
SOC 312

Elements of Sociological Research

Fall 2013
ASA 0118C
T/TH 9-10:40

Instructor: Dr. Barber
E-Mail: barber@siu.edu
Phone: x7633
Office: Faner 3436
Office Hours: T 11-5

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 effects of media on adolescents and the relationship between voting and income to experiences with disaster and drug usage. In this class, you will become familiar with *how* such research is conducted. In particular, you will learn: 1) the basic principles underlying social sciences research; 2) the connection between research question, methods, and theory; 3) what it takes to do good research; and 4) how to be a rigorous consumer and critic of research results.

You will walk away from this class with the ability to competently comprehend research results reported in the media as well as analytic and reasoning skills that will help you in any future job.

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 one day of in-class exercises. Lectures will take place on Tuesdays and cover the reading for that day. They will also 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 Thursdays. They will vary in their activity but always engage with the concepts presented in Tuesday's readings/lecture, and they will be graded. Come to class ready to work with your fellow students to discuss, practice, and apply the principles of sociological research.

Graduate Assistant

Name: Annie Munch
E-Mail: ammunch@siu.edu
Phone: x2494
Office: Faner 384
Office Hours: T 11-2 & W 3-6

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

Thursday, February 14
Exam #1

March 12 & 14
Spring Break

Thursday, March 28
Exam #2

Thursday, May 2
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, and often. 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 the 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 most Thursdays. 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 or your group.

Exceptions for Thursday exercises include guest lectures or videos, as well as exam weeks, which will have Tuesday in-class trivia review sessions.

30% of grade

In-Class Exams (3):

There will be three in-class exams. Each will cover the in-class *and* text 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 multiple choice, matching, and/or 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.

* 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 or make-up 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 case, 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 (copying, plagiarism, etc.) 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 (during office hours) 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.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

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. 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 CELL PHONE 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 that 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 photos, or surf the Internet. I WILL notice if you are online!

Make sure all assignments you turn in are properly stapled. Loose papers not secured with a staple risk getting lost or disorganized. For this reason, I DO NOT ACCEPT UNSTAPLED PAPERS.

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 will be useful in college as well as in the work place.

Course Schedule

Week 1:

January 15: **Introduction to course**

January 17: **Chapter 1: Science, Society, and Social Research**

Week 2:

January 22: **Chapter 2: The Process and Problems of Social Research**

January 24: *Class Exercise: Reviewing a Research Article*

Week 3:

January 29: **Chapter 3: Ethics in Research**

January 31: *Class Exercise: Rethinking Laud Humphrey's Tearoom Trade*

Week 4:

February 5: **Chapter 4: Conceptualization and Measurement**

February 7: *Class Exercise: Narcissistic Youth?: Using Composite Measures to Understand Entitlement*

Week 5:

February 12: *Class Exercise: Trivia Review*

February 14: **EXAM #1**

Week 6:

February 19: **Chapter 5: Sampling**

February 21: *Class Exercise: The Luck of the Irish: Sampling Green M&M's*

Week 7:

February 26: **Chapter 6: Causation and Experimental Design**

February 28: **CLASS CANCELED**

Week 8:

March 5: **Chapter 7: Survey Research** (Guest Lecture: Annie Munch)

March 7: *Class Exercise: Online Social Psychology Survey* (Meet in computer lab, Faner 1032)

www.socialpsychology.org/expts.htm

Week 9:

March 12: **SPRING BREAK**

March 14: **SPRING BREAK**

Week 10:

March 19: **Chapter 8: Elementary Quantitative Data Analysis**

March 21: *Class Exercise: Quantitative Methods Worksheet*

Week 11:

March 26: *Class Exercise: Trivia Review*

March 28: **EXAM #2**

Week 12:

April 2: **Chapter 9: Qualitative Methods: Observing, Participating, Listening**

April 4: *Video: "Method: Sidewalk and Ethnography," with Mitchell Duneier*

Week 13:

April 9: **Chapter 10: Qualitative Data Analysis**

April 11: *Class Exercise: Observing on Campus*

Week 14:

April 16: **Chapter 11: Evaluation Research**

April 18: *Class Exercise: Program Evaluation Design* (Meet in computer lab, Faner 3414)

Week 15:

April 23: **Chapter 12: Reviewing, Proposing, and Reporting Research (Video: Super Size Me)**

April 25: *Class Exercise: Don't Eat the Fries: Using a Documentary on McDonalds to Enhance Scientific Literacy*

Week 16:

April 30: *Class Exercise: Trivia Review*

May 2: **EXAM #3**

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!