Sociology 303: Social Research Methods

Spring 2008

Instructor: Adam T. Perzynski  Schedule: M and W 9:00-10:15 AM
E-mail: atp5@case.edu  Classroom: Mather Memorial 222
Telephone: 216-778-2850  Office: Mather Memorial 222A

Office Hours: After class and by appointment.

Course Description: In this course we will explore the methods that sociologists use to address research questions and issues important to the discipline. We will study and implement the methods and techniques for social research.

Key Objectives:
• Demonstrate a basic knowledge of research methods in sociology.
• Discuss research techniques and be able to analyze and interpret data.
• Design and implement a research project.
• Be able to critically evaluate published research in sociology.
• Effectively communicate research hypotheses, findings and conclusions.


Software: SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is required for the homework assignments. If you do not wish to purchase the software, you are free to use the Sociology Computer Lab in Mather Memorial. The software is available for purchase through the university software center: http://softwarecenter.case.edu

Additional Readings: Additional readings will be distributed in the classroom and made available via the Blackboard website for the class. All additional reading materials are REQUIRED reading. If you are absent, you should check Blackboard.

Grading: 10% 1) Attendance and participation
20% 2) Weekly Assignments and Exercises
20% 3) Midterm
20% 4) Final Exam
30% 5) Final Project
Grading Detail:

1) Attendance and participation. Attendance and participation are mandatory. Students should contact me before class if they expect to be absent. Students with more than three unexcused absences will not receive full credit for attendance or participation.

2) Weekly Assignments and Exercises. Students will be asked to complete weekly assignments. These assignments may involve the use of computers. I encourage you to work together on all assignments and exercises. However, all writing for the weekly assignments should be your own unique work. Assignments will be evaluated based upon the clarity and quality of writing, as well as whether all of the questions were addressed and all the tasks completed.

3) Midterm Exam. The midterm will be administered in class and be based on readings, lectures, assignments and exercises. A brief study guide will be provided.

4) Final Exam. The final exam will be a take home exam. You will be expected to critically evaluate published sociological research and to demonstrate your knowledge of how to conduct sociological research.

5) Final Project. This project constitutes a large portion of your grade. The final project will be a synthesis of your prior work in the class as accomplished through the weekly assignments.

Deadlines: Weekly assignments are always due on Wednesdays. Late assignments will not be accepted. Examinations will not be rescheduled. The final project due date is not flexible. Students who believe that they have a circumstance which constitutes a valid exception should contact the instructor immediately.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to conduct themselves with the utmost integrity both in and out of the classroom. Plagiarism, cheating, and other violations of university policies will not be tolerated.

Course Schedule:
Changes to this schedule and to the syllabus as a whole should be expected. Learning is a dynamic process requiring structure and flexibility.

I. Introduction to Social Research

1. Monday, January 14  
   Introduction and Overview

2. Wednesday, January 16  
   The Science of Social Research

   Read Schutt, Chapter 1

--- January 18 ---

   DEADLINE TO WITHDRAW WITHOUT FINANCIAL PENALTY

3. Monday, January 21  
   MLK DAY NO CLASS
4. Wednesday, January 23  
Research Questions  
*Read Schutt, Chapter 3 pp. 53-57 & pp. 69-79*  
** Assignment 1 Due**

5. Monday, January 28  
Conceptualization and Measurement  
*Read Schutt, Chapter 4, 91-100*

6. Wednesday, January 30  
Theory and Social Research  
*Read Schutt, Chapter 2*  
*Read Stoecker “Are Academics Irrelevant?” (Blackboard)*  
** Assignment 2 Due**

II. Research Design and Measurement

7. Monday, February 4  
Ethics in Research  
*Read ASA Code of Ethics*  
*Visit Case IRB Website (Blackboard)*

8. Wednesday, February 6  
Research Designs  
*Read Schutt, Chapter 7*  
** Assignment 3 Due**

9. Monday, February 11  
Sampling  
*Read Schutt Chapter 5*

10. Wednesday, February 13  
Causation. Measurement Examples.  
*Read Schutt Chapter 6*  
** Assignment 4 Due**
### III. Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 11. Monday, February 18 | Measurement / Crafting a Research Proposal  
Chapter 4 101-128         |
| 12. Wednesday, February 20 | Survey Research I- Writing Questions  
*Read Schutt, Chapter 8, pp. 233-256*  
** Assignment 5 Due**         |
| 13. Monday, February 25 | Survey Research II – Administration of Surveys  
*Read Schutt, Chapter 8, pp. 257-280*         |
| 14. Wednesday, February 27 | Qualitative Data Collection I – Observation and Ethnography  
*Read Schutt, Chapter 9; 287-307*  
*Read The Souls of Black Folk. Forethought and Chapter 4. (Blackboard)*  
** Assignment 6 Due**         |
| 15. Monday, March 3 | Qualitative Data Collection II – Interviewing and Focus Groups  
*Read Schutt, Chapter 9; 309-318* |
| 16. Wednesday, March 5 | MIDTERM EXAM |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>NO CLASS. SPRING BREAK. HAVE FUN!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IV. Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 17. Monday, March 17 | Introduction to Data Analysis  
Planning and Discussion of Projects         |
| 18. Wednesday, March 19 | Analyzing Visual Data  
Reading Assignments on Blackboard  
** Assignment 7 Due**         |
19. Monday, March 24  Qualitative Data Analysis

*Read Schutt, Chapter 10*

20. Wednesday, March 26  Quantitative Analysis: Univariate Description

*Reading assignment TBA (Blackboard)*

** Assignment 8 Due**

March 28  Deadline to withdraw from class

21. Monday, March 31  Class Project Development and Special Topics

22. Wednesday, April 2  Quantitative Analysis: Bivariate Data

*Reading assignment TBA (Blackboard)*

23. Monday, April 7  Quantitative Analysis: Inferential Statistics

*Reading assignment TBA (Blackboard)*

** V. Presenting & Interpreting Results **

24. Wednesday, April 9  Quantitative Analysis: Multivariate Data Analysis

*ROUGH DRAFT OF PROJECTS DUE*

** Assignment 9 Due**

25. Monday, April 14  Preparing Data for Analysis (Class Data)

26. Wednesday, April 16  Data Analysis Examples (Class Data)

** Assignment 10 Due**

27. Monday, April 21  Turning Computer Output into Meaningful Tables

28. Wednesday, April 23  Bringing it all together: Making Interesting Research Conclusions

** Assignment 11 Due**

29. Monday, April 29  Final Projects Due

Wednesday, May 6th  TAKE HOME FINAL DUE