

II. Catalog Description

Placement into ENGL 111 English Composition I with ENGL 070 English Composition I Workshop, or higher, and MATH 020 Elementary Algebra.

This multidisciplinary course introduces the world of social science with its focus on human experience by exposing students to real-world research presented by different discipline experts: social workers, educators, sociologists, historians, anthropologists, political scientists, and/or psychologists.

The course presents a variety of key qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and methods used in social science research. It also examines questions relating to the nature of knowledge, of truth, as well as issues of power. Topics include interviewing and focus groups, discourse analysis, experimental designs, mixed methods approach, the use of critical theory and feminists research methodologies in social science research.

The successful completion of this course entails the carrying out of a group research project. Groups of students, in collaboration with a faculty member, identify a social research question, perform appropriate research, and communicate the research in writing with a formal paper and orally with a class presentation.

III. Statement of Course Need

A. *Social Science in Action with Research Methods* is an innovative multidisciplinary course which aims to serve as a gateway to the social sciences by offering an overview of how knowledge is produced in a number of social science disciplines.

By entailing for its completion a group research project, the course would enable students to become active agents in the production of knowledge, thereby fostering reflective learning and analytical skills. It would moreover allow students to build stronger social networks with fellow students, faculty and other community members. *Social Science in Action with Research Methods* would further attenuate the power relationship in the classroom by affirming (through practice) a collaborative approach to the student-instructor interaction.

Importantly, early research experience better prepares transfer students to the demands of four-year institutions. For other students, the type of engaging experience that the course would provide motivates the pursuing of their studies, thus impacting student retention and/or transfer rate at the college level. Finally, the characteristics of part of the student population that RVCC aims to serve - underprivileged ethnic and/or low-income students – render the empowering dimension of a social research course even more relevant, if not critical.

B. Lab component: Yes (1h)

C. Similar monodisciplinary courses generally transfer as a social science elective, and on lesser occasions as social science general education courses.

IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

- A. Free Elective
- B. This course would serve as a General Education course in social science (pending)
- C. To see course transferability: a) for New Jersey schools, go to the NJ Transfer website, www.njtransfer.org; b) for all other colleges and universities, go to the individual websites.

V. Outline of Course Content

This course consists of the following themes:

- I. Research in the social sciences
 - A. Features of social science disciplines and social research
 - B. Literature review for research
 - C. Ethical issues in social research
- II. Qualitative methods
 - A. Ethnography and case study
 - a) Research diaries
 - b) Interviewing and focus group
 - c) Archival research
 - B. Observation
 - C. Discourse analysis
- III. Quantitative methods
 - A. Theory and basic concepts
 - B. Designs
 - a) Correlational
 - b) Experimental
 - c) Mixed-methods
- IV. Research as social change
 - A. Action research
 - B. Feminist methodologies
 - C. Critical race theory

VI. General Education and Course Learning Outcomes**A. General Education Learning Outcomes:**

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and use social science theories, methodologies and methods of inquiry to investigate, analyze, and discuss human behavior and societal issues by drawing conclusions from data and evidence (GE- NJ 5, 3, ER)*
2. Explain the importance of considering historical societal conditions, individuals' culture, perspective and backgrounds to evaluate research practices and perspectives, and understand analysis of human behavior (GE – NJ 8, 6, 5)*
3. Engage in activities that exercise personal and social responsibility (GE – NJ 5, ER)*
4. Communicate research findings (orally and in writing) in a clear and precise manner (GE- NJ 1)
5. Address an information need by locating, evaluation, and effectively using information (GE – NJ IL)*

[*: Embedded critical thinking]

B. Course Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Define and circumscribe social science, social research and social research basic epistemological underpinnings
2. Describe and compare quantitative and qualitative research methods
3. Use feminist methodologies and critical race theory to think critically about social research
4. Identify and take a position on potential research-related ethical issues

C. Assessment Instruments

1. Lecture discussion
2. Small group work
3. Student oral presentations
4. Research paper

VII. Grade Determinants

- A. Research paper
- B. In class presentation
- C. Essays/Term papers
- D. Quizzes

Given the goals and outcomes described above, the primary formats, modes, and methods for teaching and learning that may be used in the course:

- A. Lecture/discussion
- B. Small-group work
- C. Student oral presentations
- D. Student collaboration

VIII. Texts and Materials

Open Educational Resources

TEXTBOOK. Somekh, B., & Lewin, C. (2011). Theory and Methods in Social research. London: Sage.

OTHER MATERIAL. Articles, film and video.

IX. Resources

Library Database