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SOCI 318.02: Sociological Research Methods

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Sociological Research Methods

Soci 318: Spring 2014

T/Th 3:40-5:00; GBB L04

INSTRUCTOR: Krista Caffrey

OFFICE: Social Science 317

OFFICE HOURS: Mon, Wed, Fri 10:10-11:00 and by appointment

EMAIL: krista.caffrey@mso.umt.edu; (I will try to respond as promptly as possible)

Course Description:

Sociology is the objective study of society, paying close attention to how people organize and structure themselves into groups. In turn, sociologists reconsider assumptions about society and question that which is obvious in order to better understand human behavior and the construction of the social norms. This course looks at how social scientists empirically investigate and quantify behavior within the social world. The objective is to familiarize you with the basic principles and techniques of social science research, including measurement, data collection, experiments, surveys, and field research.

Primary Textbook:

Daniel F. Chambliss and Russell K. Schutt. 2012. *Making Sense of the Social World*. 4th Edition. SAGE Publications, Inc.

Reserve readings: Supplementary readings will be found on eRes. These readings are required. Readings will be listed in the syllabus along with required chapters for each unit.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Attendance: 75 points

Student Projects: 3 projects x 50 points each = 150 points

Exams: 2 exams x 100 points each = 200 points (3 exams, will drop lowest)

Final exam: 125 points

Total points: 550 points

Grades: 90% A; 80% B; 70% C; 60% D; Less than 60% F

Student Projects

Students are responsible for three student projects throughout the semester. You will be given instructions for each project. Project 1 will be to design an experiment and submit a write-up that illustrates an understanding of experimental methods. Project 2 will be to design a survey and submit a write-up that illustrates an understanding of survey methods. Project 3 will be a short field observation with field notes, followed by submission of an analytical write-up of the observation. Students **may** work on these projects in groups of no more than 3, but **must** compose and submit individual write-ups. Group written write-ups will result in no credit on the project.

Exams

There will be 4 exams in the course; three midterms and one final exam. Midterm exams are not comprehensive (will only cover unit material) but the final exam *is* comprehensive (will cover all new material after the 3rd midterm *and* material from all other units. Each exam will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and short essay questions. Scantrons and blue books are *not* necessary for this course.

Attendance

Everyone begins with 75 attendance points. You lose 10 points for every absence and 5 points for each tardy after 4 absences and 4 tardies. (i.e., everyone will be allowed 4 “free” absences and 4 “free” tardies.) If you must be late, try to let me know in advance and make an effort to enter the room as quietly as possible. Documented medical issues and family emergencies are exceptions to the attendance policy.

Policies:

Students are responsible for their own work and should hand in all materials the date they are due. No late materials will be accepted unless it is discussed with the instructor.

Students are also responsible to be at all exam dates unless they have a valid excuse. Written verification must be handed in before the student is allowed to schedule a make-up examination.

Lastly, I reserve the right to change course content during the semester, including readings and lectures, as I see fit.

Course Expectations and Classroom Etiquette:

The issues we deal with in this class are often controversial and you may be exposed to arguments you do not agree with through the readings, discussion, or lectures. You are encouraged, and expected to, voice your opinion about these issues, but I also expect you to support your opinions with evidence. Moreover, I expect students to create a comfortable class environment by sharing ideas, observations, and questions in a respectful manner. Such an environment is only possible when students and instructors treat each other with mutual respect and listen without interruption. Towards this end, I will not tolerate words or actions that result in hostility or tension in the classroom.

Cheating of any kind, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated and will result in an F for the course. Incidences of cheating/plagiarism will also be brought to the attention of the department chair. For more information, see the Student Conduct Code at <http://life.umd.edu/SA/documents/fromWeb/StudentConductCode1.pdf>.

Course Outline:

Course outline is tentative and subject to change at my discretion. Changes will be announced in class. Directions and guidelines for the projects will be discussed in class.

Course Outline

Week 1: Jan. 27 th -31 st	Introduction to the Course/Social Science Research <i>Textbook: Ch. 1 & 2</i>
Week 2: Feb. 3 rd -7 th	Ethics in Research (Ethics movie-Tuesday) Finding Information <i>Textbook: Ch. 3 & Appendix A; eRes: Singleton & Straits</i>
Week 3: Feb. 10 th -14 th	Reporting Results Conceptualization & Measurement <i>Textbook: Ch. 12 & Ch. 4</i>
Week 4: Feb 17 th -21 st	Conceptualization and Measurement <i>Textbook Ch. 4; eRes: Barker</i> Exam 1: Thursday, Feb. 20th
Week 5: Feb. 24 th -28 th	Assign Project 1 on Tues Feb. 25th Sampling <i>Textbook: Ch. 5</i>
Week 6: Mar. 3 rd -7 th	Quasi-Experimental Design Causation and Experimental Design <i>Textbook: 6; eRes: Babbie</i>
Week 7: Mar. 10 th -14 th	Causation and Experimental Design Quantitative Data Analysis <i>Textbook: Ch. 6 & 8; eRes: Keizer</i>
Week 8: Mar. 17 th -21 st	Quantitative Data Analysis <i>Textbook: Ch. 8</i> Exam 2: Thursday, Mar. 20th
Week 9: Mar. 24 th -28 th	Project 1 Due & Assign Project 2 on Tuesday, Mar. 25th Survey Design Indexes and Scales <i>Textbook: Ch. 7; eRes: Neuman</i>
Week 10: Mar. 31 st -Apr. 4 th	Spring Break: No Class!
Week 11: Apr. 7 th -11 th	Survey Data Analysis <i>Textbook: Ch. 8</i>
Week 12: Apr. 14 th -18 th	Exam 3: Tuesday, Apr. 15th Qualitative Methods <i>Textbook: Ch. 9</i> Project 2 Due and Assign Project 3 on Thursday, Apr. 17th
Week 13: Apr. 21 st -25 th	Qualitative Methods Structured vs. Unstructured (Field trip) <i>Textbook: Ch. 9</i>

Week 14: Apr. 28 th -May 2 nd	Qualitative Data Analysis <i>Textbook: Ch. 10</i>
Week 15: May 5 th - May 9 th	Evaluation Research <i>Textbook: Ch. 11 & eRes: Babbie</i> Project 3 Due on Thursday, May 8th
Finals Week: May 12 th -May 16 th	Final Exam: Monday, May 12th 1:10-3:10