

Sociological Inquiry
SOCL 1143-X11
Summer I 2021 | Fully Online

Professor: Dr. Jennifer Pace

Office: O'Donohoe 131 (PY Building)
*Office hours will be held via Zoom

Office Hours: Tuesdays: 11:00-2:00PM

Email: Jennifer.Pace@msutexas.edu
*Note: I will return emails within 48 hours, excluding weekends.

Required Text: The Process of Social Research. 2nd edition. *Dixon, Singleton, & Straits*
*All additional readings will be available on our D2L course website.

Virtual Office Hours: Office hours will be held virtually via Zoom. **If you are planning to attend office hours, you must sign up for a slot ahead of time.**

Signing up for office hours is simple: Use this link to sign up for slots during the semester (the link is also on our D2L course site under the “content” tab, then “office hours: links”):

<https://calendly.com/professor-pace-msu/office-hours-individual>

Joining Zoom office hours is simple: Use this link for office hours during the semester (the link is also on our D2L course site under the “content” tab, then “office hours: links”):

<https://msutexas-edu.zoom.us/j/92985565236>

Course Description: This course examines the means that sociologists use to gather information about social phenomena. Instead of simply teaching the student what the sociologist knows, this class will teach the student how we know what we know. This course assumes no prior sociological or research methods background. The course will cover the principles of the scientific method, as well as quantitative and qualitative methodologies with special emphasis on gathering information that is trustworthy and useful for a theoretical understanding of social life. This course will also introduce students to some core areas that sociologists study, including *deviance, sexuality, criminology, race and ethnic relations, gender, age, health, and inequalities*.

Course Goals: Sociology is the scientific study of society. This means that as sociologists we utilize the scientific method to observe, learn and make inferences on various levels of analysis. Society is greater than the sum of its individuals. In other words, socio-economic structures of the world exercise power over us whether or not we are aware of it. Inside this general overview, sociologists focus on different aspect of society to answer fundamental questions about the world that surrounds us. This course will help you familiarize yourself with basic of sociological research methods.

Evaluation: Grading for this course will be determined by the following breakdown:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Discussion Board Posts | 10% |
| Application Assignments (x 3) | 40% |
| Exams (x 4) | 50% |
| TOTAL | 100% |

****The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus as necessary****

Discussion Board Posts (10%): There will be **five** weekly discussion boards that you will post to over the course of the semester, one for each week (see course schedule for due dates). Satisfactory participation will be based on your engagement in and contributions to discussions. Be detailed in your comments and demonstrate that you read/watched the week's content.

- Every week, you should post:
 - 1) One original comment, at least **two** paragraphs (respond to the week's content – what did you find interesting? Why?)
 - 2) Two response comments, at least **one** paragraph each, to your classmates' posts.

Application Assignments (40%): There will be **three** application assignments due over the course of the semester (see course schedule for due dates). Your assignments should be three pages (minimum), double-spaced, 12-point font, with one inch-margins. The assignment should incorporate/ summarize key methodological points from the assigned article (one page) and give a critical analysis of the article's methods (2 pages). Detailed instructions are on our D2L site.

Exams (50%): There will be **four** exams over the course of the semester. Exam questions will be drawn from lectures, readings, and other course content/activities. The exams will consist of a combination of True/False and Multiple Choice questions. *Exam Make-Up Policy: Missed exams can only be made up with documentation of an extenuating circumstance (see below).*

Extenuating Circumstances: Emergencies and other extenuating circumstances happen. If you experience an extenuating circumstance, you must produce documentation to excuse missing assignments/exams/deadlines. Documentation includes:

- A written note from a physician or MSU infirmary
- A written note from a physician for a family member's illness
- Written evidence of attending a mandatory university function (band, choir, sports, etc.)
- Written evidence of death of a family member (ask professor about documentation)
- Official documentation of mandatory military obligation
- Official documentation of required jury or court appearance
- Religious observance (ask professor about documentation)
- *COVID-19 had created new challenges for many. If you experience a circumstance that you believe is extenuating that is not outlined above, contact me to discuss the situation.*

OTHER IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION

The Americans with Disabilities Act: The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Office of Disability Services.

Religious Observance: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. If you have a religious observance conflict, you will need to provide written proof of the conflict and I will work with you on an individual basis to address the issue. It is your responsibility to review the

syllabus, note any possible conflicts, and discuss alternatives with me *at the beginning of the semester*.

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. All students of Midwestern State University are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, lying, bribery, threatening behavior, and aid of academic dishonesty. Those found to be in violation of the MSU Texas Student Honor Creed will be reported to the university.

Class Behavior:

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavior standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and those dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities.

Grading Scale:

| Letter | Percentage | Description |
|---------------|---------------------|--|
| A | 90-100 | Exceptional: Exceeds all required elements of the assignment, and the quality of the work is considerably greater than what is required. |
| B | 80-89 | Good: Meets all required elements of the assignment, and the quality of the work is better than what is required. |
| C | 70-79 | Average: Meets all required elements of an assignment, no more, no less. Quality of assignment is satisfactory for college level work. |
| D | 60-69 | Below average: Does not meet all the required elements of the assignment, and/or the quality is below satisfactory. |
| F | 59 and below | Failing: Almost none of the requirements of the assignment are met and/or the quality of the assignment is unacceptable. |

Course Policies:

1. There are no "make-ups" for assignments/exams without documentation of a university recognized extenuating circumstance (see above).
2. You are encouraged to reach out and make a few connections to other students in the class. These class contacts can help you keep up to date, serve as study partners, and help you workshop/revise your assignments/exams.
3. It is your responsibility to keep up with the class. As a fully online class, this holds unique challenges. Be sure that you have a plan to help keep yourself on task and on schedule. Forgetting or losing track are not reasons that excuse missing due dates. Be sure you are ready to commit the time and mental energies that an online class requires.

COURSE SCHEDULE

- ❖ Readings marked with * can be found as PDFs or Links on our D2L course website.
- ❖ “Chapter” readings are found in your textbook.
- ❖ *Note: Readings and scheduled items are subject to change.*

WEEK 1

UNIT 1: Principles of Sociology

- **Tuesday, June 1st: Sociological Inquiry – The Science of Studying the Social World**

- READ: Syllabus & Course Schedule (PDF)
READ: “15 Major Sociological Studies and Publications” (Link)
WATCH: TEDx – Sam Richards: The Wisdom of Sociology (Video)

- **Wednesday, June 2nd: What is Sociology?**

- READ: *Ferris. “Introduction to Sociology.” (PDF)
READ: *Mills, C. Wright. “The Sociological Imagination.” (PDF)
WATCH: What is Sociology? (Video)

- **Thursday, June 3rd: Society & Culture**

- WATCH: Social Networks and Social Influence (Video)
WATCH: Symbols, Values, & Norms (Video)
WATCH: Cultures, Subcultures, and Countercultures (Video)
DUE: Week 1 Discussion Board Posts due by 11:59 PM

- **Friday, June 4th: Methods of Inquiry – How Sociologists Study the Social World**

- READ: Ch. 1 *Introduction: Why Care About Research Methods?* (Textbook)
WATCH: Sociology Research Methods (Video)
VIEW: Lecture_Chapter 1 (PowerPoint)

WEEK 2

- **Monday, June 7th: Review & Exam**

- READ: Exam Review Guide (PDF)
DUE: Exam #1 (Open from 8:00am to 5:00 PM)

UNIT 2: Foundations of Research Design

- **Tuesday, June 8th: Processes and Problems**

READ: Ch. 2 *Science and Social Research: From Theory to Data and Back* (Textbook)

VIEW: Lecture_Chapter 2 (PowerPoint)

WATCH: Sociological Paradigms & Theories (Video)

WATCH: Sociology and the Scientific Method (Video)

- **Wednesday, June 9th: Ethics in Research (part 1)**

READ: Ch. 3 *The Ethics and Politics of Research: Doing What's "Right"* (Textbook)

VIEW: Lecture_Chapter 3 (PowerPoint)

- **Thursday, June 10h: Ethics in Research (part 2)**

WATCH: Henrietta Lacks, the Tuskegee Experiment, and Ethical Data Collection (Video)

WATCH: TEDx Trust in research -- the ethics of knowledge production (Video)

DUE: Week 2 Discussion Board Posts due by 11:59 PM

- **Friday, June 11th: APPLICATION – Applying Ethics in Sociological Research on Deviance & Sexuality**

READ: Humphries, Laud. "Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places." (PDF)

WATCH: Ethical Sociology (Video)

WATCH: Deviance (Video)

DUE: Application Assignment #1: Ethics due by 11:59 PM

WEEK 3

- **Monday, June 14th: Research Design**

READ: Ch. 4 *Research Designs: It Depends on the Question* (Textbook)

WATCH: Examples of Sociological Methods & Studies (Video)

VIEW: Lecture_Chapter 4 (PowerPoint)

- **Tuesday, June 15th: Review and Exam**

READ: Exam Review Guide (PDF)

DUE: Exam #2 (Open from 8:00am to 5:00 PM)

UNIT 3: Methods of Sociological Research – Part I

- **Wednesday, June 16th: Surveys (part 1)**
READ: Ch. 8 *Surveys: Questioning and Sampling* (Textbook)
VIEW: Lecture_Chapter 8 (PowerPoint)
- **Thursday, June 17th: Surveys (part 2)**
WATCH: Sampling Methods and Bias with Surveys (Video)
DUE: Week 3 Discussion Board Posts due by 11:59 PM
- **Friday, June 18th: Experiments**
READ: Ch. 7 *Experiments: What Causes What?* (Textbook)
WATCH: Research Methods: Experiments (Video)
VIEW: Lecture_Chapter 7 (PowerPoint)

WEEK 4

- **Monday, June 21st: APPLICATION – Experiments in Studying Race, Crime, and Inequality**
READ: Pager, Devah. 2003 “The Mark of a Criminal Record.” (PDF)
WATCH: Race, Employment, and a Criminal Record (Video)
WATCH: Racial/Ethnic Prejudice & Discrimination (Video)
DUE: Application Assignment #2: Experiments due by 11:59 PM
- **Tuesday, June 22nd: Content Analysis**
READ: Ch. 10 *Existing Data Analysis: Using Data from Secondhand Sources* (Textbook)
VIEW: Lecture_Chapter 10 (PowerPoint)
- **Wednesday, June 23rd: Review and Exam**
READ: Exam Review Guide (PDF)
EXAM: Exam #3 (Open from 8:00am to 5:00 PM)

UNIT 4: Methods of Sociological Research – Part 2

- **Thursday, June 24th: Field Research and Interviewing (part 1)**
READ: Ch. 9 *Field Research and In-Depth Interviews* (Textbook)
VIEW: Lecture_Chapter 9 (PowerPoint)
DUE: Week 4 Discussion Board Posts due by 11:59 PM

- **Friday, June 25th: Field Research and Interviewing (part 2)**

WATCH: Ethnographic Method (Video)

WATCH: The Seduction of Gangs - Pains and Pleasures of Ethnographic Research (Video)

WEEK 5

- **Monday, June 28th: Mixed Methods**

READ: Ch. 11 *Multiple Methods: Two or More Approaches* (Textbook)

WATCH: Telling a Complete Story with Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research (Video)

VIEW: Lecture_Chapter 11 (PowerPoint)

- **Tuesday, June 29th: APPLICATION – Using Mixed Methods in Studying Gender, Age, & Health**

READ: Mojola et al. 2015. “HIV After 40 in Rural South Africa.” (PDF)

WATCH: Gender Stratification (Video)

WATCH: Population Health (Video)

DUE: Application Assignment #4: Mixed-Methods due by 11:59 PM

- **Wednesday, June 30th: Concluding the Course – Sociologists on Sociology: “Why we do what we do”**

WATCH: Sociologists on Sociology (video)

DUE: Week 5 Discussion Board Posts due by 11:59 PM

- **Thursday, July 1st: Review and Exam**

READ: Exam Review Guide (PDF)

EXAM: Exam #4 (Open from 8:00am to 5:00 PM)