

**SOC G211 Research Methods**

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**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Critique of Survey Research**  
**Critique of Qualitative Research**  
**Critique of Comparative/ Historical Research**

I. Find one article on the general topic of your research proposal in sociological journals (see tips for bibliography). Choose the article based on the methods used:

**Survey Research: Preferably** choose a study for which the author has created his/her own survey. If this is not possible, try to locate the survey itself – for example the questions for the GSS you will find online.

**Qualitative Methods:** Choose a research article in which the author(s) conducted either  
Option a) an in-depth, intensive **interviews** or  
Option b) **field research**, that means an ethnography, participant observation etc.

**Critique of Comparative/ Historical Research:** Choose a study in which the author(s) either  
Option a) used comparative methods  
Option b) used historical methods  
Option c) used comparative/historical methods

**II. Give a brief summary** of the theoretical and methodological approach of the article by answering questions (1-5) **first**:

- 1) What is the research question?
- 2) What is the purpose of the study? Explanatory, evaluative, exploratory or descriptive?
- 3) What are the theoretical framework(s) is building on/ testing?
- 4) Were any hypotheses states? Are they adequately justified in terms of the theoretical framework?
- 5) What are the main findings?

(see also relevant questions outlined in Schutt's Appendix B and C: "Questions to ask about a Research Article" and "How to read a research article.")

### **III. THEN answer the following questions specific for each methodological approach:**

#### **Specific Questions for Assignment on “Survey Research”**

Address the following specific questions:

- a. What was the population and sample for the survey?
- b. What kinds of questions were used? Open- or closed ended questions?
- c. How was the survey used to measure the author’s concepts?
- d. How do you judge the measures used in terms of their validity and reliability?
- e. How did the survey help the author to answer his/her research question?
- f. Would another method have been more useful?

#### **Specific Questions for Assignment on “Qualitative Research”**

##### **Option a) In-depth Interviews Interview**

- a. What was the population and sample for this study?
- b. How did the author structure the interviews?
- c. What role did the interviewer take?
- d. Do the interviews provide good measures of the concepts the author is interested in?
- e. How did the interviews help the author to answer his/her research question?
- f. Would another method have been more useful?

##### **Option b) Field Research**

- a. How did the author choose and gain access to his/her research site?
- b. How did s/he build rapport and maintain relationships with the informants?
- c. How did s/he work to insure that he/she collected quality data?
- d. How did using field research help the author to answer his/her research question?
- e. Would another method have been more useful?

#### **Specific Questions for Assignment on “Comparative/Historical Research”**

- a. What was the population and sample for this study?
- b. What specific research method did the author use? See Schutt and discuss for example if this research is case-oriented or variable-oriented.
- c. What kind of causality did the authors establish?
- d. How did using the comparative/historical method help the author to answer his/her research question?
- e. Would another method have been more useful?