



**Syllabus: Sociological Inquiry**  
**Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
SOCL 1143 Section X21

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Spring Semester 2020 CRN = 12319  
ASYNCHRONOUS Online

Contact Information

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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.

### **Course Navigation**

This course is an online course, so it is important to understand how to get around. All readings that are not in the Carr et al. textbook (see below) will be available by clicking first on the Content tab and then on either Course readings or Syllabus. Any presentations that I post will be under presentations, also under the content tab. To complete assignments you will have to click on ‘Assignments’ under the ‘Assessments’ tab. This will take you to the ‘dropbox’. All of the discussion board entries will be available under ‘Discussions’, which is under the ‘Communications’ tab. They will also be available under the content modules. I will make periodic announcements that should be visible from the course home page. Tests and Quizzes will be available by clicking on Tests located under the Assessments Tab.

### **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 (also required reading)**

- Desmond, Mathew, Andrew V. Papachristos and David S. Kirk. 2016. “Police Violence and Citizen Reporting in the Black Community” *American Sociological Review* 18(5) 857-876
- 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 (not required):**

(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.

**1. Keep up with the readings. You are responsible for knowing the material in the text and other readings according to the syllabus schedule as well as the material covered.** Chapters should be read by the time the material is covered listed in the syllabus. This class moves very quickly, and you must keep pace with the course. In this way you will gain more from the lecture, online discussions, and be prepared for quizzes, reducing 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. There are different levels of knowledge. A person knows that they know material well, when they can accurately explain the material to another person.

**2. Check into the online class environment daily. Make sure that you can navigate well the online environment. Take appropriate notes while you read and according to your best learning style and method.**

**3. Keep up with all assignments and log in frequently.**

**Course Schedule**

| <b>Week</b>                        | <b>Topics</b>  | <b>Readings</b>            | <b>Due Dates</b>  |
|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Week 1</b><br>1/11 to 1/15      | Overview of course and scientific method                 | Carr et al. 1;<br>Tyson    |   |
| <b>Week 2</b><br>1/18<br>1/19-1/22 | Martin Luther King, Jr. Day<br>Theory’s role in research | Carr et al.2;<br>Esterberg |   |
| <b>Week 3</b><br>1/25              | Finish Theory and Research                               |                            | Discussion Board<br>Initial post 1/25<br>Follow up 1/26 |
| 1/26-1/29                          | Research Ethics  | Carr 3                     |   |

| <b>Week</b>                  | <b>Topics</b>  | <b>Readings</b>                     | <b>Due Dates</b>  |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Week 4</b><br>2/1         | Research Ethics                                      |                                     | Ethics<br>Assignment due<br>2/1                         |
| 2/2-2/5                      | Culture  | Giddens et al 3                     |   |
| <b>Week 5</b><br>2/8         | <b>Exam I</b>  |                                     |   |
| 2/9-2/12                     | Conceptualization, Operationalization and Hypotheses | Carr 4                              |   |
| <b>Week 6</b><br>2/15        | Conceptualization, Operationalization and Hypotheses |                                     |   |
| 2/16-2-19                    | Crime and Deviance                                   | Macionis 7;<br>Desmond              |   |
| <b>Week 7</b><br>2/22-2/24   | Crime and Deviance                                   |                                     | Discussion Board<br>Initial Post 2/24<br>Follow up 2/25 |
| 2/25-2/26                    | Experiments  | Carr 8                              |   |
| <b>Week 8</b><br>3/1-3/5     | Experiments  | Pager 2003                          | Research article<br>analysis due 3/5                    |
| <b>Week 9</b><br>3/8-3/12    | Race and Ethnic inequalities                         | Giddens et al. 11                   | Discussion Board<br>Initial Post 3/11<br>Follow up 3/12 |
| <b>Week 10</b><br>3/15       | <b>Exam II</b>                                       |                                     |   |
| 3/16-3/19                    | Sampling Strategies                                  | Carr 6                              |   |
| <b>Week 11</b><br>3/22-/3/26 | Inequality   | Macionis 8<br>Magdoff and<br>Foster | Discussion Board<br>Initial Post 3/25<br>Follow up 3/26 |
| <b>Week 12</b><br>3/29- 3/31 | Survey Research                                      | Carr 7                              |   |
| 4/1-4/2                      | Holiday Break  |                                     |   |
| <b>Week 13</b><br>4/5-4/6    | Survey Research                                      |                                     |   |
| 4/7-4/9                      | Qualitative Research                                 | Carr 10: Kojima<br>2015             | Survey Due 4/7  |
| <b>Week 14</b><br>4/12-4/14  | Qualitative/ Participant Observation<br>Research     | Prokos and<br>Padavic               |   |
| 4/15-/4/16                   | Historical Comparative Research                      | Carr 12                             |   |
| <b>Week 15</b><br>4/19-4/23  | Historical Comparative Research                      | Wilson                              |   |
| 4/24-4/25                    | Review material for Exam III                         |                                     |   |
| <b>Week 16</b>               | <b>Exam III</b>                                      |                                     |   |

## Grading points and weights

| Assignments                              | Points     |
|--|------------|
| Ethics Assignment                        | 40         |
| Survey Assignment                        | 40         |
| Research Article Analysis                | 40         |
| Quizzes 4 * 10                           | 40         |
| Discussion Board 10 pts * 4              | 40         |
| Comments on other student postings 5 * 4 | 20         |
| Exam 1                                   | 100        |
| Exam 2                                   | 100        |
| Exam 3                                   | 100        |
| <b>Total Points</b>                      | <b>520</b> |

## Grading Scale

90% to 100% A

80% to 89% B

70%-79% C

60%-69% D

## Discussion Board

Discussion board entries are worth 10 points each. You will have one discussion board posting over each major topic that we cover- i.e. chapter in Carr et al. (2018). To earn full points for the discussion postings, please be sure that you have fully addressed and thought through the questions or the reflection that you are posting about. After posting your initial entry as a thread in the discussion please post one response to someone else's posts. This way we can capture some interaction in the online environment. The comments to other students' posts will be worth an additional 5 points and will be due the day after the initial post.

## Quizzes

There will be four 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. Since this course is online, this expectation is reasonable.

### **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 four days have gone by, grading begins at half credit.

### **Important Dates**

Change of schedule and late registration: August 24-26, 2020.

Deadline to file for graduation:

Last Day to drop with a grade of “W:” December 4, 2020.

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.

### **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) exist 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.

### **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.