

SOC 318 SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH METHODS

University of Montana
Fall 2009 / MWF 12:10 – 1:00
Liberal Arts Bldg 201

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Course Overview:

How do sociologists learn about society? How does social science help us solve social problems? How can learning about social science methods help you get a job? How does one get from a research question to "findings"? Are some ways better than others? How can we tell? How do you know when someone is "lying with statistics"? How do you know whether or not a researcher is "telling the truth" in a research report?

This course covers the major research techniques which sociologists use to observe and interpret the social world. We will focus on issues of the logic of research and research design and the general procedures for research design. In particular, will we discuss a variety of techniques of gathering data including surveys, experiments and quasi-experiments, field research, and unobtrusive methods like content analysis and historical research. The goal of this course is to help students become more knowledgeable practitioners, consumers, and evaluators of social science data and research.

Required Textbook:

Making Sense of the Social World (3rd Edition). Chambliss and Schutt. Pine Forge Press., 2008

Course Outline:

Class Participation	10%
Test 1	20%
Test 2	20%
Research Paper	30%
Final Presentation	20%
Total	100%

Class Participation:

Participation is determined by your level of preparation for class. You are expected to come to class prepared for class discussion. This means coming with one or two questions or comments you got from the required readings for that day. You may be called upon to ask a question or comment on the assigned readings. Active participation requires engagement through discussion as well as through active listening and note taking. See behavioral expectations for what may result in the deduction of participation points.

Readings

Class lectures will cover only a portion of the material discussed in the required readings. You will also be responsible for the key concepts and terms in the assigned textbook reading. Consider the book a primary resource for the test, so stay on top of the readings! Additional readings may be assigned that

can be access on e-reserves. Reading the article before class will prepare you for discussion should you be called on to respond. To access additional course documents, go to the UM Sociology department website, click on my web page, and look for 318 course documents. Or, type this link in your browser: http://www.umt.edu/sociology/faculty_staff/keogh/

Research Project

This class allows you to the opportunity to conduct your own original research through the content analysis method. The total project is worth 50% of your final grade, so take it seriously but make sure you won't get bored with it. Throughout the semester you will submit a number of assignments that contribute to your overall grade. This includes: (a) research proposal (b) data and methods overview (c) research outline and (d) final paper. The details of this project will be discussed in class at a later date.

Exams

There are two exams and a final in the class (each worth 20% of your final grade). Review guides will be available before each exam. All exams will include identification of key terms and multiple-choice questions based off of in-class lectures and required readings. Your research presentation will be considered your final examination.

Grading:

A+	100%	B+	86-89%	C+	76-79%	D+	66-69%
A	93-99 %	B	83-85%	C	73-75%	D	59-65%
A-	90-92%	B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	F	0-58%

Course Requirements/Expectations:

Attendance

You are responsible for all material covered in class whether or not you choose to attend. I will not distribute my lecture and discussion notes under any circumstances. Therefore, it is strongly suggested that you befriend at least one other student in the class with whom you could exchange notes should you be absent. If you need to miss a scheduled exam or submit a paper late for legitimate reasons, you must contact me before the due date to make alternate arrangements.

Classroom Behavioral Expectations

Punctuality is an attribute necessary in the professional world. Out of respect for everyone in class, **please be on time!** In addition to this, for the common courtesy of others in class, all cell phones must be turned off during class time. This means absolutely no calls OR text messaging during class. Furthermore, please refrain from listening to music, reading non-class related materials, or sleeping during class. Failure to do so will result in your dismissal from class.

Late Work

All work needs to be turned in during class time on the date listed, unless otherwise stated. For each day the assignment is late, the grade will result in a loss of 10%, or full letter grade on that assignment. For example, if you would normally receive a 90% on a paper (A-), your grade will be lowered to a 80% (B-). *Except for emergency situations, this policy remains firm.*

Make-up Exams

Make-up exams are only for those who contact me *before* the time of the exam. Two make-up dates will be arranged by the GAs after the exam. You will be responsible for attending one of these if you wish to receive credit for the exam. Please let me know as soon as possible which dates you will be missing. Note that the make-up exams will be different from the in-class version.

Email Policy

Email is the primary method for contacting me, Yet due to the overwhelming number of students in this class, please email me and/or the TA only when necessary: missing classes, make-up exams, setting up meetings outside of office hours, etc. Email is *not* an appropriate for:

- Submitting assignments. I will not accept any assignments over email.
- General course questions that can be answered by referring to the syllabus.
- Questions about lectures in a class that you missed. Refer to your classmates.

Academic Dishonesty

Each student is expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic and professional matters. The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, against any student who is found guilty of academic dishonesty or who otherwise fails to meet the expected standards. Any student judged to have engaged in academic dishonesty in course work may receive a reduced or failing grade for the work in question and/or for the course.

Course Schedule:

	Date	In-Class	Reading	Assignment
Mon	31-Aug	Course Introduction		
Wed	2-Sep	Introduction to Social Science Research	Chapter 1	
Fri	4-Sep	Social Science Methods: Social capital	Robert Putnam (download online)	
Mon	7-Sep	***LABOR DAY: NO CLASS***		
Wed	9-Sep	Information on Research Projects	Chapter 2	
Fri	11-Sep	Processes & Problems in Social Research		
Mon	14-Sep	Social Science Ethics	Chapter 3	<i>Proposal</i>
Wed	16-Sep	Case Study: "Tearoom Trade"	Humphries (download online)	
Fri	18-Sep	Conceptualization & Operationalization	Chapter 4	
Mon	21-Sep	Measurement		
Wed	23-Sep	Validity and Reliability		
Fri	25-Sep	Sampling	Chapter 5	
Mon	28-Sep	Review		STUDY!!!
Wed	30-Sep	<u>TEST 1</u>		STUDY!!!
Fri	2-Oct	Content Analysis overview & exercise	Mastro and Stern (download online)	
Mon	5-Oct	Causation and Experimental Design	Chapter 6	
Wed	7-Oct	Survey Research	Chapter 7	
Fri	9-Oct	No class: Project Meetings - Feedback		Schedule appt
Mon	12-Oct	Quantitative Research Methods I	Chapter 8	

Wed	14-Oct	Quantitative Research Methods II		
Fri	16-Oct	Quantitative Case Studies: College & SATs	Zwick & Sklar (Download online)	
Mon	19-Oct	Qualitative Research Methods	Chapter 9	
Wed	21-Oct	Ethnography: Avoiding Politics	Eliasoph (Download online)	<i>Data/Methods</i>
Fri	23-Oct	Qualitative Data Analysis I	Chapter 10	
Mon	26-Oct	Qualitative Data Analysis II	Stack&Gundlach (Download online)	
Wed	28-Oct	Causality: Country music exercise	Maguire& Snipes (Download online)	
Fri	30-Oct	Evaluation Research	Chapter 11	
Mon	2-Nov	Case Study: The D.A.R.E Project	DARE Evaluation (download online)	
Wed	4-Nov	Review		STUDY!!
Fri	6-Nov	<u>Test 2</u>		STUDY!!
Mon	9-Nov	Library research		
Wed	11-Nov	***VETERANS DAY: NO CLASS***		
Fri	13-Nov	Reviewing Research	Chapter 12 (part 1)	<i>Annotated Bibliography</i>
Mon	16-Nov	Reporting Research	Chapter 12 (part 2)	
Wed	18-Nov	Project review: Writing up your findings		
Fri	20-Nov	Video: <i>Junk Science</i>		Schedule appt <i>Prelim Research Findings</i>
Mon	23-Nov	No class: Project Meetings - Findings		
Wed	25-Nov	***THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS***		
Fri	27-Nov	***THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS***		
Mon	30-Nov	Research Presentation Overview		5 min project explanation
Wed	2-Dec	Case Study: "From Night to Day"	Hood (download online)	
Fri	4-Dec	Case Study: "Lesbian Motherhood"	Hequembourg & Farrell (download online)	<i>Presentation Outlines</i>
Mon	7-Dec	Student Presentations	Meetings as necessary	
Wed	9-Dec	Student Presentations	Meetings as necessary	
Fri	11-Dec	Student Presentation	Meetings as necessary	<i>Final Papers Due</i>
		FINAL		