Research design

3 purposes

* Exploration
* Description
* Explanation

Evaluation research

* Research undertaken for the purpose of determining the impact of some social intervention such as a program aimed at solving a social problem

Qualitative field research

* Topics
	+ Defy simply quantification
	+ Attitudes and behaviors best understood in their natural setting
	+ Social process overtime
* Elements
	+ Practices
	+ Episodes
	+ Encounters
	+ Roles and social types
	+ Social and personal relationships
	+ Groups and cliques

Conducting qualitative field research

* Be familiar with relevant research
* Discuss your plans with others in the area
* Identify and meet informants
	+ First impressions
	+ Establish open and trusting relationship

Unobtrusive research

* Methods of studying social behavior without affecting it

Qualitative analysis

* The non- numerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationship

4 stages of constant comparative method

* Comparing incident application to each category
* Integrating categories and their properties
* Delimiting the theory
* Writing theory

Qualitative data processing

* Coding
	+ Open coding
	+ Axial coding
	+ Selective coding