

## CONTENTS

OBJECTIVES.....	1
METHOD OF INSTRUCTION.....	1
CORE READINGS.....	2
SEMINAR DISCUSSION OF PAPERS.....	3
LOCATING RESEARCH ON FAMILY VIOLENCE.....	3
OUTLINE FOR RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND FOR SEMINAR PAPER.....	5
APPROXIMATE TIME SCHEDULE FOR EMPIRICAL PAPERS.....	9
NOTEBOOK WITH COMPUTER OUTPUT.....	10
OUTLINE FOR ABSTRACTS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ARTICLES.....	11
SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO PRESENT STATISTICAL FINDINGS.....	12

## OBJECTIVES

1. The "substantive" or content objective of the seminar is to explore the nature, frequency, causes, and consequence of "maltreatment" between members of the same family. The types of maltreatment include physical, verbal, material, and sexual abuse of children and spouses, neglect of children and the elderly, and so-called "property crimes" within the family, e.g. theft from another member of the family. We will also give some attention to "primary prevention."

2. This is also a seminar in sociological theory and research methods. The intent is to give you insight into the SOCIAL causes of human behavior and methods of investigating causal factors of this type. However, if you are not a sociologist, this is not a requirement for your paper.

3. The distinction between a "course" and a "seminar" which I follow is that a course is designed to convey what is known about some phenomenon, whereas a seminar is designed to advance human knowledge of that phenomenon. Of course, that distinction breaks down in practice. One has to have accomplished the first in order to do the second. For that reason, the first half of the seminar includes a core group of readings and an exam at midsemester. Then you will be "experts" and can devote the rest of the semester to the research you will do to contribute new knowledge.

## METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

1. Although I may give an occasional formal lecture, and there might be a guest speaker, the primary focus of the seminar is on your research and the research of other members of the seminar. The meetings each week will focus on reviewing a research proposal or draft paper. Your project will come up for discussion at least three times. These will provide occasion for me to bring in relevant studies and their findings, as well as to make theoretical and methodological suggestions. I also welcome individual discussion of your research.

2. Core reading, as indicated below and reading journal articles relevant for your particular research interest. Note that there is no direct connection between the weekly seminar meetings, which review research proposals and drafts of research papers by the seminar members, and what is on the final exam.

3. Abstracts of three articles. If possible, these should be chosen from among the studies you are reviewing for your research. An outline for these abstracts is below. I hope you will find that doing these abstracts is a valuable learning experience.

4. Reviewing drafts of papers and research proposals by members of the Family Research Laboratory. These papers will be distributed a week in advance. You should come prepared to offer comments and suggestions that could help in revising the paper for publication.

5. Research papers. There are three types of papers: (A) Empirical research, comparable to an article in a sociological or psychological journal. This is the type of paper that is usually done by students taking the seminar for credit. (B) Theoretical papers in the sense of developing a new theory or refining an existing theory. For this seminar, a review of existing theories, even an excellent critical review, is not sufficient unless it results in a reformulation of a theory or development of a new theory. (C) Research proposals to be submitted to NSF, NIH, etc. Usually only post-doctoral fellows will do this type of paper.

Which type of paper you do should be based on such things as whether you have already had experience with one type and want to get experience with the other, and the extent of your knowledge of sociology (or whatever your discipline is). Generally it takes a greater knowledge of a discipline to do a theoretical paper as defined here.

You should think of these papers as primarily an apprenticeship experience in which we work on the paper together, rather than as an assignment that you do and turn in. We will meet each week to go over what you have done and puzzle over things together.

6. Exam and grades: There will be a "final" exam at about midsemester. This will cover the items on the core reading list. By having the final exam at this time you will have acquired the basic knowledge needed to write a good seminar paper in time to make use of it, and to have the 2nd half of the semester free to concentrate on your research. You can use notes you have written on the required readings on what yThe seminar grade will be based about 30% on the exam, 60% on the paper, and 10% on the abstracts and seminar participation.

### **CORE READINGS**

(Undergraduates registered for Soc 797 need to read only the Barnett book)

#### **Buy or Use UNH Library Copy**

Barnett, Ola W., Cindy L. Miller-Perrin, and Robin D. Perrin. 2005. *Family violence across the lifespan: An introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Loseke, Donillen R., Richard J. Gelles, and Mary M. Cavanough. 2005. *Current controversies on family violence. 2nd editon*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

#### **The following are available on Blackboard**

Straus, Murray A. and Gerald T. Hotaling. 1980. The Social Causes of Husband-Wife Violence. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, and 13.

Gelles, Richard J. and Murray A. Straus. 1979. Determinants of violence in the family: Towards a theoretical integration. In W. Burr, R. Hill and I. Reiss, Contemporary Theories about the Family. NY: Free Press. (V10)

Straus, Murray A., Richard J. Gelles and Suzanne K. Steinmetz. 1980. Behind Closed Doors: Violence in the American Family. New York: Doubleday/Anchor.

Straus, Murray A. 1974. "Leveling, civility, and violence in the family. Journal Of Marriage And the Family, 36 (January):13-29, plus addendum in August 1974 issue. (V8)

Straus, Murray A. and Richard J. Gelles. 1986. "Societal Change and Change in Family Violence from 1975 to 1985 as Revealed by Two National Surveys" Journal of Marriage and the Family 48:465-479. (VB2)

Straus, Murray A. 1995. "Trends in cultural norms and rates of partner violence: An update to 1992." Pp. 30-33 in *Understanding partner violence: Prevalence, causes, consequences, and solutions*, edited by Sandra Stith and Murray A. Straus. Minneapolis, MN: National Council on Family Relations. (V56)

Straus, Murray. A. (2006 in press). The conflict tactics scales. In N. A. Jackson (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of domestic violence*: Routledge/Taylor & Francis (The journal article on the CTS2 is also on Blackboard in case you need to look up the exact wording of the questions or statistical details)

Straus, Murray A. 2001. "The benefits of avoiding corporal punishment: New and more definitive evidence." Chapter 12 in Murray A. Straus, Beating The Devil Out Of Them: Corporal Punishment In American Families And Its Effects On Children, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publications. (CP41)

Weis, J. G. 1989. "Family violence research methodology and design." Pp. 117-162 in *Family Violence*, edited by L. Ohlin and M. Tonry. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Family Violence Research Program Bibliography (VP)

### **SEMINAR DISCUSSION OF PAPERS**

Most meetings of the seminar will include a review of the draft of a paper or grant application by either a student in the seminar or a member of the Family Research Laboratory. You will be given a copy of the paper a week in advance. I encourage you to come prepared to offer comments and suggestions to the author, but this is not required. You will see how it works the first time we do this. The author of the paper will not make an oral presentation, but will participate in the discussion. The discussion is intended bring up, explain, clarify, and sometimes debate things that might help him/her revise the paper or grant application. For this to have any meaning for you, it is essential that you read the papers in advance because, as I said, there is no oral presentation of the paper. We just start right in discussing the paper by going around the room. Each seminar member brings up something that could improve the paper or the grant application or asks a question or about something that is not clear, or puts forth ideas and suggestions they think will help the author. This process is repeated until all the main issues that people have thought of are covered or until the time is up. Little or nothing will be expected from you at the first session or two, but as you gain experience, more will be expected.

Your Comments. We will go around the room, usually two or three times. At each round, you will have an opportunity to bring up whatever point you feel will be helpful to the author, starting with what you feel might be most important. This can include ideas concerning a theoretical approach, methods, interpretation of the data, and references that the author might want to know about. Also valuable are things you did not understand because authors need to know what is not clear to readers of their paper. Another criterion for selecting what to bring up orally is to try to keep in mind what might be of interest to others in the seminar in addition to the author of the paper. There will usually not be enough time for you to present all your points orally. That is actually a good thing because many of the points will have to do with wording and other details that can best be handled in your written comments, or marked directly on the draft paper. Before the seminar meeting, decide on which of the points you want to present orally.

Written Comments. Whenever possible, you should prepare written comments because that improves the quality of your oral comments, saves time in the seminar because you can omit small details by giving a copy to the author, and it is also very helpful to the author of the paper to have a written commentary. Give your written comments and the marked copy of the paper to the author at the end of the seminar

Your Comments When Your Own Paper is Discussed. It is not necessary or desirable to respond to each point. However, you should ask for more information about comments that you don't understand or disagree with; and also to clarify points that may have been misunderstood and bring out points that you think will be of general interest to members of the seminar.

### **LOCATING RESEARCH ON FAMILY VIOLENCE**

The Textbook by Barnett et al is a good place to start. For your preliminary research proposal, because that has to be done just about immediately, it will be sufficient to include just a few references from the research described in that book and the other core readings.

Family Violence Research Program Bibliography. This lists the many books and articles which have been produced by members of our program. Articles marked with an \* are available to you free. My secretary Doreen will show you the file cabinets where they are located. Just pick out those you want, but do not take more than 10 to start with. If you read these and want more, you are welcome to them.

Psychological Abstracts And Sociological Abstracts. Together, they cover most of the family violence literature. They are both available on CD disks at the library. Using those disks, you can search for the

topics you want, and then download a file of the abstracts, which fit. However, until recently, they did not cover the following journals. So, you will need to check the indexes to those journals one by one:

Social Science Citation Index. The subject index volume is most likely to be useful because it lists all publications by the "key words" in their titles. The author index lists all publications by each author. The most unique volume is the citation index. It is helpful when you can identify a work that is along the lines of your interest. Since that is the case, other people who have written on the same aspect of things are likely to cite that author. So you look in this volume to find all the publications, which have done so, and then scan the titles to find those that look interesting. For example, I used SSCI to track down articles, which used the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS). The title and abstract of an article seldom mention the method used to gather the data, so the usual search of Psych or Soc Abstracts would not work. However, when a test or scale is used, my article or book on that instrument is almost always cited. By searching for all publications that had cited Straus, you will find those that cite my papers on the CTS. Those will be articles that are likely to have used the CTS. Using this process, I was able to locate just about every article that was based on data obtained by using the CTS, even though the CTS was rarely mentioned in the title or abstract.

Some Journals (\* indicates the journal is in the FRL library)

- \*AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR.
- \*CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT
- \*CHILD MALTREATMENT
- \*VIOLENCE AND ABUSE ABSTRACTS. This journal that started in 1995. The UNH library does not have it, but the FRL library does.
- \*FAMILY VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT BULLETIN
- \* J
- \* JOURNAL OF ELDER ABUSE
- \* JOURNAL OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE
- \* JOURNAL OF FAMILY VIOLENCE
- \* JOURNAL OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE
- \* JOURNAL OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (TITLE ?)
- \* PREVENTING SEXUAL ABUSE
- VICTIMOLOGY
- \* VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
- \* VIOLENCE AND VICTIMS

## OUTLINE FOR RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND FOR SEMINAR PAPER

(If you have taken Soc 902 with me, you will be relieved to learn that the proposal for this seminar is much shorter and less comprehensive. This is because you must produce the proposal within the first two or three weeks in order to be able to complete the study by the end of the semester. Usually about five double space pages will do.)

There will be two drafts of the research proposal. The first is usually quite incomplete. For example, the Data Analysis section will usually be missing until I have had a chance to read the first draft with you and we can discuss a mode of data analysis.

The final paper will also have two drafts. The first will be discussed in the seminar and you will get ideas and help from me and from other members of the seminar. Then you revise the paper and the revised paper will be the one used for purposes of assigning a grade. Aspects of importance than you should consider include whether there is any controversy about what you propose to study, are there gaps in research because something has not been studied or the results are inconsistent; and is there a theory (in the sense of an explanation for why something occurs) that might be applicable which you can test.

### TITLE

The title is important for helping you get the issue of your paper in focus and then for staying on track. One-way of creating a title is to have it start with a word or words that indicate the independent variable, followed by AND, and then end with a word or words that indicate the dependent variable or variables. For example, "Socioeconomic Status of Parents And Their Use of Corporal Punishment."

### INTRODUCTION

Describe the issue you will investigate and explain why it is important. Why would anyone want to know what you propose to find out? What could be done with that information? For the proposal, it is not necessary to cite references, but this may be appropriate for the final paper. For the proposal, this can be one double space page. For the final paper it should be 2 or 3 pages. The heading Introduction is not necessary because that is the only thing that the first page or so can be. If there is some special slant to the introduction, that can be first heading; for example: THE CONFLICT ABOUT THEORIES OF X.

### PREVIOUS RESEARCH

For purposes of the initial proposal, one page mentioning two or three studies is sufficient. You might be able to find these two or three among the studies cited in the readings for this seminar.

For the final paper, the review of literature section should be about four or five pages should usually include a tabular summary (see example at the end the syllabus), and must organize the literature under sub-headings, for example: Studies of aspect X. Studies of aspect Y, etc; Studies using method X, Studies using method Y; Studies done from the perspective of theory A, Studies done from the perspective of theory B. etc.

Tabular summary. The table should summarize the empirical research on the main issue of your study. Each empirical study of that issue should have row in the table. The usual headings are Study, Sample (type of people in the sample, and the N), Measure of Independent Variable, Measure of Dependent Variable, and Findings. But this will vary with the topic. See the example at the end of this document, but do not necessarily use those headings. For example, if you are reviewing the effect of number of children in the family on use of spanking and other corporal punishment, there would probably be no need to have a column for the independent variable because it is the same for all the studies. However, because there are many ways to measure corporal punishment, and because that can have a major effect on the findings, there should be a column in which you indicate the measure used in each study. If there is a third variable that affects the relation of X to Y, that needs to be taken into account in the Findings column. For example, the

rate is drastically affected by the age of the child because parents are much more likely to spank 4 year olds than 14 year olds. So, the correlation between the X variable and corporal punishment would need to be reported for each age group in the study.

This table will be a great help to you in getting on top of the literature, and is often a valuable part of an article. The table will usually be Table 1, and should not be relegated to an appendix. You should refer to it often in your write up of the literature.

**Evaluate.** A good review critically evaluates the research and reaches conclusions about what is known on the issue covered under that sub-heading (and sometimes also overall). An outstanding review also suggests possible reasons for discrepancies in the literature, implications of the findings, and/or suggests solutions to methodological problems.

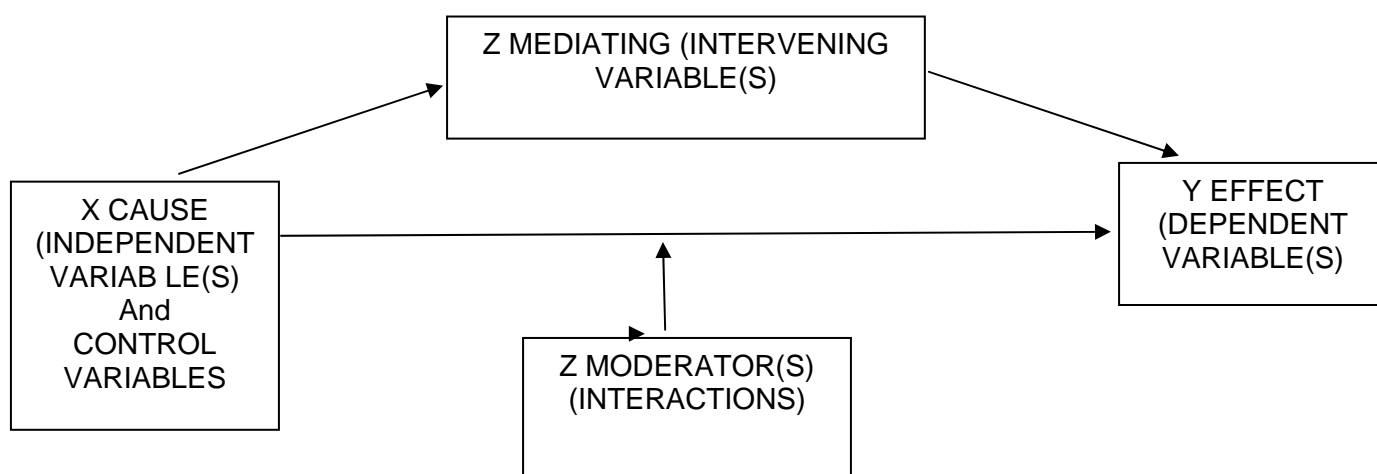
**Relate To Your Study.** Somewhere within each sub-heading you must indicate the relation of what is in that section to your study. It is often just a sentence that introduces or concludes a section of the review, e.g. "Since the above review indicates important problems with the research on ....X..., the research described in this proposal will ....." OR "Since the studies just reviewed show that ...X... is related to...., X is included as one of the independent variables in the proposed research."

**Writing Style Must Distinguish Between Empirical Research And Other Writing.** It is important that you make clear what is an empirical finding and what is an interpretation or theory. This can be done explicitly, or implicitly by using different terms for the two types of references. For example, use "studies" and "findings" for describing empirical data (either quantitative or qualitative), and terms such as "argues that" "holds that" "theorizes" etc for material that is not a report of empirical data, or is the implications of empirical findings rather than the actual findings.

If you can work in a specific finding, that would be even better, as in the example: An early paper by Jones (1953) argued that Protestants are more likely to...xx... This theory was confirmed in a study by Dutton (1988) which found that the Protestants are 20% more likely to...xx...

### CAUSAL DIAGRAM, AND HYPOTHESES OR QUESTIONS TO BE INVESTIGATED

**Diagram.** Create a causal diagram of what you propose to study. The basic elements of the diagram are:



Usually a study will have either mediating variables or moderating, but sometimes both. Many studies have neither.

Except for the Moderators, the arrows should have + or – signs to indicate the direction of the effect you expect to find.

**Hypotheses.** For purposes of this seminar, a hypothesis is a statement of the way you think the independent variable(s) you will investigate are related to the dependent variable(s). For example: "The higher the socioeconomic status of the parents, the less corporal punishment they use." If you do not have a basis for a hypothesis, you can pose a question, such as "Is the socioeconomic status of parents related to their use of corporal punishment?"

Avoid "correlated with" positively correlated" and "negatively correlated" Instead, for "positively correlated" say, "the more X the more Y." Instead of "negatively correlated" say "the more X, the less Y."

For mediating effects (also called intervening variables in path analysis). The relation between X and Y is mediated by Z. This can be either "fully moderated" in which case there is no "direct path" from X to Y, or "partially moderated," in which case there is both a direct path ("direct effect") and also paths through the mediating variable(s).

For interaction effects, there are many variations. One example is: "When Z is present, the more X, the more Y; but when Z is absent (or low) there is no relation between X and Y. I will help you develop this.

## METHODS

For purposes of the proposal, the things that you will do should use the future tense, but when this is put in the methods section of the final paper, it should be in past tense because it describes things you have done.

### Sample

Most papers for this seminar will use "archived" data. So you should use past tense. Describe how the sample was selected. Give the number of cases. For the final paper, there also needs to be information about some of the characteristics of the sample, such as their age, gender, socioeconomic status, family background etc. This information can help understand the results.

### Measures

List the independent, dependent, and control variables. For each describe how they were measured, for example by giving the specific question that was asked to obtain the data.

### Data Analysis

For the research proposal, use the future tense. For the final paper, use past tense. This section will be difficult or impossible to write in the first draft of your proposal. Usually there will be two parts, using the following headings:

**Exploratory or Bivariate Analyses.** This will include (1) frequency distribution for each of the variables that will be used in your study, and one or more of the following: (2) Cross Tabulation or analysis of variance (ANOVA; in SPSS "Means") to compare males and females on each of the variables (3) Cross tabs or ANOVA or correlation of your dependent variables by your main independent variable,

**Multivariate Analysis.** Once we have examined the results of the Exploratory analyses, we will discuss what method of multivariate analysis is best for your study. Among the possibilities are OLS regression, logistic regression, and analysis of covariance. I will try to suggest an example of an article using that method.

## RESULTS (FINAL PAPER ONLY)

If you were not very experienced with using SPSS or STATA, \at the start of the semester I proably had you do some simple analyses to help you get up to speed. Not all of these analyses (and in some cases, none of them) will go in your paper.

**Headings.** It is essential to use headings when reporting the results of your study. For example, you could have headings based on the method of analysis, such as Descriptive Statistics, Correlation Analysis, and Regression analysis. Or, better, you could have headings based on the subject matter or issue such as Prevalence Of Corporal Punishment, Relation of Socioeconomic Status to Use of Corporal Punishment, and The Combined Effect of Gender of the and Socioeconomic Status of the Parent.

**Give Results On Descriptive Statistics.** For most papers, the first set of results to present is to let your readers know how much of the key variables occurred, such as how much partner violence, how much corporal punishment, how much depression, etc. After that will come sections which present tests of your hypotheses/

## DISCUSSION (FINAL PAPER ONLY)

This is the place where you give your interpretation of the findings, for example, you could discuss (1) What accounts for the findings, (2) What do the findings mean, (3) What is the importance of the findings. Example: "The findings are consistent with and support the theory that parents have stricter expectations for first-born children, and tend to let later-born children get away with more. Thus first-borns grow up....." The discussion should be at least two pages long.

I prefer that you avoid ending the paper with the limitations or suggestions for future research. These can come earlier, either as separate sections or woven into the discussion. Putting them as the last words focuses the reader's thinking on what the study did not find, whereas I think it is usually much better to leave the reader thinking about the contributions of the study is (what is known now, that was not known before) and the implications of the results for theoretical understanding of the issue studied, and/or the implications for policy and clinical practice.

## ABSTRACT AND LENGTH

**Abstract.** Include an abstract of up to 200 words on the title page. It should mirror the headings of your paper even though most journals do not want headings in an abstract; i.e. what the issue is, the methods, the results, and your discussion. Given the word limit, each of these can only be brief summaries.

**Length.** Articles for scientific journals in sociology and psychology are usually about 20 pages of text, not counting the title page and abstract, the tables, graphs, and references. So your seminar paper should be about that length.

## APPROXIMATE TIME SCHEDULE FOR EMPIRICAL PAPERS

This outline assumes that your research will be done by analyzing an existing data set. If you are gathering new data, you must draw up a similar time schedule and go over it with me.

In addition to what is listed below, each week for the first half of the semester you should read at least 15% of the required readings so that by the time of the exam in the middle of the semester, you will have read it all. The exam will be in the 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> week of the semester

### Week

1. Orientation meeting. Schedule an appointment with me to discuss possible paper topics (if this has not already been done).
2. Oral presentation and discussion of your research topic. Even better would be if can bring and distribute a paragraph to a page on what you propose to study and how you might do the study. You will get more suggestions and ideas from that.
3. A. First draft of research proposal (see outline) Bring copies for everyone in the seminar to read.  
B. Turn in the first of the three abstracts of empirical research articles related to the topic of your paper.
4. (A) Meet with me and bring a revision of research proposal for us to discuss.  
(B) Obtain a disk with the data you need from me or from some other source.
5. A. Frequency distributions of all variables to be used in your study. Write a one sentence to one paragraph comment about each of the variables.\* MEET (= brief meeting with me to go over the output and what you have written)  
B. Second abstract.
6. Compute scales that are needed and compute frequency distribution of those scales for the total sample and for male and female respondents. Write a one sentence to one paragraph comment about each frequency distribution, commenting on whether there are differences between male and female respondents and what you think they indicate or what you think causes the difference. MEET
7. Compute bivariate analyses such as correlations, cross tabs, or ANOVA to relate the independent variable(s) to the dependent variables(s). Write comments about what you think each correlation, cross-tab, or ANOVA shows. MEET
- 8 & 9. Compute a multivariate analyses on the basis of discussion with me. Write a 2 to 5 page draft on what results show. MEET
10. COURSE EXAMINATION. The week of the exam will vary from semester to semester.
- 11 (A) Compute a revised multivariate analysis on the basis of discussion with me, and revise the write up of multivariate analysis. MEET  
(B) Third abstract
12. Draft of review of literature (2 to 5 double space pages) and discussion section (1 to 2 double space pages). MEET
13. First draft of complete paper distributed so that others can read it in time for the next seminar meeting.
- 14 or 15. Seminar discussion of first draft. MEET

The revised paper is due by the middle of Exam week.

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\* This can be such things as whether the frequency distribution (the percent of cases in each category) suggests that the sample is representative or not, whether the distribution seems low or high to you and why, how the scores might affect your paper, and/or something on the practical or theoretical importance of the distribution. You should also check that the distribution makes sense; for example, if there is someone with a score of 9 on a variable where the answers to the question could range from 1 to 6, that is an error that needs to be noticed and corrected. I will show you how to correct such errors.

## NOTEBOOK WITH COMPUTER OUTPUT AND DISK WITH DATA AND OUTPUT

### Notebook

Purchase a three ring binder and a set of divider tabs (10 tabs is best). Put the documentation for the study such as the questionnaire and the list of variables in the first section, and label it Questionnaire etc. Each time you compute statistics, add the output to the notebook and fill in the table of contents page. For example, the 2<sup>nd</sup> section will be labeled Frequencies, the next section will probably be labeled Scales, the third section might be labeled Correlations, etc.

Each time we meet to discuss the output you have produced, it must be in the notebook.

Set the output file so that your output is dated and the pages are numbered.

The notebook must be available for us to consult throughout the semester, and must be given to me along with the revised version of your paper at the end of the semester.

### CD Disk

The disk should have the following folders: Data (for your SPSS.SAV or STATA data files), Output Paper.

## OUTLINE FOR PRELIMINARY RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Use the following headings. The length should be one single space page, plus a causal diagram on a second page.. If you have trouble providing any of the needed information, you can put ??? after the heading and we will work on it with you during the seminar discussion and my meeting with each of you individually.

**TITLE:** For purposes of this proposal, the title should usually consist of a word or phrase to indicate the independent variable or variables, the word AND, followed by a word or phrase to indicate the independent variable or variables. If there is some other interesting feature that you can work into the title, that is great. Do not use the phrase "a study of" or similar phrases.

**THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION OR HYPOTHESIS**

**THE IMPORTANCE OR VALUE OF THE RESULTS.**

**POSSIBLE TYPE OF SAMPLE,** including number of cases

**METHODOLOGY:** Classify the research design as either cross sectional, longitudinal, experimental, some combination of these, or possibly other. If there is some other aspects of the research which is necessary to understand the project describe it briefly

**DATA ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY WILL USE,**

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLE (OR VARIABLES):** State what the variable is and how you might measure it, such as a single question or a composite scale, or an experimentally "manipulated" condition.

**DEPENDENT VARIABLE (OR VARIABLES):** As above

**MEDIATING AND/OR MODERATING VARIABLE.** Your proposal should specify testing either a mediating (i.e. indirect) effect, or testing for a "moderator" (i.e., interaction").

**CONTROL VARIABLES AND OTHER FACTORS:** Name at least one control variable, but more is better. You do not need to say how these were measured.

**CAUSAL DIAGRAM.**

## OUTLINE FOR ABSTRACTS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ARTICLES

**REFERENCE:** Start the abstract with this. Give the complete citation. Use the American Sociological Association style exactly, but if your discipline is not sociology, use the style of your discipline.

**HYPOTHESIS:** Give the hypothesis tested by the author, regardless of whether you agree with it. If a formal hypothesis is not given in the article, state the research problem as succinctly as possible. If there are numerous hypotheses, try to subsume them under one, two or three general hypotheses. (Sometimes abstracts are prepared to summarize only one or two of many hypotheses tested in a study; if so, indicate this.)

**SAMPLE:** Describe the sampling method (i.e., how the sample was selected) and key characteristics of the sample used to test the hypothesis(es) you are abstracting. It is not necessary to describe pre-test or preliminary study samples.

**RESEARCH DESIGN TYPE:** 1. Classify the study as either cross sectional, longitudinal, experimental, some combination of these, or possibly other. 2. Describe briefly any other If there are other aspects of the research that readers of the abstract need to know about in order to understand the results, or any unusual procedures which are of interest in their own right, mention them.

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLE (OR VARIABLES):** The variable(s) whose hypothesized effect on other variables is the primary focus of your study. State what the variable is, and how it is measured. If the study is an experiment, summarize how the independent variable was "manipulated" i.e. made to vary. Note that "cause" is a theoretical concept. It is not necessary that the study you are abstracting has proved that there is actually a causal relationship.

**DEPENDENT VARIABLE (OR VARIABLES):** The variable which is assumed to be the effect in the sense of caused by or influenced by changes in the independent variable. State what the variable is and how it is measured.

**MODERATING or MEDIATING VARIABLES.** A "moderator effect" is the same as an interaction effect. It refers to a relationship between X and Y that is contingent on the value of a third variable (X2), X2 is the moderator variable. A mediating variable (also known as an intervening variable) in a path model or structural equation model, tests a hypothesis about indirect effects, i.e., X1 leads to X2, and X2 leads to y. In this case, X2 is the mediating variable.

**CONTROL VARIABLES AND OTHER FACTORS:** Control variables are independent variables that are included to rule out "spurious" relationships. If there are many and there is not enough space to give them all, give one or two examples and say how many were included in the study.

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:** The literal facts or relationships found. State the findings without using statistics. See page in syllabus on reporting statistical findings. However, you may also use specific figures if these can be given briefly. For example: "First born children are more often high in social responsibility as shown by the finding of 20% of first born children with high responsibility scores as compared to only 10% of middle or youngest children." Use "propositioned" format if possible, e.g. "The more of X, the more (or less) of Y". See section in this syllabus on Describing Statistical Results for a bit more on propositional format.

**DISCUSSION:** The interpretation of the findings. Three examples of things that are under the heading of "discussion" are (1) What accounts for the findings, (2) What do the findings mean, (3) What is the importance of the findings. Example: "The findings are consistent with and support the theory that parents have stricter expectations for first-born children, and tend to let later-born children get away with more. Thus first-borns grow up....." As in the case of the HYPOTHESIS this should be a summary of the author's discussion. (But, if you also include your own view or evaluation, that is ok, provided it is clearly labeled as such.)

### ABSTRACTORS NAME AND DATE:

The entire abstract should be on one single space page. Type the headings in full caps - as in this outline. If the article gives the necessary information in brief enough form, you can quote those parts i.e. there is no need to paraphrase unless you wish to. Just put exact quotes in quotation marks.

## SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO PRESENT STATISTICAL FINDINGS

Put statistics in tables, not in the text. Try to put all statistics in a table, not in running text. The main exception is if there are only one or two statistics -- a table is silly for that. But sometimes there are a series of sets of one or two which should be in table.

Present results without using numbers whenever possible. Do not repeat statistics in the text. Do not say "Table 3 shows that 29% of Group A, 34% of Group B, and 10% of Group C believed that....." Instead, say what these percentages show (without using numbers to say it); for example: "Table 3 shows that Group C had the lowest percentage who believed that....."

Mention the table, and (if a complicated table) part of the table at the beginning of the presentation of the results. For example, Table 3 shows that...., or The first column of Table 3 shows that....

Focus on the size of the correlations, means, or percentages. Give priority to describing the extent to which X and Y are related, or how much group A and B differ from each other. The significance test tells you how much confidence you can have in those associations or differences. You can have a lot of confidence in a small difference if the N is big enough.

Avoid Saying "positively correlated" or negatively correlated when possible (and it usually is possible). Instead, present the findings in "propositional format." To present correlation and standardized regression coefficients (Beta's), do not say "The upper left correlation in Table 3 shows that the correlation between year in college and feminist attitudes is .28" (the reader can read that in the table!). Instead say "The upper left correlation in Table 3 shows that the more years students have been in the university, the greater the score on the feminist attitude index. (Note that you can't phrase it this way if the relationship is non-linear.)

The formula for presenting propositions based on correlations or standardized regression coefficients is to start with "The more...." and insert the name of the independent variable. This applies to negative as well as positive correlations. If the coefficient is positive, "the more" is followed by "the more" and you name the dependent variable. If the coefficient is negative, it is followed by "the less" and you name the dependent variable. When appropriate use equivalent phrases such as "the higher" or "the lower" "the longer".

Format when the independent variable is binary ("dummy variable"): e.g., female=1 male=0; Catholic majority=1 Protestant majority=0; High income=1 low=0; mixed marriage=1, other=0. The format is:

Name the category coded 1.. tend to have more (less). ..name the dependent variable..... OR

When...name the category coded 1...is present, there is more (less)....name the dependent var.....

Example: Suppose you found a correlation of .37 between communities with a Catholic majority and the amount spent per capita on public schools. If that coefficient is in a table, you could present this as "Table x shows that communities with a Catholic majority tend to have a higher per capita expenditure for public education. Or: "If the majority of the population is Catholic, there is a greater per capita expenditure for public schools."

Discuss the findings. In sociology there is often some discussion of findings as the findings are presented, as well as in a "Discussion" or Conclusions section (In psychology journals, "discussion" must be in a separate section after the Results section). To discuss means to comment on or speculate about the findings, i.e. to go beyond the findings. If you discuss findings as you present them, you must be sure to choose words that indicate what are empirical findings, and what is your interpretation or commentary.

Example: "The differences between group A and C suggest that ....." The use of the term "suggest" alerts the reader that you are now going beyond the facts.

Three of the things to include in a discussion. (1) Why the results you found occurred, e.g., processes or circumstances, that could have brought about the finding. (2) Whether the results are consistent with or contrary to previous empirical research and theory. (3) The theoretical and practical implications of the findings. Theoretical implications include what the findings suggest in the way of causal theories. Practical implications include the findings suggest can be done (or which should avoid being done) that would make life better. (4) Limitations or cautions.

Presenting unstandardized regression coefficients. The format is: "For each increase of one...give the independent variable...e.g., dollar, percent divorced, child per family, point on the stress index....., there is an average increase (or decrease) of... give the regression coefficient...in name the dependent variable" e.g.: ...suicides per 100,000k population, points on the fear of crime index, ..dollars donated to the church, .percent who attend church, etc

Example: Suppose you regressed the suicide rate on the divorce rate found an unstandardized regressions coefficient of coefficient of 2.6, you could say: "For each increase of one percent in the percentage of the population who are divorced, there is an average increase of 2.6 suicides per 100,000 population."

Use Standardized Regression Coefficients (Beta) if you want to compare the strength of the relationship between different independent variables with a dependent variable; for example, to determine if the divorce rate is more strongly related suicide than is median income. Unstandardized regression coefficients cannot usually be used to talk about the relative importance of different variables in the regression because each variable is expressed in different units, such dollars, rate for 100,000, number of children. The standardized coefficient deals with this by expressing all the variables as Z scores.

Dichotomous independent variables ("dummy variable" "indicator variable"). The format is: Women have an average of...insert regression. coefficient....more (less).. name the dependent variable...than men

Example: You did a study of factors influencing faculty salary (measured in dollars per yr), such as years at the university, number of publications, gender of the faculty member. Gender was coded (female=1, male=0). You found an unstandardized regression coefficient for gender of -.873. You could present this as follows: "After controlling for all the other variables in the model, being female faculty member in this university was associated with an average of \$873 less per year than was received by male faculty."

Results From Logistic Regression (A) For an odds ratio of 1.32, for example, you could say that it "shows that each increase of one unit (one point, one category, etc) of ...(X)... multiplies the odds ratio by 1.3 or 32%."



Table 1. Research on Gender Differences in Self Reported Crime					
Juvenile Crime					
A. General Population Studies					
Study	Sample and N	Measure Used	Rates for		Male to Female Ratio
			Males	Females	
Porterfield, 1947	N=337 m=200 f=137 College students	Pre-enrollment in college: 1 or more delinquent act Average number of acts	100% 17.6	100% 4.7	1.0 3.7
Short & Nye, 1958	n=1265 m=695 f=560 High School & Training School Students 16 - 17 years old	In lifetime: 1 or more delinquent act	100%	76%	1.3
Dentler & Monroe, 1961	n=912 Junior high school students	In lifetime: Some theft High Theft	61% 67%	39% 33%	1.6 2.0
Akers, 1964	n=836 m=429 f=407 9 <sup>th</sup> grade students 13 to 17 years old	Mean scale score of self- reported delinquent behavior:	8.50	6.66	1.3
Gold, 1966	n=522 m=258 f=264 13 to 16 year olds living in an industrial city	Mean index score based on acts committed in past three years: Index F (wide range of acts) Index S (serious acts weighted)	4.8 5.4	1.9 1.9	2.5 2.8
Wise, 1967	N=589 High school sophomores 15 to 18 years old living in a suburban community	In lifetime: Alcohol Offenses Driving Offenses Theft Vandalism Assault	63.7% 46.9% 30.5% 25.2% 26.6%	54.7% 27.1% 14.7% 9.3% 6.6%	1.2 1.7 2.1 2.7 4.0
Hindelang, 1971	n=763 m=319 f=444 Students in a co-ed catholic high school	In past 12 months: 24 delinquent acts	4.3-71.8%	2.9-59.7%	2.56**

