

HOD 2500: Systematic Inquiry
Vanderbilt University, Spring 2025

Class Meeting Times: Wednesdays and Fridays, 1:25 PM – 2:40 PM

Class Location: [REDACTED]

Instructor: Madison Dell, email TBD

Office Location: Appointments by Zoom only.

Office Hours: Please email Madison to find a mutually agreeable time to meet. (*Office hours are a time to discuss questions about the course or assignments one-to-one with the instructor or your assigned TA.*)

Teaching Assistants

- [REDACTED]
 - Email: [REDACTED]
 - Students Assigned: [REDACTED]
 - Office Location: [REDACTED]
 - Office Hours: [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
 - Email: [REDACTED]
 - Students Assigned: [REDACTED]
 - Office Location: [REDACTED]
 - Office Hours: [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
 - Email: [REDACTED]
 - Students Assigned: [REDACTED]
 - Office Location: [REDACTED]
 - Office Hours: [REDACTED]

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand and apply the basic principles of research design.
2. Differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research methods.
3. Develop research questions and hypotheses relevant to their interests.
4. Critically assess the ethical implications of research.
5. Apply research methods to real-world challenges.

Required Texts and Materials

- **Textbook:** Babbie, E. (2020). The Practice of Social Research (15th ed.). Cengage Learning. ISBN: 9780357360767. Available [here](#).
- **Supplemental Readings:** Selected journal articles and case studies will be uploaded to Brightspace.

Assignments

Guidelines for Submitting Assignments

1. Assignments submitted late will have a 10% penalty per day, up to a maximum of 3 days. After 3 days, assignments will not be accepted.

2. Replacements for corrupted files or updated assignments will be treated as late, taking the latest submission date.
3. Please remember to plan ahead so that you have plenty of time to complete assignments, even in the case of unexpected circumstances. However, if you are facing extenuating circumstances (e.g., serious illness or the death of an immediate family member), please email Madison as soon as you can to request an extension of the deadline.
4. All assignments (i.e., research question, methodological critiques, research proposal) will be submitted via Brightspace, with the exception of some in-class assignments.
5. All assignments, with the exception of some in-class assignments where the instructor will indicate otherwise, should be completed independently.
6. All assignments should be the original work of the student.

Brief Description of Assignments (a more comprehensive description of each assignment will be uploaded to Brightspace)

1. **Research Question Assignment:** Develop a research question relevant to your interests.
2. **Qualitative Article Critique:** Critique a scientific article that uses qualitative methods, taking into account the research design, participants and site, central phenomenon, approach to data collection, analytic strategy, and ethical considerations.
3. **Two-Paragraph Plan:** Write a two-paragraph summary of the research question, proposed method, and project scope for your final research proposal to get early feedback from your TAs as you're developing your final research proposal.
4. **Quantitative Article Critique:** Critique a scientific article that uses quantitative methods, taking into account the sampling strategy, variables, statistical analysis, validity of the findings, and ethical considerations.
5. **Final Research Proposal:** Write a comprehensive research proposal, including a brief literature review, methods section, analytic plan, and implications. The proposal should address a real-world issue of interest to you.

Grading (1000 total points)

- Assignments (70% of grade)
 - Research Question Assignment: 100 points (10% of grade)
 - Qualitative Article Critique: 100 points (10% of grade)
 - Two-Paragraph Plan: 100 points (10% of grade)
 - Quantitative Article Critique 100 points (10% of grade)
 - Final Research Proposal: 300 points (30% of grade)
- In-Class Work (30% of grade)
 - 8 group assignments with the 3 lowest dropped: 20 points each (10% of grade)
 - 13 reading quizzes with the lowest 3 dropped: 10 points each (10% of grade)
 - 13 exit tickets with the 3 lowest dropped: 10 points each (10% of grade)

Grading Scale

A	94-100	A-	90-93		
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
D+	67-69	D	63-66	D-	60-62
F	Below 60				

Use of AI Tools

As the use of AI becomes more prevalent in workplaces and our society at large, it is critical to learn how to use AI tools in ways that are both practical and ethical. In this course, we will use generative AI tools in some instances and on assignments specified by the instructor. You will be informed when and how these tools will be used, along with guidance for proper attribution. Any use of generative AI tools outside of these parameters in this course is not allowed.

Attendance and Absences

Attendance is not required; however, there will be in-class group assignments, reading quizzes, and exit tickets. I will drop your 3 lowest group assignments, 3 lowest reading quizzes, and 3 lowest exit tickets, with the understanding that over the course of the semester, there may be illnesses or other circumstances that prevent you from coming to class. You do not need to email me or your TA to let us know that you will be missing class, as we have factored these absences in by dropping the lowest scores.

Support and Resources

1. **Vanderbilt Writing Studio:** Curb Center Building (1801 Edgehill Avenue), Suite 112.
2. **Peabody Student Life:** The [Peabody Office of Student Life](#) offers programming including narrative circles, Common Grounds (a program to meet other students, staff, or faculty), lecture series, and other special events. It also supports student-led programming.
3. **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Vanderbilt is committed to equal opportunity for students with disabilities, as am I. If you need course accommodations due to a disability, please contact [VU Student Access Services](#) to initiate the process. After SAS has notified me of relevant accommodations, we will discuss how these accommodations may best be approached in this class, and I will facilitate the accommodations.
4. **Mental Health and Wellness:** If you are experiencing stress that may be interfering with your ability to perform academically, Vanderbilt's Student Care Network offers a range of support services. The Office of Student Care Coordination (SCC) is the central and first point of contact to help you navigate and connect to appropriate resources. You can schedule an appointment with the SCC [online](#) or call 615-343-WELL. You can find a calendar of services [here](#). If you or someone you know needs to speak with a professional counselor immediately, the University Counseling Center offers Urgent Care Counseling. Students should call the UCC at (615) 322-2571 during office hours to speak with an urgent care clinician. You can also reach an on-call counselor after hours or on the weekends by calling (615) 322-2571 and pressing option 2 at any time. You can find additional information [here](#).
5. **Mandatory Reporter Obligations:** All University faculty and administrators are mandatory reporters. What this means is that all faculty and administrators must report allegations of sexual misconduct and intimate partner violence to the Title IX Coordinator. In addition, all faculty and administrators are obligated to report any allegations of discrimination. I am willing to discuss with you such incidents but can only do so in the context of us both understanding my reporting obligations. If you want to talk with someone in confidence, officials in the Student Health Center, the University Counseling Center, and the Office of the Chaplain and Religious Life (when acting as

clergy) can maintain confidentiality. In addition, officials in the [Project Safe Center](#) have limited confidentiality, in that they must report the incidents but can do so without providing identifying information. The Project Safe Center serves as the central resource for those impacted by sexual misconduct and intimate partner violence and can assist with navigating all facets of the University's resource and support network and other processes.

6. **Names and Pronouns:** If you would like to use a different name or pronouns than those provided through YES, please let me know at any time prior to or during the semester. Information is available through the [LGBTQI Life offices](#) about how to change either or both of these in YES.

Honor Code

All work submitted in this course is governed by provisions of the Vanderbilt University Honor Code, found in the [student handbook](#). If you have any doubts about how the Honor Code applies to your work in this class, please ask me for clarification. Uncertainty about application of the Honor Code does not excuse a violation.

Communication Policy

In this class, we will seek to support each other. This means that we will aim to create a culture of care and respect among students, the instructor, and the TAs. To do this, I ask that you direct your questions to other students, your assigned TA, and to me in the following situations:

- If you missed class and need the notes, please reach out to a classmate.
- If you attended class and have questions about the course or assignments, first email your assigned TA, and your TA will respond via email and will also hold office hours by request to discuss questions further when helpful.
- If your TA does not know the answer to a question, they will reach out to me, and I will respond within 24 hours on weekdays. You can also request a meeting with me during my, and I will be happy to meet with you via Zoom.

Course Technology

The course will utilize Brightspace for sharing resources (PowerPoints, assignment descriptions, etc.) and submitting assignments. Computers and/or cell phones will be used regularly for in-class group assignments, reading quizzes, and exit tickets. Please be sure you are not using your technology in a way that is distracting to you or others in the class.

Instructor's Expectations

1. **Attendance:** Though attendance is not required, you will gain more by attending class and engaging with your peers. When you do attend class, it is expected that you stay until the end of class and participate fully.
2. **Active Engagement:** Come to class having done the readings and assignments and ready to engage in in-class activities and assignments with your peers.
3. **Respect:** Respect and value diverse perspectives, include other students in class activities, and take responsibility for your actions.
4. **Integrity:** Give credit for ideas that are not your own, both in extending the ideas of your classmates and in citing sources in written work. We will aim to create a classroom atmosphere of collaboration where everyone contributes during in-class activities.

Course Schedule:

Date	Topic	Do Before Class	Reading Quiz	Important Assignment Dates
Wednesday, 01/08/25	Overview of HOD 2500	--	--	--
Friday, 01/10/25	Intro to systematic inquiry	Read Babbie Chapter 1	--	--
Wednesday, 01/15/25	Social science paradigms and global contexts	Read: - Babbie Chapter 2 Adam et al (2023): Tracking global resources and capacity for health research: Time to reassess strategies and investment decisions	#1	--
Friday, 01/17/25	Forming research questions	Read Babbie Chapter 4	#2	Introduce Research Question Assignment
Wednesday, 01/22/25	Overview of research methods	Read: Proctor et al. (2010): Outcomes for implementation research: Conceptual distinctions, measurement challenges, and research agenda Barroga & Matanguihan (2022): A practical guide to writing quantitative and qualitative research questions and hypotheses in scholarly articles	--	--
Friday, 01/24/25	Research in a time with advanced AI	Explore Research Rabbit , Perplexity , and Elicit	--	Due: Research Question Assignment
Wednesday, 01/29/25	Exploring bias and researcher positionality	Read: - Babbie Chapter 3 Milner (2007): Race, culture, and researcher positionality: Working	#3	--

Date	Topic	Do Before Class	Reading Quiz	Important Assignment Dates
		through dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen		
Friday, 01/31/25	Introduction to qualitative methods	Read Babbie Chapter 10	--	--
Wednesday, 02/05/25	Interviewing	Read Jiménez & Orozco (2021) : Prompts, not questions: Four techniques for crafting better interview protocols	#4	--
Friday, 02/07/25	Focus groups	Read Tausch & Menold (2016) : Methodological aspects of focus groups in health research	--	--
Wednesday, 02/12/25	Qualitative coding	Read: Deterding & Waters (2021): Flexible coding of in-depth interviews: A twenty-first-century approach - Babbie Chapter 13 (pp. 390-395)	--	Introduce Qualitative Article Critique
Friday, 02/14/25	Community-engaged research	Read Lykes (2017) : Community-based and participatory action research: Community psychology collaborations within and across borders	#5	--
Wednesday, 02/19/25	Participant observation in ethnography	Read: Fix et al. (2022): Direct observation methods: A practical guide for health researchers Thorne (1980): "You still takin' notes?" Fieldwork and problems of informed consent	#6	--
Friday, 02/21/25	Tentative Guest Speaker: HOD Librarian	Explore HOD Library website	--	Due: Qualitative Article Critique
Wednesday, 02/26/25	Systematic Reviews	Read 1 of 4 articles posted to Brightspace – choose your own adventure!	#7	--

Date	Topic	Do Before Class	Reading Quiz	Important Assignment Dates
Friday, 02/28/25	Introduction to quantitative methods	Read Babbie Chapter 14	--	--
Wednesday, 03/05/25	Measurement and descriptive quantitative designs	Read: - Babbie Chapter 5 Brown et al. (2021): The organizational trauma resilience assessment: Methods and psychometric properties	#8	Introduce Two-Paragraph Plan
Friday, 03/07/25	Correlation	Read 1 of 4 articles posted to Brightspace – choose your own adventure!	#9	--
Wednesday, 03/12/25	--	No class: Spring Break!	--	--
Friday, 03/14/25	--	No class: Spring Break!	--	--
Wednesday, 03/19/25	Sampling	Read Babbie Chapter 7	#10	--
Friday, 03/21/25	Experimental quantitative designs	Read: - Babbie Chapter 8 - Randomized Control Trial article (TBD)	--	Due: Two-Paragraph Plan
Wednesday, 03/26/25	Longitudinal designs	Read 1 of 4 articles posted to Brightspace – choose your own adventure!	#11	Introduce Quantitative Article Critique
Friday, 03/28/25	Research ethics	Read: Tuck & Yang (2014): R-words: Refusing research - Babbie Chapter 3, section “Ethical Issues in Social Research” Lebel & McLean (2018): A better measure of research from the global south	--	--
Wednesday, 04/02/25	Mixed methods	Read Campbell et al. (2017) : Giving voice—and the numbers, too: Mixed methods research in community psychology	#12	--

Date	Topic	Do Before Class	Reading Quiz	Important Assignment Dates
Friday, 04/04/25	Research proposal Q&A and writing workshop	Writing workshop and instructor examples (NIH reporter)	--	Due: Quantitative Article Critique
Wednesday, 04/09/25	Implementation research	Read: Nilsen (2015): Making sense of implementation theories, models, and frameworks Damschroder et al. (2009): Fostering implementation of health sciences research findings into practice: A consolidated framework for advancing implementation science	#13	Introduce Final Research Proposal
Friday, 04/11/25	Social network analysis	Read: Liu et al. (2023): Network analysis for formative evaluation of collaborative, team science research partnerships Watch: Video, What is social network research?	--	--
Wednesday, 04/16/25	Mapping (Geographic Information Systems)	Explore a story map	--	--
Friday, 04/18/25	Policy implications for research	Read Shinn (2007) : Waltzing with a monster: Bringing research to bear on public policy	--	--
Friday, 04/25/25	--	--	--	Due: Final Research Proposal