SA1. RESEARCH DESIGN ASSIGMENT

Weight: 20% of course grade

In class we've examined the strengths and weaknesses of *Bowling for Columbine*. Why do you think so many gun murders occur in the United States? Write a short paper that describes and justifies a Most Similar or Most Different Systems Design (MSS or MDS) to test one explanation for rates of gun-related homicide. One of your cases MUST BE THE UNITED STATES and the second should be drawn from the list on page three of this handout.

(Note: This is a formal paper, so please use standard academic English and do not use the first person.)

In your paper, explicitly address each of the following questions:

Why?

Why are rates of gun-related homicide so high in the USA? Briefly describe one structural, one rational, and one cultural theory of gun violence that you think is interesting or plausible.

Comparison?

What country comparison would support (or falsify) one of the explanations you've described? What are the rates of gun-related homicide for the USA and your second case? What factors are "controlled" through your comparison? What conclusion does your MDS or MSS design suggest?

Potential sources for data will be discussed in class. Please see Dr. Hinckley if you have any questions.

Formatting Rules

- Limit of 3 pages plus comparison table
- Typed, double spaced
- Append a list of sources for any data you include (e.g., from books, Web sites, etc.)
- **DUE AT THE START OF CLASS ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2009***

*EXCEPT IN CASES OF DOCUMENTED MEDICAL EMERGENCIES, NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED!

Comparison Table

	Case A USA	Case B	Similar or Different?
Dependent Variable			
Independent Variable			
Control Variables			

In addition to the USA, please select one of the following cases to use in your paper:

COUNTRY NAME	GUN HOMICIDE RATE PER 100,000 (Year: 2001)
Japan	0.03
Singapore	0.07
Taiwan	0.15
Kuwait	0.34
England/ Wales	0.07
Scotland	0.19
Netherlands	0.27
Spain	0.19
Ireland	0.3
Germany	0.21
Italy	1.16
Sweden	0.18
Denmark	0.23
Israel	0.72
New Zealand	0.22
Australia	0.56
Belgium	0.87
Canada	0.6
Norway	0.36
Austria	0.42
Northern Ireland	3.55
France	0.55
Switzerland	0.46
Finland	0.87
USA	**6.24**

Additional Cases (various years from 2000-2005)	
Columbia	49.5
South Africa	22.4
Brazil	21.1
Haiti	6.0
Mexico	5.1