

Research Methods
SOCL 3633-201
Fall 2020 | MWF 9:00am-9:50am
Classroom: Prothro-Yeager 100

Professor: Dr. Jennifer Pace

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

Office Hours: Mon & Wed: 12:00-2:00PM
Tues: 11:00AM-12:00PM

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

Required Text: *Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation. By Daniel Chambliss and Russell Schutt. 2019. (6th Edition).*
*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/99526005519>

Course Description:

This is an undergraduate level course designed to give students an understanding of the common research methods social scientists use to conduct social research – in other words, we will be learning how “to do” sociology. In addition to the basic foundations of research methods, we will also cover specific methodological approaches, including ethnographic, interview, survey, experimental, and content/historical research methods. Three themes will be explored: 1) the various advantages and disadvantages of each method, 2) when the use of one method is appropriate or inappropriate for the research question, and 3) how to evaluate researchers’ claims on the basis of the evidence they present.

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

Exams x 3	50%
Projects x 3	30%
Reading Quizzes	10%
Participation/Class Activities	10%
TOTAL	100%

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

Grades:

1) Exams (50%): There will be three exams in this class. Exam material will be drawn from lectures, readings, and other course content/activities. Exams will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and free-response style questions.

Exam Make-Up Policy: Missed exams can only be made up *with documentation of an extenuating circumstance* (see below for details). You must notify me either prior to the exam (if you know you will be absent) or within 24 hours after the missed exam (if you had an emergency). *Note: If you know that you have a conflict with an exam date, or otherwise anticipate missing an exam, it is your responsibility to set up an appointment at the beginning of the semester to discuss with me.*

2) Projects on D2L (30%) There will be three projects in this class, including: 1) Ethics, 2) Surveys, and 3) Interviews. These projects will be your opportunity to actually go through the process of conducting research/collecting data, as opposed to simply reading about it. Detailed instructions for the three projects will be discussed later in the semester. Late projects will be penalized 10 points for every day turned in past the due date (up to three days). Projects should be turned in on our D2L course website.

3) Reading Quizzes on D2L (10%): There will be 11 weekly reading quizzes in this class (see schedule for dates). Each week, you will take a reading quiz on our D2L course site. The quiz will be available until **Tuesday at 11:59 PM** each week. The quiz will close promptly at 11:59 PM on Tuesdays, so if you do not take it before then, you will not receive points for the quiz.

The quizzes will cover the reading/chapter for that week and will include 5-10 multiple choice questions. You will have 10 minutes to complete the quiz.

****Your two lowest quiz scores will be dropped – meaning, only 9 quiz scores will count toward your grade. There are no “make-ups” for reading quizzes. If you are sick, need to travel, forget to take the quiz on time, just want to skip one, etc., then you can use one of your two drops.**

4) Participation/Class Activities (10%): There will be periodic, unplanned class activities throughout the semester. As long as you are present in class and are participating in the activity (which may include groupwork, film analyses, etc.), you will score very well in this portion of the course. Consider this grade item as the potential to boost your overall score.

****Your two lowest activity scores will be dropped – meaning, you can miss two activities and your grade will not be penalized. There are no “make-ups” for class activities. If you are sick, need to travel, oversleep and don’t make it to class, etc., then you can use one of your two drops.**

Exam Make-Up Policy: Missed exams can only be made up with official documentation of an extenuating circumstance (see below).

****Discussion Board Posts on D2L (Attendance):** Attendance is an important component of this course. Due to the current health crisis, we are focusing our attendance tracking online, through our D2L course site. By Thursday at 11:59 PM each week, you are required to post to our D2L Discussion

Board one original comment (one paragraph) and one response comment (one paragraph) to one of your classmates. This will help capture your attendance virtually, which can help build in some flexibility just in case you need to stay home for health reasons. This is an important aspect of the course. For every missed post past your second, your final grade will be docked one percentage point. If you simply stop coming to class *and* stop checking in virtually (by posting to the weekly discussion board), you can be dropped from the class.

OTHER IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION

Extenuating Circumstances: Emergencies and other extenuating circumstances happen. If you experience an extenuating circumstance, you must produce official documentation to “excuse” your absence from class. 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.*

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 Accommodation.

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 no 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.

Classroom 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 tops 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. No laptops or cell phones are allowed in lecture unless directed otherwise. If you have a disability or special circumstance that requires you to use a laptop, please see me to discuss.
2. There are no "make-ups" or "early turn-ins" for in-class work/assignments/quizzes.
3. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. For in-class notes, please contact one of your classmates.
4. In this class, as in many sociology classes, our discussion will often focus on controversial issues that may arouse intense feelings and disagreement. While enthusiastic discussion of these issues is encouraged, inappropriate/disrespectful comments will not be tolerated.
5. As the instructor, I reserve the right to ask you to leave if I believe your comments and/or actions are contributing to a classroom environment where not all individuals (myself included) feel respected and safe.
6. Please do not get up and leave class, or start packing up to leave, before our time is up. **Please avoid being late to class.** It is distracting to both me and the other students. If you must leave early or come late, let me know ahead of time. Disrupting class by being late/leaving early will have a negative impact on your grade. When you arrive late and disrupt our class, you will not be counted as in attendance for the day (which will negatively impact your final grade). For repeated tardiness, you may be asked to leave for the day.

Students who violate these policies are subject to being dropped with an F for the class at the faculty member's discretion

Peer Contact Information (your first source for missed material)

Name _____ Email/Number: _____

Name _____ Email/Number: _____

Name _____ Email/Number: _____

COURSE SCHEDULE

- ❖ **Reading(s) for the week are due by the first day of class for the week (Monday)**
- ❖ Readings marked with * can be found on our D2L course website.
- ❖ “Chapter” readings are found in your textbook.
- ❖ **Weekly Reading Quizzes are due on D2L by Tuesday at 11:59 PM each week**
- ❖ **Weekly Discussion Board Posts are due on D2L by Thursday at 11:59 PM each week**

UNIT 1: THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

Week 1 (Jan 11-Jan 15): CONSIDERING RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIOLOGY

Readings: *Crossman. “15 Major Sociological Studies and Publications.” (Link on D2L)
~Begin Chapter 1 (Textbook)

Due & Events: No Quiz this week; DB Posts due by Thursday at 11:59 PM

Week 2 (Jan 18-Jan 22): INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODS

Readings: *Merton. “Three Fragments from a Sociologist’s Notebook.” (PDF on D2L)
~Finish Chapter 1 (Textbook)

Due & Events: DUE: Quiz #1 due Tuesday by 11:59 PM
DUE: DB Posts due by Thursday at 11:59 PM

EVENT: *No Class on Monday (MLK Day)*

Week 3 (Jan 25- Jan 29): PROCESSES AND PROBLEMS

Readings: ~Chapter 2 (Textbook)

Due & Events: DUE: Quiz #2 due Tuesday by 11:59 PM
DUE: DB Posts due by Thursday at 11:59 PM

EVENT: *Film on Friday: Zimbardo & Ethics (Assignment TBA)*

Week 4 (Feb 1 – Feb 5): ETHICS

Readings: ~Chapter 3 (Textbook)

Due & Events: DUE: Quiz #3 due Tuesday by 11:59 PM
DUE: DB Posts due by Thursday at 11:59 PM
DUE: **Project #1: Ethics due Friday by 11:59 PM**

EVENT: *Remote research day on Friday (no in-person class) – Take this day to research and complete project #1*

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

Week 5 (Feb 8 – Feb 12): REVIEW AND EXAM

Readings: *TBA (Article PDF found on D2L)

Due & Events: DUE: **Exam #1 on Friday (remotely on D2L)**
(No Reading Quiz or DB Post this week)

EVENT: *Present assignments in-class on Monday*

UNIT 2: THE PRACTICE OF SOCIAL RESEARCH (PART I)

Week 6 (Feb 15 – Feb 19): CONCEPTUALIZATION AND MEASUREMENT

Readings: ~Chapter 4 (Textbook)

Due & Events: DUE: Quiz #4 due Tuesday by 11:59 PM
DUE: DB Posts due by Thursday at 11:59 PM

Week 7 (Feb 22 – Feb 26): SAMPLING AND GENERALIZABILITY

Readings: ~Chapter 5 (Textbook)

Due & Events: DUE: Quiz #5 due Tuesday by 11:59 PM
DUE: DB Posts due by Thursday at 11:59 PM

EVENT: *Remote Learning day on Wednesday (no in-person class) TBA*

Week 8 (March 1 – March 5): EXPERIMENTS

Readings: ~Chapter 6 (Textbook)

Due & Events: DUE: Quiz #6 due Tuesday by 11:59 PM
DUE: DB Posts due by Thursday at 11:59 PM

Week 9 (March 8 – March 12): SURVEYS

Readings: ~Chapter 7 (Textbook)

Due & Events: DUE: Quiz #7 due Tuesday by 11:59 PM
DUE: DB Posts due by Thursday at 11:59 PM
DUE: **Project 2: Surveys due Friday by 11:59 PM**

EVENT: *Remote research day on Friday (no in-person class) – Take this day to research and complete project #2*

Week 10 (March 15 – March 19): REVIEW AND EXAM

Readings: *TBA (Article PDF found on D2L)

Due & Events: DUE: **Exam #2 on Friday (remotely on D2L)**
(No Reading Quiz or DB Post this week)

EVENT: *Present assignments in-class on Monday*

UNIT 3: THE PRACTICE OF SOCIAL RESEARCH (PART II)

Week 11 (March 22 – March 26): CONTENT ANALYSIS

Readings: ~Chapter 11 (Textbook)

Due & Events: DUE: Quiz #8 due Tuesday by 11:59 PM
DUE: DB Posts due by Thursday at 11:59 PM

Week 12 (March 29 – April 2): ETHNOGRAPHY & FIELD METHODS

Readings: ~Chapter 9, pages 216-236 (Textbook)

Due & Events: DUE: Quiz #9 due Tuesday by 11:59 PM
DUE: DB Posts due by Thursday at 11:59 PM

EVENT: *No Class on Friday (Holiday Break)*

Week 13 (April 5 – April 9): INTERVIEWING & FOCUS GROUPS

Readings: ~Chapter 9, pages 237-244 (Textbook)
*TBA (Article PDF found on D2L)

Due & Events: DUE: Quiz #10 due Tuesday by 11:59 PM
DUE: DB Posts due by Thursday at 11:59 PM
DUE: **Project 3: Interviews due Friday by 11:59 PM**

EVENT: *Remote research day on Friday (no in-person class) – Take this day to research and complete project #3*

Week 14 (April 12 – April 16): REPORTING RESEARCH

Readings: ~Chapter 13 (Textbook)

Due & Events: DUE: Quiz #11 due Tuesday by 11:59 PM
DUE: DB Posts due by Thursday at 11:59 PM

EVENT: *Present assignments in-class on Monday*

Week 15 (April 19 – April 23): REVIEW AND EXAM

Readings: *TBA (Article PDF found on D2L)

Due & Events: DUE: **Exam #3 on Friday (remotely on D2L)**
(No Reading Quiz or DB Post this week)

We do not have a final exam for this class