

Sociology 317 • Research Methods in Sociology

Spring 2016

Course Time/Days: 11:10-12:00, MWF

Course Location: CUE 114

Instructor: Dr. Emily Huddart Kennedy  
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**Introduction:**

This course is designed to provide you with a basic understanding of social science research. We will focus on issues such as the logic of research design, conceptualization and measurement, data collection methods available to social scientists, and what social scientists do with data once they have collected it. Because this course is an “M” course (Writing in the Major Course) I place emphasis on social science writing and the revision of writing.

Expected Learning Outcomes	Method of Evaluation
<u>Think critically</u> about social science research, including how to identify research questions.	Two exams, final project, workshops
<u>Evaluate</u> and use social science information, including how to critically evaluate the content of social science research.	Final project
<u>Communicate</u> in writing and speech the relevance of research findings.	Essay questions on exams, final project, oral presentation of final project
<u>Apply academic concepts</u> through community work and networks	Final project

**Required Course Materials:**

Dixon, J.C., R.A. Singleton, and B.C. Straits. 2016. *The Process of Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

\*There will periodically be additional course materials on the course Blackboard site. It is your responsibility to check the class site and syllabus before class in the event that there are changes made to this version.

**Course Requirements:** (Total course points: 475)

**Examinations** (100 points or 21% of course grade)

- Two in-class exams (50 points each). Exams will be true/false, multiple choice, short-answer, and essay and will cover course readings and lecture material. I only give make-up exams in **emergency situations** (athletics, family emergency, illness). Make-up exams will be administered at 8:00 am on Thursdays by sociology graduate students in Wilson-Short 204. They may or may not be all essay format.

**Quizzes** (100 points or 21% of course grade)

- There will be 10 quizzes in this course. Each week that readings are assigned, students will have a quiz on the Friday of that week. Quizzes will be multiple choice and are aimed at clarifying for you what the most important points from that week's reading were.

**Writing Assignments** (175 points or 37% of course grade)

- Students will complete a group project in partnership with the Moscow Food Co-op. Throughout the semester, students will complete four components of this project, the fifth being a final report that combines all components. Groups will present their work to the class and a representative from the Food Co-op in the final week of the semester.

Late assignments will be docked 5 points for **each day** late. Do **NOT** turn in assignments or papers under my office door or via e-mail, unless given approval in advance.

**Course Participation** (100 points or 21% of course grade)

- I have designed the course to be interactive, with the idea that students learn best by doing. For that reason, the course will consist of many hands-on interactive activities about the course topics, in-class group project workdays, and in-class methods workshops.

*Workshops* (80 points or 17% of course grade). To encourage participation, the course consists of eight graded in-class methods "workshops." The workshops are a graded hands-on application of the week's lecture material and are worth up to 10 points each. To earn full credit for workshop participation, a student must be present **for the entire workshop and complete the in-class activity for that day**. Participation in the workshop will serve as an excellent preparation tool for exams. Points for these in-class workshops **cannot** be made up. **I will not accept a written workshop activity prior to or after a workshop occurs in class.**

Grading for the workshop sessions are as follows:

- Does not attend/attends and does not participate in activity (0)
- Tardy for part of the workshop and cannot fully participate as a result of tardiness (3)
- Present for entire workshop and completes activity but write-up is not clearly explained/complete (6)
- Present for entire workshop and both thoroughly and accurately completes activity (10)

*General course participation* (20 points or 4% of course grade). A student can earn points for attendance, attentiveness in class, involvement in class discussions, and attending the in-class group project days. During in-class group project days, the TA and professor will be present to answer questions and, on occasion, lecture about materials/questions that arise. It is also possible that during these in-class group project days, I will make important announcements about course material and projects.

Letter grade distribution by point scale (out of 475):

A	447-475	C	352-365
A-	428-446	C-	328-351
B+	413-427	D+	318-327
B	399-412	D	285-317
B-	380-398	F	0-284

**Attendance:** Attendance is not required, but highly recommended. If you must miss class, ask a classmate for notes, **not the professor or TA**. If you miss class, be sure to check the course website for updates to the syllabus. **To ensure accurate grade entry, all formal documentation of missed class(es) due to a university approved reason (e.g., attendance at a sporting event, military training), must be filed with the professor by April 1, 2015.**

**Incomplete Grades:** Incomplete grades will only be given in emergency situations.

**Classroom Decorum:** I expect students to maintain a high level of professionalism and personal conduct. This means you should treat me, the TA, and other students with respect: please do not talk with classmates during class, arrive on time, do not leave early, do not send/receive phone calls or text messages during class, or otherwise distract me or your classmates. In turn, I will help create a positive, friendly environment for discussion.

**Academic Integrity:** If you violate standards of conduct set forth by the university, I will assign you an "F" for the course (a sanction allowed by WAC 504-26-405). I will report all instances of violations of academic integrity, no matter how minor, to the Office of Student Standards and Accountability. Violations of standards of conduct include, but are not limited to: use of unauthorized materials in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations, or giving or receiving unauthorized assistance by any means, including talking, copying information from another student, using electronic devices, or taking an examination for another student.; use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; acquisition or possession of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the university faculty when acquired without their permission; unauthorized collaboration on assignments; intentionally obtaining unauthorized knowledge of examination materials; unauthorized multiple submission of the same work; Fabrication, which includes, but is not limited to: Submitting a false excuse for absence or tardiness or a false explanation for failing to complete a class requirement or scheduled examination at the appointed date and time, engaging in any behavior for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion, and Plagiarism which refers to presenting the information, ideas, or phrasing of another person as the student's own work without proper acknowledgment of the source. This includes submitting a commercially prepared paper or research project or submitting for academic credit any work done by someone else. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials (see WAC 504-26-010 for additional violations, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=504-26-010>).

**Reasonable Accommodation:** I am committed to providing assistance to help students living with disabilities succeed in this course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations must be approved through the Access Center.

**Classroom Safety:** WSU is committed to maintaining a safe environment of its faculty, staff, and students. The university has developed the Campus Safety Plan to ensure this safety (<http://safetyplan.wsu.edu>). It contains a listing of university policies, procedures, statistics, and information relating to campus safety, emergency management, and the health and welfare of the campus community. The WSU emergency management website (<http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies>) provides additional campus safety information. All students are requested to bookmark on their computers and become familiar with the WSU ALERT system (<http://alert.wsu.edu>) to read about warning and emergency notifications. All students are requested to register their emergency contact information for the Crisis Communication System (CCS). If you need help evaluating your area in terms of safety and emergency management or have any recommendations go here: <http://oem.wsu.edu>.

**Service Learning:** In this course, you will be applying your knowledge of how to develop a research question and answer it with a survey and rudimentary data analysis. In this work, we will be partnering with the Moscow Food Co-op and the Center for Civic Engagement to identify the goals of the survey and to share the results of your projects.

**Course Schedule** (Subject to change)

	<b>Topic/Activity/Assignment Due</b>	<b>Related Reading</b>
1	M, 01/11: Receive syllabus *Order textbook W, 01/13: The Research Process F, 01/15: Quiz, getting in groups	Syllabus, pp.7-11 in class Chapter 1, p.1-7 + 12
2	M, 01/18: NO CLASS W, 01/20: Guest lecture: Misty Amarena, Moscow Food Co-op F, 01/22: Research ethics and group work ( <b>Getting to Know You</b> )	Ch. 3, p. 39-46
3	M, 01/25: Workshop 1: Ethics & Social Media in Research W, 01/27: From theory to data and back F, 01/29: Social research + quiz ( <b>Prepare team policy document</b> )	Ch.2, p. 15-25 Ch. 4, p.73-87
4	M, 02/01: Workshop 2: Reviewing literature, research question W, 02/03: In-class group project work day F, 02/05: Conceptualization & Measurement + quiz	Ch. 5, p.103-110
5	M, 02/08: Levels of measurement, <b>Component 1 due</b> W, 02/10: In-class activity, 0.5% extra credit F, 02/12: Workshop 3: Concept Identification & Measurement	Ch. 5, p. 116-122
6	M, 02/15: NO CLASS W, 02/17: Reliability and Validity F, 02/19: In-class work day + quiz	Ch. 5, p. 122-131
7	M, 02/22: Workshop 4: Reliability, <b>C-2 due + group progress eval</b> W, 02/24: Exam review F, 02/26: <b>Midterm exam</b>	
8	M, 02/29: Causality W, 03/02: Sampling F, 03/04: Workshop 5: Sampling + quiz	Ch. 4, p.88-93 Ch. 6
9	M, 03/07: Surveys #1 W, 03/09: Surveys #2	Ch. 8, p. 204-211 Ch. 8, p. 223-238

	F, 03/11: In-class group project work day + quiz	
10	M,W,F: (03/14 – 03/18): NO CLASS, Spring Vacation, <b>*Survey is sent out</b>	
11	M, 03/21: Workshop 6: Survey design, <b>Component 3 due</b> W, 03/23: Experiments F, 03/25: Workshop 7: Experimental design + quiz	Ch. 7
12	M, 03/28: Qualitative methods #1 W, 03/30: Qualitative methods #2 F, 04/01: Workshop 8: Qualitative data analysis with <i>Little Miss Sunshine</i> + quiz	Ch. 9, p. 243-249 Ch. 9, p. 249-263; 281-285
13	M, 04/04: Data analysis #1 W, 04/06: Data analysis #2 F, 04/08: In-class project work day + quiz	Ch. 12, p. 352-368 Ch. 12, p. 369-380
14	M, 04/11: In-class group project work day, <u>bring laptop with Excel</u> W, 04/13: Exam review F, 04/15: <b>Final exam</b>	
15	M, 04/18: Writing in sociology, <b>Component 4 due</b> W, 04/20: Writing results F, 04/22: In-class group project work day + quiz	Ch. 14, p. 429-433 + 442 Ch. 14, p. 435-445
16	MW, 04/25 and 04/27: Group project presentations F, 04/29: Wrap-up, <b>Component 5 due</b>	