

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
History and Sociology of Science Department

STSC/HSOC 420
Research Seminar

Spring, 2008
Professor Ruth S. Cowan

SYLLABUS

INTRODUCTION: This course has been structured to meet the needs of STSC and HSOC students who plan to write a two semester senior honors thesis. The final project for the course is a thesis proposal. If there is room in the course, students who do not plan to write an honors thesis can still take it, but their final product must be a research paper not a research proposal.

FORMAT AND ASSIGNMENTS: The course runs on two tracks until Spring Break (SB) after which it will run on a third.

(1) Every week before SB we will be joined by one or two Penn faculty members (see the schedule below) who will talk with us about research techniques in their fields. Our visitor will have given us something to read in preparation for the discussion. Readings will all be posted on the BlackBoard site for the course. In addition to reading the article or chapter before you come to class you should also print out a copy and bring it to class, in order to make our discussion of research methods more fruitful.

(2) The remainder of our class time, before SB, will be devoted to various exercises in preparation for the submission of a secondary bibliography, which will be due on March 5th.

(3) After SB the readings we do in common will be assigned by students. Each student will have to choose a reading and present an oral report which connects that reading to a tentative research proposal (or research project). Final proposals (or research papers) will be due on the last day of class, April 23rd.

GRADING: Participation in discussion, showing evidence of having done the reading:
roughly 20%
Preliminary bibliography: roughly 20%
Oral report: roughly 20%
Final paper (research proposal): roughly 40%

SCHEDULE:

Jan 23: Ruth Schwartz Cowan (History and Sociology of Science):

Jan 30: Jason Schnittker (Sociology)/Carolyn Cannuscio (Family Medicine)

Feb 6: Tulia Faletti (Political Science)

Feb 13: Andria Johnson (History and Sociology of Science)

Feb 20: Jonathan Moreno (Bioethics Center and History and Sociology of Science)

Feb 27: Fran Barg (Family Medicine)

Mar 5: Samuel Prestion (Sociology and Demography)