



Syllabus: Sociological Inquiry
Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences
SOCL 1143 Section 101

Fall Semester 2019 CRN = 11257
Days M,W,F; Time: 10:00am to 10:50am
Building and room: DB 121

Contact Information

Instructor: Isaac Christiansen, PhD. Assistant Professor of Sociology
Office: Prothro-Yeager Hall, Room O-134
Office hours: MW 8:00 a.m. – 8:50 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.
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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 within sociology, including culture, stratification, and crime and deviance.

Course Overview and Objectives

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. Specifically, you will be able to:

- Identify the principles of the scientific method and how they provide an epistemological foundation to our understanding of the social world. Thus, early on in the course, you should be able to identify why sociological perspectives informed by research are qualitatively distinct and superior to views that are based on ‘common sense’, the media and personal experience.
- Understand the various steps in the research process.
- Be able to identify the differences between quantitative and qualitative research, and when they are appropriate.
- Understand how sociological concepts are ‘operationalized’ to be measured.
- Understand the importance of maintaining a strong link between theory and research.

- Understand the critical role ethics play in research.
- Identify different types of quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analysis methods, and begin to understand which types of methods may answer which types of questions.
- Identify different sampling strategies, and the strengths and weaknesses of each.
- Understand how the research question(s) determine the method(s) to follow.
- Begin to form an idea of the types of analyses to which you can subject various types of data, and what kind of knowledge each type of test will render.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Carr, Deborah, Elizabeth Heger Boyle, Benjamin Cornwell, Shelley Correll, Robert Crosnoe, Jeremy Freese, and Mary C. Waters. 2018. *The Art and Science of Social Research*. Norton. New York and London

Required Articles

Esterberg, Kristen G. 2002. "Strategies for Beginning Research" Pp.25-41 in *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill Companies. Inc.

Tyson, Neil deGrasse. 2015. "What Science is – and How and Why it Works" *The Huffington Post*. November 18. Retrieved 12/28/2017

Other Text Chapters

Macionis. John J. 2017. "Deviance" Pp.175-200 in *Society: The Basics*. Pearson. Boston.

Eligible Research Articles

Kojima, Shinji. 2015. "Why do Temp Workers Work as Hard as They Do?: The Commitment and Suffering of Factory Temp Workers in Japan." *The Sociological Quarterly*. 56:355-385.

Magdoff, Fred and John Bellamy Foster. 2013. "Class Warfare and Labor's Declining Share" in *Monthly Review*. (64):10

Pager, Devah. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record" *American Journal of Sociology*. 108(5) 937-975

Prokos, Anastasia and Irene Padavic. 2002. "'There Oughtta be a Law against Bitches': Masculinity Lessons in Police Academy Training" *Gender, Work and Organization* 9 (4) 439-459

Wilson, Andrea E. 2009. 'Fundamental Causes' of Health Disparities: A Comparative Analysis of Canada and the United States. *International Sociology* 24(1) 93-113

Alternative Approved articles for review:

(For a very robust text of Magdoff and Foster of the association of labor's declining share and the decline of unionization see Tali Kristal's article. These articles use advance quantitative methods and for this reason I did not assign them. The tests in these articles support the arguments put forth by Magdoff and Foster). For another similar study see Kerrissey 2015.

Kristal, Tali. 2010. "Good Times, Bad Times: Postwar Labor's Share of National Income in Capitalist Democracies." *American Sociological Review*. 75(5) 729-763

Kerrissey, Jasmine. 2015. "Collective Labor Rights and Income Inequality" *American Sociological Review*. 90(3) 626-653

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook 2017-18](#)

Basic skills necessary for the assimilation of sociological knowledge and success in this course:

1. Self-discipline: You will need to be sufficiently dedicated and take the time necessary to not only read through all of the assigned material, but to truly learn and absorb it. You will need to ask yourself questions as you read to ensure that you can identify and recall the main points. After reading you should be able to answer questions related to the material and see its personal and/or social/economic/political implications. When you are at class you are to be focused on the class. **No computers or cell phones are to be used during class time!**

You are responsible for knowing the material in the text and other readings according to the syllabus schedule as well as the material covered in class lecture. Chapters should be read by the time the material is covered in class. In this way you will gain more from the lecture, be prepared for quizzes, and reduce the need to cram for exams. To test your own knowledge, you should be able to answer the questions at the end of each chapter correctly.

2. Attend every class. Come prepared and pay attention in class, take appropriate notes according to your best learning style and method.

3. A willingness to challenge dominant beliefs and perceptions. The sociologist must not fear information, data, and iconoclastic perspectives, which may clash with their preconceptions. The sociologist must not shy away from information, data or truths that may be distasteful to powers that be- or to their own preconceptions.

Course Schedule

Week	Topics	Readings	Due Dates
Week 1 8/26 to 8/30	Overview of course and scientific method	Carr et al. 1; Tyson	
Week 2 9/2	Labor Day		
Week 2 9/4-9/6	Theory's role in research	Carr et al.2; Esterberg	
Week 3 9/9-9/11	Theory and Research		
9/13	Research Ethics	Carr 3	
Week 4 9/16-9/18	Research Ethics		
9/20	Culture	Giddens et al 3	Ethics Assignment due 9/22
Week 5 9/23-9/25	Culture		
9/27	Exam 1		
Week 6 9/30 -10/4	Conceptualization, Operationalization and Hypotheses	Carr 4	

Week	Topics	Readings	Due Dates
Week 7 10/7-10/11	Crime and Deviance	Macionis 7	
Week 8 10/14	Finish Crime and Deviance		
Week 8 10/16-10/18	Experiments	Carr 8	
Week 9 10/21 – 10/23	Experiments		
Week 9 10/25	Race and Ethnic inequalities	Giddens et al. 11 and Pager	
Week 10 10/28-10/30	Race and Ethnic Inequalities		
Week 10 11/1	Second Exam		
Week 11 11/4-11/8	Sampling Strategies	Carr 6 Kojima 2015	Group Sampling assignment due 11/11
Week 12 11/11-/11/15	Inequality	Macionis 8 Magdoff and Foster	
Week 13 11/18- 11/22	Survey Research	Carr 7	
Week 14 11/25	Qualitative Research		Survey Due 11/24
11/27-11/29	THANKSGIVING BREAK		
Week 15 12/2	Qualitative/ Participant Observation Research	Carr 10 Prokos and Padavic	
Week 16 12/4-12/6	Historical Comparative Research	Carr 12/ Wilson	Research article analysis due 12/2
Week 16	Final Exam: Wednesday December 11 10:30am-12:30am		

Grading points and weights

Assignments	Points
Attendance	30
Ethics Assignment	40
Group Sample Assignment	40
Survey Assignment	40
Research article Analysis	40
Quizzes	40
Exam 1	100
Exam 2	100
Final Exam	150
Total Points	580

Grading Scale

90% to 100% A

80% to 89% B

70%-79% C

60%-69% D

Quizzes

There will be five quizzes given throughout the semester.

Exams

Exams are composed of multiple-choice questions and fill in the blank.

Missed exam policy:

No missed exams may be retaken without instructor approval based on *evidence* (doctor's note, university letter) that indicates the person missed the test due to a legitimate emergency, illness and/or school function. **Without this evidence ten points will be deducted from the exam. All missed exams must be made up within one week.** The exam may also be different than the exam given to the rest of the class, and no bonus question will appear on the make-up exam.

Final Exam

The final exam is comprehensive and will be Wednesday December 11 at 10:30 am

Extra Credit

A student may gain extra credit by conducting an additional article review. The amount awarded depends on the quality as assessed by the stipulations under 'Article Reviews'. Extra credit is available only to students who have turned in all of their assignments. The extra credit Article Review is worth up to 15 points.

Late Work

Late assignments will have up to 5 points deducted per day late. After a week has gone by, grading begins at half credit.

Important Dates

Change of schedule and late registration: August 26-28

Deadline to file for graduation:

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" October 28.

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

The attendance and participation of students is vital for a positive and rewarding learning experience for everyone. Your presence is expected and students will be evaluated on their sharing of thoughts and class contribution. You will miss vital information if you are not present and alert in class. In the end it is your grade and your responsibility to know the information in the exams and to incorporate the information from class in your assignments. **You are allowed up to three absences after which your grade will suffer up to a 20-point deduction for each day absent. Only under extreme circumstances or university activities that conflict with class will this penalty be waved.**

Online Computer Requirements

Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings. Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. **Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!**

Instructor Class Policies

Learning Environment Please keep in mind that everyone has a different learning style and we need to collectively keep distractions to a minimum. I will respect you and I also expect you do give your fellow classmates and me that same respect. If you are disruptive in class you will first be given a warning, the second time it occurs, you will be asked to leave. **Please stay off your cell phones and other electronic devices during class.** Not permitted during class time. Turn off or silence your cellular telephones before coming to class. Sending text messages is distracting and is strictly prohibited. Laptop use is generally prohibited during class time. No use of iPods or other listening devices will be tolerated. Please focus on the task at hand

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the *Schedule of Classes* each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. **HOWEVER**, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exists in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Disability Support Services

Midwestern State University is committed to providing equal access for qualified students with disabilities to all university courses and programs, and by law all students with disabilities are guaranteed a learning environment that provides reasonable accommodation of their disability. This guarantee is provided through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA reads: "No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subject to discrimination by any such entity." The Director of

Disability Support Services serves as the ADA Coordinator and may be contacted at (940) 397.4140, TDD (940) 397.4515, or 3410 Taft Blvd., Clark Student Center 168.

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#)

Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Midterms

In order to help students keep track of their progress toward course objectives, I will provide a Midterm Progress Report through each student's WebWorld account for students in danger of receiving a D or an F for the course. Midterm grades will not be reported on the students' transcript; nor will they be calculated in the cumulative GPA. They simply give students an idea of where they stand at the midpoint of the semester. Students earning below a C at the midway point should schedule a meeting with the professor and seek out tutoring.

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). At no time will any form of cheating or plagiarism of any kind be allowed. Students are attending the university to learn and cannot do so if they do not complete their own work. Academic dishonesty is a serious ethical violation and will not be tolerated. I expect that these standards will be met, and I will hold students to them. **Plagiarism will result in a penalty up to and including a zero on the assignment, and a report to the dean of students. Repeated offenses may result in an instructor drop from the course.** Cases are addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Plagiarism is according to the New Oxford Dictionary is “the practice of taking someone else’s work and passing it off as your own”. This means in academic practice copying someone else’s work and ideas, without quoting and citing as appropriate. Proper use of quotation marks and references are essential.

Consequences of plagiarism or academic dishonesty include failing the article review, assignment, exam and/or quiz at a minimum. Other consequences include failing the entire course and the filing of the Academic Misconduct Form that will remain on your college records. Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.