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SOCI 318.01: Sociological Research Methods

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Sociological Research Methods

SOCI 318: Fall 2018

Social Science Building Room 352

Wednesday 6 p.m.-8:50 p.m.

Teaching team information

Instructor: Amanda Taylor

Office: Social Sciences 307

amanda.taylor@umontana.edu

Office hours: Wednesday 5 p.m.-6 p.m. and by appointment

Preceptor: Phallon Arthun

Office: Social Sciences 332

phallon.arthun@umconnect.umt.edu

Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 2p.m.-3p.m.

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time. Changes will be announced in class and posted on the Moodle page.

“When you accept the authority of experts, but do not know how they arrived at their knowledge, the ability to evaluate what the experts saw is lost as is control of your destiny.”
Nueman

Course description

Methods of research in the social sciences including naturalistic observation, interviewing, measurement, experiments, surveys, content analysis, and basic data analysis.

Sociology is the objective study of society, paying close attention to how people organize and structure themselves into groups. In turn, sociologists reconsider assumptions about society and question that which is obvious to better understand human behavior and the construction of the social norms. This course takes a hands-on approach to empirically investigating behavior within our social world.

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of the course, you will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the guiding principles and ethics of sociological research, describe and practice common methods of social science research, including observation, interviewing, survey research, content analysis, and experiments, as well as devise and prepare a research question, collect and analyze data, and report results sociologically.

Required readings

Neuman, W. Lawrence. *The Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 3rd ed. Pearson, 2012. ISBN: 0205762611

You are welcome to use other editions of this textbook with the understanding that the content may vary. Other readings will be available on Moodle.

Quizzes

There will be seven unannounced reading exams in this course. Only five will count towards your grade, allowing you to drop two quizzes due to low scores or absences from class. They will be worth five points each, contributing 25 total points toward your final grade. Make up quizzes are not available. If you miss a quiz, it will be one of your two drops.

Workshops

There will be in-class workshops throughout the semester. Most will be listed on the syllabus but I reserve the right to add impromptu workshops during the semester. There will be no more than 15 total workshops. Workshops are worth 15 points each, with the exception of the research instrument workshop, which is worth 20 points. Half of the points for the Peer Review workshops are based on the feedback you give your peers. Feedback must be relative to course materials and not only grammar and spelling corrections. Partial credit make up workshops may be available on a case by case basis.

Assignments

Assignments must be uploaded to Moodle 15 minutes before the beginning of class. There will be a few exceptions noted on the schedule where you will be required to bring a hard copy to class. Feedback and grades will be provided electronically through the Moodle page. Writing assignments should be polished when you turn them in. Take the time to proofread your assignment for typos and clarity before turning them in.

Late assignments will be docked points. You must talk to me if you wish to turn in assignment late. Do not turn in assignments or papers under my office door or via e-mail without prior discussion. If you miss an assignment deadline you must contact me and receive permission via email to turn in a late assignment. The value of assignments varies (see the course schedule) and the total points available for assignments are 240 points.

In-Class Assignments

There will be regular in-class assignments. These will be worth 5 points each. If you are not in class, you will not be able to make-up these assignments. In the rare case that an extenuating circumstance prevented you from coming to class, making up in-class assignments may be possible. This will be determined on a case by case basis.

Exams

The exams in this course will be pyramid exams, in which you take the same exam twice. The first time, you will answer the questions by yourself, without using books or notes. After the first answer sheet is handed in, you will answer the same questions on the second sheet, this time consulting in small groups with your classmates, and your books and notes. The exam is weighted with the solo exam worth 75% and the group exam worth 25%. Exam 1 will take place over the first 50 minutes of class and the group exam will take place during the second half of class. A 15 minute break is allowed in between exams.

Students are not permitted cell phones, tablets, smart watches, and other electronic devices during exams. Any student found in violation of these mandates will receive a zero on the exam and will be required to meet with me to discuss if they are eligible to continue on with the course.

Students who arrive late to an exam will not get extra time to complete the exam. Make-up exams are available only under two conditions: 1) you must have a valid excuse (this almost always means a legitimate medical excuse with adequate documentation); or 2) you must receive my permission to miss the exam at least 72 hours prior to the exam. It is your responsibility to provide legitimate written verification of your excuse to me. If I do not receive verification from you, you will not be allowed to take a make-up exam.

There will be two exams in this class, a midterm and a final exam. Each is worth 100 points. 200 points of your final grade will be from these two exams.

The final exam will be on: 12/12/18 *7:40p.m.-9:40p.m.*

Extra Credit

Students can earn a total of 6 extra credit points throughout the semester through the following options:

“Weekly Why” Participation

Most classes will include a short discussion on a pressing social topic. Students may earn extra credit for submitting an idea and discussing it in class. The process is as follows:

1. Ideas must be sent to me at least 72 hours before class. Students will receive 1 extra credit point for submitting an appropriate idea.
2. I will select an idea and notify the student within 48 hours of class.
3. One more extra credit point will be rewarded to a student if their topic is chosen and discussed in class.

Verbal Participation

Students will earn extra credit points:

- * By asking insightful questions about the course material.
- * By making thoughtful contributions to the class discussions.

Students will not earn extra credit points:

- * For asking questions that indicate that they are not paying attention.
- * For repeating points that their fellow students have already made.
- * If they attend class infrequently or erratically.
- * If they routinely arrive late to class or leave class early.

The teaching team will track verbal participation throughout the semester and will post any extra credit points that students earn for verbal participation to the Moodle gradebook during finals week.

Course guidelines and policies

Academic honesty

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code, which is available for review online.

Make sure that your work is your own. Students are encouraged to discuss assignments with classmates to facilitate your learning. However, students must turn in their own separate homework. Don't get confused by what is acceptable and what is not. In this class, discussion of ideas and research methodology is permitted, and encouraged among classmates. Students should be careful not to work directly from a classmate's notes, not to copy another's paper or solo exam, and not to let others view their solo exam. Turning in a homework assignment that you did not personally complete is plagiarism. If this is unclear, please ask.

Attendance

You are expected to attend class. It will be difficult to do well if you do not attend regularly. I will not provide notes or schedule special meeting times to go over material that is missed due to a non-university sanctioned absence. You will be responsible for any material you missed; I recommend that you meet with a classmate to discuss topics that you have missed and to exchange notes.

You are expected to come to class on time, prepared to learn, and to attend until the end of class. If you need to leave early, please inform me ahead of time and sit near the exit as to minimally disrupt other students.

Classroom etiquette

Please treat each other and each other's ideas respectfully. Keep in mind that the University of Montana forbids discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. If you violate this policy I will ask you to leave.

Given the length and hours of this class, students are allowed and encouraged to bring food to class. The only requirement is that food not become a distraction. If food becomes a distraction to you or someone around you, please discuss this with me. If I notice that it is distracting, I will discuss it with you in private.

Disability modifications

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406-243-2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Email policy

I will check and respond to emails during business hours for one hour daily Monday-Friday. When I answer questions that students have emailed me during class, I consider the question answered. Do not email me after 10 pm the night before an exam. I will not respond. I encourage students to ask questions in class, schedule office hours, and/or meet with the preceptor.

Grading policy

There will be two exams, five quizzes, up to 15 workshops, and six homework assignments that will comprise the total points for the semester (See the schedule at the end of the syllabus). Final grades will be determined based on your average score out of the total points possible. At any point, you can calculate your grade by adding the number of points to date, dividing by the total number of points possible to date, and obtaining your percentage grade to date. Your grades will be available on Moodle.

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

D: 60-69%

F: 59% or below

Name and pronouns

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you go by a different name than what is on the class roster, let me know. I will respect your name and your pronouns.

Writing Assistance

The Writing Center is a resource available to all students to assist with all steps of the writing process. Set up an appointment or learn more at The Writing Center's website.

Class schedule

This schedule is tentative. While due dates are unlikely to change, content may change as we see that we need to spend more or less time on a particular topic. I will do my best to ensure that exam dates do not change, but the material covered on the exams may change. It is your responsibility to keep up with the schedule by attending class regularly, checking the Moodle page and your student email frequently, and doing the readings and assignments. The chapters listed below are from our textbook. Any additional readings will be available on Moodle. The reading listed is what you need to have read PRIOR to the class meeting time.

Date	Contents
8/29/18	Syllabus Chapter 1 Doing Social Research
9/5/18	Chapter 2 Theory and Social Research Chapter 3 Ethics in Social Research
9/12/18	Chapter 3 Ethics in Social Research Human Subject Assignment due (15) Ethics WS Chapter 4 Literature Reviews
9/19/18	Chapter 4 Literature Reviews

	Reading Sociology due (25) Literature Review-Peer Review WS Chapter 5 Measurement
9/26/18	Chapter 5 Measurement Finalize Research Topic Peer Review WS
10/3/18	Guest Speaker Jonathan Dorman-Quantitative Research Chapter 6 Sampling Sampling WS Chapter 7 Surveys
10/10/18	Exam on Chapters 1-6 (solo then group)
10/17/18	Chapter 7 Surveys Survey WS Chapter 8 Experiments Quantitative Project Proposal due (50) Peer Review WS
10/24/18	Chapter 9 Unobtrusive Research Content Analysis WS
10/31/18	Chapter 10 Quantitative Data Analysis Chapter 11 Field Research and Focus Groups
11/7/18	Chapter 11 Field Research and Focus Groups Guest Speakers-Daisy Rooks, Rachel Just and Larissa Fitzpatrick Field Research WS
11/14/18	Qualitative Project Proposal due (50) Peer Review WS Chapter 12 Historical Comparative Chapter 12 (Babbie) Evaluation Research
11/21/18	NO CLASS
11/28/18	Chapter 13 Qualitative Data Analysis Bring 3 copies of your research instrument to class Peer Review research instrument WS
12/5/18	Chapter 14 Writing a Research Report Peer Review of Final Assignment
12/12/18 *7:40p.m.- 9:40p.m.*	Final exam on chapters 7-14 Final Assignment Due (75)