III. OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE PURPOSE / DESCRIPTION

Provide an introduction to the subject matter and course content:

Sociology 438 is a variable topics course. The gangs and society course theme (syllabus is attached) is designed to introduce students to contemporary research in the criminological investigation of gangs and the methodological approaches that have been implemented to study them. The course begins with an examination of the operational issues associated with gangs and how it is that these groups are distinct from "cliques" and other peers groups. The course focus then shifts to an examination of the distribution and nature of gangs in America and the characteristics of youths who comprise them. Next, the role of gangs in crime and delinquency with particular attention being paid to the connection between gangs and violence is examined. The final section of the course covers the methodological approaches that have been implemented to study gangs.

IV. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Provide examples of how the course will support students in achieving each learning outcome

- Identify and pursue sophisticated questions for academic inquiry.
  - Yes If yes, how will student learning be supported?

Each student will complete an annotated bibliography on a gangs and society related theme. Topics for the paper must be approved after students have completed an initial literature review. This ensures that there are a sufficient number or research articles available on the topic that they wish to pursue. The paper requires an argument supported by research evidence and theory to support the thesis that the topic selected is important for a sociological understanding of youth street gangs.
☐ No  If no, course may not be eligible

- Find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information effectively and ethically from diverse sources (description of information literacy outcomes appropriate for each class level). Subject liaison librarians are available to assist you embed information literacy into your course:
  ☑ Yes  If yes, how will student learning be supported?

During the first week of class, student participate in a “Using Digital Databases” session organized by the social sciences liaison from the Mansfield Library. Students learn how to find peer reviewed research using digital databases, how to evaluate information suitability for the annotated bibliography, how to save search results, and archive pdf copies of research articles.

☐ No  If no, course may not be eligible

- Manage multiple perspectives as appropriate
  ☑ Yes  If yes, how will student learning be supported?

The assigned readings will provide students with information about the origins, development, and persistence of gangs in American society. Authors of the assigned readings present various, and in some cases opposing viewpoints, on key aspects within the existing literature. In class writing assignments will require students to introduce evidence presented in these readings to substantiate the arguments that they make in their thesis statements.

☐ No  If no, course may not be eligible

- Recognize the purposes and needs of discipline-specific audiences and adopt the academic voice necessary for the chosen discipline
  ☑ Yes  If yes, how will student learning be supported?

Several class meetings times are dedicated to instruction on thinking and writing sociologically. Writing rubrics (see attachments), which are provided to students for all formally evaluated writing assignments, include information about the voice the paper should be written in and the audience to which it should be written for.

☐ No  If no, course may not be eligible

- Use multiple drafts, revision, and editing in conducting inquiry and preparing written work
  ☑ Yes  If yes, how will student learning be supported?

The annotated bibliography is submitted in three parts. The first part (due at the end of week five) and second part (due at the end of week ten) are reviewed and feedback is given for revision/improvement of the draft that was submitted. Students are given written feedback on both of the in-class free writing assignments and are invited to "revise and resubmit" one of these assignments for re-grading.
The final version of the annotated bibliography will include a reference list and in-text citations that adhere to guidelines established by the American Sociological Association (ASA). One class meeting is dedicated to an overview of the rules and writing guidelines contained in the ASA Style Guide.

V. WRITING COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Enrollment is capped at 25 students. □ Yes □ No
  If no, list maximum course enrollment.
  Explain how outcomes will be adequately met for this number of students.

The course cap is 20 students. As a small seminar style class, meetings are organized around discussion and application of information gathered from assigned readings in the course. The small number of students provide for the ability to discuss and critique the information. Each student will have the opportunity to serve as a discussant and note taker for a section of readings.

Justify the request for variance.

- Briefly explain how students are provided with tools and strategies for effective writing and editing in the major.

Student are provided access to the American Sociological Association Style Guide. Parts of three class meetings are dedicated to training on writing sociologically. Parts of two additional sections are dedicated to writing instruction provided by members of the University of Montana Writing Center.

- Which written assignment(s) includes revision in response to instructor’s feedback?

At least one of the two in-class free writing exercises and the two initial drafts of the annotated bibliography include revision opportunities to students in response to instructor feedback on their work.

VI. WRITING ASSIGNMENTS
Please describe course assignments. Students should be required to individually compose at least 20 pages of writing for assessment. At least 50% of the course grade should be based on students’ performance on writing assignments. Quality of content and writing are integral parts of the grade on any writing assignment.

- **Formal Graded Assignments**

  A total of at least 21 pages of writing (2 self introduction paper; 7 discussion questions; 2 free writing; at least 10 annotated bibliography) will be required constituting 73% (275 out of 375) of the total points available in the course.

- **Informal Ungraded Assignments**

  The self introduction paper and discussion questions are informal in the sense that students are not given a specific written rubric outlining the expectations for completion. These assignments, as specified in the syllabus, are graded. The self introduction paper is worth 25 points, and weekly discussion questions are worth five points each.

- Attach a sample writing assignment. Include instructions / handouts provided to students.

VII. WRITING ASSESSMENT

HOW ARE THE LEARNING OUTCOMES ABOVE MEASURED? Describe the measurement(s) used, such as a rubric or specific test questions that directly measure the Advanced Writing learning goals. Please attach or provide a web link to the rubric, test questions, or other qualitative measurements used for several of the learning outcomes.

The connection between class content and organization have been articulated above. The rubrics used to measure the advanced writing goals are included as attachments with this form.
VIII. SYLLABUS

Attach syllabus and send digital copy with form to faculty.senate@msu.umt.edu. The syllabus must include the list of Writing Course learning outcomes:

- Identify and pursue more sophisticated questions for academic inquiry
- Find, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize information effectively from diverse sources
- Manage multiple perspectives as appropriate
- Recognize the purposes and needs of discipline-specific audiences and adopt the academic voice necessary for the chosen discipline
- Use multiple drafts, revision, and editing in conducting inquiry and preparing written work
- Follow the conventions of citation, documentation, and formal presentation appropriate to that discipline
- Develop competence in information technology and digital literacy

SUBMISSION

After all signatures have been obtained, submit original, and an electronic file to the Faculty Senate Office, UH 221. An electronic copy of the original signed form is acceptable.