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SOCI 318.01: Sociological Research Methods

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SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH METHODS
SOCI 318
Mon, Wed, Fri 1:00 – 1:50 PM
Liberal Arts 103B
Spring 2018

Instructor: Alexander Castleton-Flores

Office: SS 307

Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00 – 3:00 PM or by appointment.

Email address: alexander.castleton@umontana.edu

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time. Changes will be announced in class and posted on the Moodle page.

Course description

Methods of research in the social sciences including naturalistic observation, interviewing, measurement, experiments, surveys, content analysis, and basic data analysis. Sociology is the 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 study behavior within the social world.

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of the course, you will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the guiding principles and ethics of sociological research, describe and practice common methods of social science research, including observation, interviewing, survey research, content analysis, and experiments, as well as devise and prepare a research question, collect and analyze data, and report results sociologically.

Required reading material

Neuman, W. Lawrence. *The Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 3rd ed. Pearson, 2012. ISBN: 0205762611

You are welcome to use other editions of this textbook with the understanding that the content may vary. Other assigned readings will be available on Moodle.

Workshops/Assignments

Every Friday there will be a workshop where you will have to hand in an in-class assignment at the end of the class. You can exchange ideas with your peers but submissions are individual unless indicated otherwise.

For the first few workshops you will work on a research project proposal that I will make available on Moodle.

If you miss an assignment you must contact me and receive permission via email to turn in a late assignment. Assignments or papers turned in under my office door or via e-mail without prior discussion will not be accepted. Late assignments will be deducted half a point per day (keep in mind that each assignment is worth 2 points).

The assignments amount to 28% of your grade

Academic honesty

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the university. All students must be familiar with the [Student Conduct Code](#). The code is available for review online at

<http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321>. Make sure that your work is your own. Students are encouraged to discuss assignments with classmates to facilitate your learning. However, students must turn in their own separate assignments. Don't get confused by what is acceptable and what is not.

Discussion of ideas is permitted, and encouraged among classmates in and out of the classroom. Students should be careful not to work directly from a classmate's notes, not to copy another's paper and appropriately cite all sources in your writing. Turning in a homework assignment that you did not personally complete is plagiarism. If this is unclear, please ask.

Project Proposals

You will have to submit two research project proposals, quantitative and qualitative. Each will value 16% of your grade. I suggest you think of a topic as early as you can. Late proposals will be deducted 2 points per day (keep in mind that each proposal is worth 16 points).

Final exam

There will be a final exam worth 40% of your grade. Students who arrive late to an exam will not get extra time to complete the exam. Make-up exams are available only under two conditions: 1) you must have a valid excuse (this almost always means a legitimate medical excuse with adequate documentation); or 2) you must receive my permission to miss the exam at least 72 hours prior to the exam. It is your responsibility to provide legitimate written verification of your excuse to me. If I do not receive verification from you, you will not be allowed to take a make-up exam.

Date: May 8, 3:20 – 5:20 PM

Attendance

You are expected to attend class. It will be difficult to do well if you do not attend regularly. I will not provide notes or schedule special meeting times to go over

material that is missed due to a non-university sanctioned absence. You will be responsible for any material you missed; I recommend that you meet with a classmate to discuss topics that you have missed and to exchange notes. You are expected to come to class on time, prepared to learn, and to attend until the end of class. If you need to leave early, please inform me ahead of time and sit near the exit as to minimally disrupt other students.

Classroom etiquette

Please treat each other and each other's ideas respectfully. Keep in mind that the University of Montana forbids discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. If you violate this policy, I will ask you to leave.

Disability modifications

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406-243-2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Email policy

I will check and respond to emails during business hours for one hour daily Monday–Friday, and during my office hours. When I answer questions that students have emailed me during class, I consider the question answered. Do not email me after 10 pm the night before an exam. I will not respond. I encourage students to ask questions in class, attend office hours, or make an appointment if you need assistance.

Grading policy

There will be 14 workshop/assignments (28%), two research project proposals (32%), and a final exam (40%).

Final grades will be determined based on your score out of 100 points.

Your grades will be available on Moodle.

Good engagement and attendance can raise a borderline grade.

A: 90-100

B: 80-89

C: 70-79

D: 60-69

F: 59 or below

Office hours

Please make generous use of the teaching team's office hours. We are here to talk about your difficulties, your successes, your grades, your project proposals and your thoughts. Making use of office hours will be critical to your success. Attending office hours indicates your engagement with the material and gives me a chance to get to know you.

Personal device policy

The use of cell phones in class is a distraction to yourself, your classmates, and your instructor. Please do not use your phones for the time that you are attending class. It is acceptable to use laptops and tablets to assist with note-taking and To refer to the readings, please limit use of these devices to that alone.

Writing assistance

The Writing Center is a resource available to all students to assist with all steps of the writing process. Set up an appointment or learn more at The Writing Center's website.

Class schedule

This schedule is tentative. While due dates are unlikely to change, They may change as we see that we need to spend more or less time on a particular topic. It is your responsibility to keep up with the schedule by attending class regularly, checking the Moodle page and your student email frequently, and doing the readings and assignments. The chapters listed below are from our textbook. Any additional readings will be available on Moodle. The reading listed is what you need to have read PRIOR to the class meeting time.

January

Mon 22 – First day of class; syllabus
 Wed 24 – Ch 1
 Fri 26 – Workshop/Assignment
 Mon 29 – Ch 2
 Wed 31 – Ch 2

February

Fri 2 – Workshop/Assignment
 Mon 5 – Ch 3
 Wed 7 – Ch 3
 Fri 9 – Workshop/Assignment
 Mon 12 – Ch 4
 Wed 14 – Ch 4
 Fri 16 – Workshop/Assignment
 Mon 19 (NO CLASS)
 Wed 21 – Ch 5

Fri 23 – Workshop/Assignment
 Mon 26 – Ch 6
 Wed 28 – Ch 6

March

Fri 2 – Workshop/Assignment
 Mon 5 – Ch 7
 Wed 7 – Ch 7
 Fri 9 – Workshop/Assignment
 Mon 12 – Ch 8
 Wed 14 – Ch 8
 Fri 16 – Workshop/Assignment
 Mon 19 – Ch 9
 Wed 21 – Ch 9
 Fri 23 – Workshop/Assignment
 Mon 26 – Spring break
 Wed 28 – Spring break
 Fri 30 – Spring break

April

Mon 2 – Ch 10
 Wed 4 – Ch 10
 Fri 6 – Workshop/Assignment
 Mon 9 – Ch 11 / **Proposal of quantitative project due**
 Wed 11 – Ch 11
 Fri 13 – Workshop/Assignment
 Mon 16 – Ch 12
 Wed 18 – Ch 12
 Fri 20 – Workshop/Assignment
 Mon 23 – Ch 13
 Wed 25 – Ch 13
 Fri 27 – Workshop/Assignment
 Mon 30 – Ch 14

May

Wed 2 – Workshop/Assignment / **Proposal of qualitative project due**
 Fri 4 – Review

EXAM – May 8, 3:20 – 5:20 PM