

SOCIOLOGY SENIOR SEMINAR
069 WILLARD BUILDING
SUMMER, 2008
MTWRF 2:20-3:35 PM

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Course Description

While most sociology courses introduce students to past research and sociological thinking regarding a particular topic (e.g., racial, gender, and class inequalities; families; theory; etc.), the current course aims to guide majors through the process of conducting sociological research using a topic of your choosing. Given the brevity of the summer semester, all students in this course will use data from the General Social Survey, a nationally representative survey with questions on a wide variety of topics. Ideally, this capstone course would allow to sociology majors to pull together a variety of concepts from previous courses to produce an original research paper. By the end of the semester, you should have acquired the following skills and knowledge:

1. Understand the scientific method and the basic steps of conducting sociological research.
2. Be familiar with a variety of different methodologies frequently used by sociologists, with particular strength in the survey research tradition.
3. Be conversant in debates regarding the ethics of social research and be familiar with the American Sociological Association Code of Ethics.
4. Track down relevant research articles in professional journals using current library search tools.
5. Be able to critique the theory, methods, and findings of published social science research.
6. Write a professional sociological paper including an abstract, literature review, methods section, findings, discussion, conclusion, and references.
7. Present the paper to peers comprehensibly and with confidence.
8. Develop skills in respectfully and insightfully critiquing the work of peers.

Readings

All readings can be found on the course's ANGEL site.

1. American Sociology Association. 1997. "Code of Ethics." Washington, D.C.: ASA.
2. Hauptman, Robert. 2002. "Dishonesty in the Academy." *Academe* 6:39-44.
3. Shea, Christopher. 2000. "Don't Talk to the Humans." *Lingua Franca* 10 (6): 25-29.
4. Church, Jonathan T. 2002. "Should All Disciplines Be Subject to the Common Rule?" *Academe* 3:62-69.

Requirements

The production of good sociological research requires serious efforts in reading, writing, and constructive exchange with peers. To encourage all three, your progress in this course will be measured in several ways. The following are the course assessments:

1. **Major Research Paper (75%)** – The writing of this multi-section paper is the heart of this course. Because there are many parts to this paper, achieving a good grade will require consistent work throughout the semester as well as a concerted effort to improve your work through revision. All full breakdown of the grade structure of this assignment can be found below. Students will receive assignment sheets for each parts of the project.

2. **Writing Partner Comments (10%)** – The best sociological research is not the result of individual genius, but of responding positively to peer criticism and improving through revision. To facilitate this process, each student will choose or be assigned a writing partner. Throughout the term, you will read her or his work and provide constructive criticism. You will be graded on the depth and quality of your comments.

3. **Class Participation, Presentation, Presentation Feedback (15%)** – While attendance is not mandatory, attending class and actively participating is essential to completing your project in a timely fashion. Moreover, your input in class is extremely important to your classmates as they develop their own research papers. In addition to normal class participation, you will be expected to present your research findings to the class during the final two weeks of the course. You will also be expected to provide feedback on four of your classmates' presentations.

Summary:

15% Class Participation, Presentation, and Presentation Feedback

10% Writing Partners (due dates on June 12 and 23)

Research Paper (75%)

5% Description of Research and Hypotheses (due May 23)

2% 2 Articles Reviewed (due May 28)

2% 2 More Articles Reviewed (due May 30)

4% Full Article Review (due June 2)

10% Literature Review (due June 6)

5% Methods Section (due June 10)

10% Results/Findings (due June 16)

10% Discussion/Conclusion (due June 20)

2% Abstract (due June 23)

25% Final, Revised Paper (due June 27)

100% Final Grade

Final Grades:

94%-100%	A	90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+	84-86	B
80-83	B-	77-79	C+
74-76	C	70-73	C-
60-69	D	<60	F

Policies

Paper Submission: Your literature review, discussion/conclusion, and final paper must be submitted both on paper AND via Turnitin.com. See below for more information on

TurnItIn. Additionally, you must submit all drafts of your assignment with your final paper to receive full credit.

Late Policy: On all assignment, your grade will be reduced by one unit for each day late (e.g., 1 day, from A to A-; 2 days, B+; 3 days, B, and so on). Also, **assignments will not be accepted more than five school days late.**

Plagiarism: Rules on plagiarism will be reviewed early in the course. Therefore, any incidence of plagiarism will absolutely not be tolerated. And given that we'll be using TurnItIn, it's both unethical and just a bad idea. You will receive a zero for the paper in question with no chance of a make-up. You will also be reported to the University's Judicial Affairs office for possible further sanctions.

Civility and Respect: This course will include discussions of class, nationality, religion, gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality. I expect students to show respect toward all the subjects of our study. More importantly, I expect you to treat your classmates and your instructor with respect and dignity at all times – especially when you disagree with them.

Course Outline

Week 1 (May 19 – May 23): The Logic of Social Research and Hypotheses

May 19 Introduction and Overview
May 20 The Scientific Method
May 21 General Social Survey (Find variables quiz)
May 22 Discussing research ideas
May 23 Library Research Review

**** DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH AND HYPOTHESES DUE (5%) ****

Week 2 (May 27 – May 30): Ethics and Literature Reviews

May 26 **NO CLASS (MEMORIAL DAY)**
May 27 Searching for articles; Individual Meetings
May 28 Searching for articles; Individual Meetings
**** REVIEW OF FIRST TWO ARTICLES DUE (2%) ****
May 29 Brief presentation of one reviewed article
May 30 Discussion of Ethics
Read: ASA Code of Ethics; Hauptman (2002)

**** REVIEW OF SECOND TWO ARTICLES DUE (2%) ****

Week 3 (June 2 – June 6): Writing and Methods

June 2 Ethics Continued
Read: Shea (2000); Church (2002)
**** FULL ARTICLE REVIEW DUE (4%) ****
June 3 How To Write a Literature Review
June 4 Survey Research and Other Methods
June 5 GSS Methods Review
June 6 Running Frequencies

**** LITERATURE REVIEW DUE (10%) ****

(Turn in one copy and give another to your writing partner)

Week 4 (June 9 – June 13): Data Analysis

June 9 Recoding and Bivariate Results

June 10 Individual Meetings

**** METHODS SECTION DUE (5%) ****

June 11 Regression Analysis and Interpreting Results

June 12 Writing Workshop

**** BRING LIT. REVIEW COMMENTS FOR PARTNER ****

June 13 Formatting Results; Individual Meetings

Week 5 (June 16 – June 20): Discussions and Presentations

June 16 Writing a Discussion Section

**** RESULTS SECTION DUE (10%) ****

June 17 How to Prepare a Presentation

June 18 Presentations

June 19 Presentations

June 20 Presentations

**** DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION DUE (10%) ****

(Turn in one copy and give another to your writing partner)

Week 6 (June 23 – June 27): Presentations

June 23 Presentations

**** BRING DISCUSSION COMMENTS FOR PARTNER ****

**** ABSTRACT DUE (2%) ****

June 24 Revising; Presentations

June 25 Presentations

June 26 Presentations

June 27 Presentations

**** FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE (25%) ****

**** PRESENTATION FEEDBACK DUE ****

Resources

-All readings, assignment descriptions, grades, and resources on using SPSS on ASA referencing as well as the General Social Survey (GSS) data and codebook can be found on ANGEL.

-Via the Penn State Library web site (LIAS), you can use Sociological Abstracts, Annual Review, JSTOR, and Proquest to find articles.

-To submit papers via TurnItIn, visit turnitin.psu.edu and use the class ID “2283684” and password “willard”. See the full instructions on the next page.

TurnItIn Instructions

This handout is for students who are to upload their own papers directly to Turnitin. The following steps explain how to log into the Turnitin site and upload a paper for review.

1. Log in to turnitin.psu.edu

- Students can log in to turnitin.psu.edu with their Access ID and password. Students will select “student” from the drop down list when they log in for the first time. After that, Turnitin will remember them as student users. If a user is both a student and faculty member, he or she will need to change his or her user type (red tab at the top of the Turnitin screen) accordingly, depending on why he or she is using Turnitin at any given time.
- Follow the instructions on screen to create a new account. When prompted, enter the 7-digit class ID and enrollment password provided by your instructor. (If you have an existing Turnitin account, click “Enroll in a Class” on your home page and enter the 7-digit class ID and enrollment password there.)
- The ID for SOC 400W is “2283684” and the password is “willard”.

2. Access the class to submit a paper

- Your Turnitin home page lists all your Turnitin classes
- Select a class by clicking its name
- Submit a paper by clicking the “Submit” button next to the proper assignment

3. Upload your paper on the paper submission page

- Choose “File Upload” or “Cut and Paste.” File Upload allows you to upload a paper in Word, WordPerfect, Postscript, PDF, HTML, RTF, or plain text format. Cut and Paste allows you to copy and paste text directly onto the page.
- Enter a title for the paper
- Click “Browse” to select a file to upload, or paste your text into the provided box
- Click “Submit”
- IMPORTANT: The next page shows a preview of your submitted paper. Click “Yes, Submit” to confirm the submission.
- The next page is a digital receipt with a Paper ID that confirms your submission.
- The digital receipt will be sent your email account.