
SOC 312

Elements of Sociological Research

Spring 2016
Wham 0302
M/W 12:15-1:55

Instructor: Dr. Barber
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Course Description

This course is designed to introduce you to the tools and methods of sociological research. Social research is used to better understand the world in which we live, including a multitude of topics from the effects of media on adolescents and the relationship between voting and income to experiences with disaster or drug usage. In this class, you will become familiar with *how* such research is conducted. In particular, you will learn: 1) the basic principles underpinning social science research; 2) the connection between research questions, methods, and theories; 3) what it takes to do good research; and 4) how to be a rigorous consumer and critic of research results reported in the media.

Course Format

To accomplish the above goals, you will be expected to *actively* engage with the concepts presented throughout this course. Our usual weeks will consist of one day of lecture and another day of in-class exercises. Lectures will take place on Mondays and cover the reading for that week. They will run as *interactive* lectures, which means that I will do some lecturing but everyone is expected to participate by asking questions, making comments, and providing examples to clarify concepts. So, make sure you come to class having done the reading. In-class exercises will take place on Wednesdays, and will be lead by the Graduate Assistant. Exercises will vary but always engage with the concepts presented in Monday's readings/lectures, and they will be graded. Come to class ready to work with your fellow classmates to discuss, practice, and apply the principles of sociological research.

Graduate Assistant

Name: Leah Williams
E-Mail: leah.nicole07@siu.edu
Office Hours: T/Th 9-12 or by apt.

Materials

Below is the textbook required for this class. Other readings will be available via Desire 2 Learn:

- Making Sense of the Social World, 4th edition. By Daniel F. Chambliss and Russel K. Schutt. 2012. Sage Publishers. (Bundle: text + e-book).
- Student Study Site: sagepub.com/chambliss4e

Milestones

Wednesday, February 17
Exam #1

March 14 & 16
Spring Break

Wednesday, March 30
Exam #2

Wednesday, May 4
Exam #3

Course Requirements and Grades

Your grade will be based on the quality of your performance with respect to the below responsibilities and assignments.

Attendance and Participation:

You are expected to attend class regularly and to arrive on time. I will send a sign-in sheet around at the *beginning* of each class. If you are more than 5 minutes late, you will not be able to sign in for the day. Because the class will run as an interactive lecture with numerous in-class exercises, everyone is expected to participate. This will make for a more dynamic learning environment where you can talk through your thoughts on and ask questions about the material. The best way to participate is to keep up with readings and to attend class regularly.

10% of grade

In-Class Exercises:

There will be weekly in-class exercises in order to encourage engagement with—and thus a better grasp of—the concepts covered in this course. These exercises include discussions, group work, and field exercises, and will take place on Wednesdays. You are expected to participate in these exercises and will be graded on the *quality* of your participation, as well as any work I collect from you and your group.

Exceptions for Wednesday exercises include guest lectures, videos, and exam weeks, which will have Monday in-class review sessions.

30% of grade

In-Class Exams (3):

There will be three in-class exams. Each will cover in-class *and* textbook material leading up to the exam, but will not be cumulative. For example, Exam #1 will cover weeks 1-4 while Exam #2 will cover weeks 6-10. All exams will consist of true/false, multiple choice, matching, and short answer questions. Each exam is worth 20% of your grade and must be taken on the day/time they are scheduled. Only if there is an emergency can an exam be rescheduled.

Review sessions will be held on the Monday before each exam, and *will count as part of your in-class exercise grade*. Also see, Student Study Site: <http://www.sagepub.com/chambliss4e>.

3 exams x 20% each = 60% of grade

Policies and Other Information

Make Up and Late Work:

I do not accept late work.

Please note that in-class exercises cannot be made up. You must be in class that day and participate in order to receive credit. Also, exams must be taken on the day/time they are scheduled and will only be rescheduled in case of an emergency. In this situation, you should see the instructor immediately (preferably before the exam date) and in person to reschedule the exam.

Academic Honesty:

I expect every student to do his or her own work. Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated, and students who are caught cheating will be sanctioned according to SIUC's policies on academic dishonesty. This will result in an F in the class and possibly expulsion from the university.

Students with Disabilities:

Special accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. Please contact me within the first two weeks of class and in person to discuss accommodations. See SIUC's Disability Support Service website for more information including guidelines and forms: <http://disabilityservices.siu.edu/>.

Emergency Procedures:

SIUC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus and is available on the BERT website <http://www.bert.siu.edu/>, Department of Public Safety's website <http://www.dps.siu.edu/>, and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each emergency.

Contacting Me and the Graduate Assistant:

E-mail is the best way to reach the Graduate Assistant and me. Feel free to email any questions you may have regarding assignments or lectures. We will do our best to respond to emails promptly, but keep in mind that we may not receive your email until the next business day. Place "SOC 312" somewhere in the subject heading. Also, some

questions are best answered in person, and in this case you may visit us during office hours—no appointment required. We will not discuss individual grades in email or before/after class, these types of discussions must be handled in person during office hours.

Please remember that the GA is a great resource for this class, so take advantage of her availability. She is your go-to person for most questions and concerns. If there is a question or issue you cannot resolve with the GA, she will refer you to me.

Cellphones and Other Pet Peeves:

Make sure your CELLPHONE IS TURNED OFF! Not low, not vibrate, but off. This is a matter of common courtesy and one that I am not flexible on.

NO BROWSING THE INTERNET. I understand some people prefer to take notes on their computers or iPads, and this is perfectly fine. However, wait until class is over to check your email, browse Facebook, or surf the Internet. I will notice if you are online!

COME ON TIME. Coming to class late or leaving early is disruptive to the instructor and to your fellow students. If you do need to leave early, make sure to let your instructor and GA know ahead of time.

CHECK THE SYLLABUS before emailing your instructor or GA. Most questions are answered in the syllabus!!!

Now is the time to practice PROFESSIONAL EMAIL ETIQUETTE. Formally address and sign your emails, and check for spelling, punctuation, and tone. Do not use abbreviations or all caps. You want to practice projecting a professional image that is useful in college and the work place.

Understand that YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR GRADE. I do not give grades, you earn them. Make sure you take advantage of all points available for this class. I will not respond to end of the semester requests to make-up work you did not do during the course.

Course Schedule

Week 1:

January 20: **Introduction to Course & Chapter 1: Science, Society, and Social Research**

Week 2:

January 25: **Chapter 2: The Process and Problems of Social Research**

January 27: *Class Exercise: Reviewing a Research Article*—Gruys, Kjerstin. “Does This Make Me Look Fat?”

Week 3:

February 1: **Chapter 3: Ethics in Research**

February 3: **Humphreys, Laud. "Tearoom Trade."** (Chapter available on D2L) – *Class Exercise: Rethinking Laud Humphrey's Tearoom Trade*

Week 4:

February 8: **Chapter 4: Conceptualization and Measurement**

February 10: *Class Exercise: Narcissistic Youth?: Using Composite Measures to Understand Entitlement*

Week 5:

February 15: *Class Exercise: Review Session*

February 17: **EXAM #1**

Week 6:

February 22: **Chapter 5: Sampling**

February 24: *Class Exercise: Newspaper Advertisement Sampling*

Week 7:

February 29: **Chapter 6: Causation and Experimental Design**

March 2: *Graduate Assistant Lecture / Exercise*

Week 8:

March 7: **Chapter 7: Survey Research**

March 9: *Class Exercise: Online Social Psychology Survey* (Meet in computer lab, TBA)
www.socialpsychology.org/expts.htm

Week 9:

March 14: **SPRING BREAK**

March 16: **SPRING BREAK**

Week 10:

March 21: **Chapter 8: Elementary Quantitative Data Analysis**

March 23: *Class Exercise: Quantitative Methods Worksheet*

Week 11:

March 28: *Class Exercise: Review Session*

March 30: **EXAM #2**

Week 12:

April 4: **Chapter 9: Qualitative Methods: Observing, Participating, Listening**

April 6: *Video / Worksheet: "Method: Sidewalk and Ethnography," with Mitchell Duneier*

Week 13:

April 11: **Chapter 10: Qualitative Data Analysis**

April 13: *Class Exercise: Ethnographic Observations on Campus*

Week 14:

April 18: **Chapter 11: Evaluation Research**

April 20: *Class Exercise: Program Evaluation Design* (Meet in computer lab, TBA)

Week 15:

April 25: **Chapter 12: Reviewing, Proposing, and Reporting Research (Video: Super Size Me)**

April 27: *Class Exercise: Don't Eat the Fries: Using a Documentary on McDonalds to Enhance Scientific Literacy*

Week 16:

May 2: *Class Exercise: Review Session*

May 4: **EXAM #3**

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!