

Sociology 317 • Introduction to Research Methods in Sociology

Fall 2016

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

Course Location: CUE 209

Instructor: Dr. Julie Kmec
 Office: Wilson-Short 217
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TA:
 Office:
 Office hours:
 Email:

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.	Three 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 1-3, final project, oral presentation of 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 (BB) 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.

We will be using the Top Hat (www.tophat.com) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or via text. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/THStudentRegistration> for the student quick start guide which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account and a brief overview of the system. An email invitation will also be sent to your email account.

Top Hat will require a subscription and can be used in other classes with the system. There are three options to choose from: \$24 for 4 months of unlimited access, \$36 for 12 months of unlimited access, or \$72 for lifetime access.

Course Requirements: (Total course points: 477)

Examinations (150 points or 31% of course grade)

- Two in-class exams (75 points each). Exams will be multiple choice and essay and will cover course readings and lecture material. I only give make-up exams in **emergency situations**. Make-up exams will be administered at 8:00 am on Thursdays by sociology graduate students in Wilson-Short 204. The make-up exam may all essay in format.

Writing Assignments (237 points or 50% of course grade)

Students will complete a group project (details provided below). Throughout the semester, students will complete five components of this project, the sixth being a final report that combines all components. Groups will present their work in the final week(s) of the semester.

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

Course Participation

I have designed the course to be interactive, with the idea that students learn best by doing. For that reason, the course will generally consist of hands-on interactive activities about the course topics, in-class group project work days, 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 10 points each. To earn full credit for workshop participation, a student must be present **for the entire workshop and complete the 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 (10 points or 2% 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.

Attendance: I will take attendance daily (sometimes using tophat). While attendance is not required, it is highly recommended. If you must miss class, ask a classmate for notes, not the professor or TA. **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 November 20.**

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

Grading Scale:*

Letter Grade	Percentage	*A grade represents my best professional evaluation of a piece of work. It neither is, nor can be, a judgment about the person who submitted the work.
A	94-100%	
A-	90-93%	
B+	87-89%	
B	84-86%	
B-	80-83%	
C+	77-79%	

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 meaning 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. Computers are not allowed in class except on days when access to the internet is required for workshop activities. The exception to this rule is for students who must use a computer because of a documented disability (please present this documentation in the first week of class).

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 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 living with a disability. If you need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please schedule an appointment at the Access Center (Washington Building 217, 335-3417). All accommodations must be approved through this center.

Classroom Safety: WSU is committed to maintaining a safe environment. 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 become familiar with the WSU ALERT system (<http://alert.wsu.edu>) and 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>.

Course Schedule (Subject to change)

	Topic/Activity/Assignment Due	Related Reading
1	M, 8/22: Introduction W, 8/24: Introduction, continued F, 8/26: Group project instructions, Manipulated Operations, Survey-based experiments, & Process of Social Research I	Syllabus, Correll et al. (BB), Chapter 1, Chapter 5 (p. 110-111 <i>manipulated vs measured operations</i>), Chapter 7 (p. 183-185)
2	M, 8/29: Process of Social Research II W, 8/31: Research Design I F, 9/2: Research Design II	Chapter 2 (8/29) Chapter 4 (8/31, 9/2). Skip p. 86-92
3	M, 9/5: NO CLASS-Labor Day W, 9/7: Research ethics F, 9/9: Workshop 1: Ethics in Research, Component 1 due (in class)	Chapter 3
4	M, 9/12: Conceptualization, Operationalization, & Measurement W, 9/14: In-class activity: Concept Measurement F, 9/16: Workshop 2: Concept Identification & Measurement	Chapter 5, p.103-121
5	M, 9/19: Validity & Reliability W, 9/21: In-class group project work day	Chapter 5, p. 122 to end

	F, 9/23: Workshop 3: Measurement Validity, Component 2 due (in class)	
6	M, 9/26: Exam review W, 9/28: EXAM 1 F, 9/30: Probability Sampling	Chapter 6, p. 137-42, 148-60 (skip p. 156-58)
7	M, 10/3: Non-probability Sampling W, 10/5: Hand back exams F, 10/7: Workshop 4: Defining Populations & Sampling	Chapter 6, p. 161-end
8	M, 10/10: Causality & Experimental Design I W, 10/12: Causality & Experimental Design II F, 10/14: Workshop 5: Experimental Design	Chapter 7
9	M, 10/17: Surveys I W, 10/19: Surveys II & in-class activity: cognitive interviews F, 10/21: In-class group project work day	Chapter 8
10	M, 10/24: Workshop 6: Survey Design, Component 3 due (in class) W, 10/26: Qualitative Methods I F, 10/28: Qualitative Methods II	Chapter 9, p. 242-252, 257-end (10/26-10/28)
11	M, 10/31: Workshop 7: Qualitative Methods W, 11/2: Existing Data Analysis & Content Analysis F, 11/4: In-class group project work day	Chapter 10. p. 288-312, 322-end
12	M, 11/7: Workshop 8: Content Analysis, Component 4 due (in class) W, 11/9: Data Analysis I F, 11/11: NO CLASS-Veteran's Day	Chapter 12, p. 352-368
13	M, 11/14: Data Analysis II W, 11/16: Reporting & Writing Results F, 11/18: In-class group project work day	Chapter 14
	NO CLASS (11/21-25): Thanksgiving Break	
14	M, 11/28: Exam review W, 11/30: EXAM 2, Component 5 due F, 12/2: Wrap-up, Group presentations	
15	M, 12/5: Hand back exams, Group presentations W, 12/7: Group presentations F, 12/9: Group presentations, Final paper due (in class)	