

Sociological Inquiry
SOCL 1143-X20
Spring 2023 | Fully Online

Professor: Dr. Jennifer Pace

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**Note: I will return emails within
48 hours, excluding weekends*

Office Hours: Mon & Wed: 12:00-2:00PM

Fri: 12:00-1:00PM
& by appointment

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

Office Hours: Office hours can be attended either in-person or virtually (via Zoom). In-person office hours are drop-in. **If you plan to attend office hours virtually via Zoom, you should email ahead of time to schedule your meeting and receive a Zoom link.**

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* sociologists 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 several core areas of inquiry that sociologists study, including *crime & deviance, gender & sexuality, race, age, and population health.*

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 includes macro level structures, meso level culture, and micro level individual/group interaction. Within this general overview, sociologists focus on different aspects 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 of inquiry.

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

Weekly Discussion Board Posts	10%
Application Assignments (x 3)	40%
<u>Exams (x 4)</u>	<u>50%</u>
TOTAL	100%

The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus as necessary

Discussion Board Posts (10%): There will be 12 weekly discussion boards that you will post to over the course of the semester, one for each week (see course schedule for due dates). You get two “free drops” – this means you only need to complete 10 posts total. Your 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 2 application assignments over the course of the semester (see course schedule for due dates). Your assignment should be 3 pages (minimum), double-spaced, 12-point font, with one inch-margins. The assignment should incorporate/ summarize key methodological points from the assigned article (1 page) and give a critical analysis of the article’s methods (2 pages). Detailed instructions are on our D2L course 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). If you have a scheduling conflict with an exam (work, etc.), be sure to contact Dr. Pace BEFORE the exam to discuss rescheduling the exam for you.*

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 and are subject to being dropped from the class with a failing grade.

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 topics 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" or "early turn-ins" 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.

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.*

UNIT 1

- **Week 1: Jan 16-Jan 20: 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)

DUE: Week 1 Discussion Board Posts (DUE by Thursday at 11:59 PM)
MLK Day – Monday

- **Week 2: Jan 23-Jan 27: What is Sociology?**

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

DUE: Week 2 Discussion Board Posts (DUE by Thursday 11:59 PM)

- **Week 3: Jan 30-Feb 3: Exploring Culture (Connecting Micro to Macro)**

- WATCH: Social Networks and Social Influence (Video)
- WATCH: Symbols, Values, & Norms (Video)
- WATCH: Cultures, Subcultures, and Countercultures (Video)

DUE: Week 3 Discussion Board Posts (DUE by Thursday 11:59 PM)

- **Week 4: Feb 6-Feb 10: 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)

DUE: Week 4 Discussion Board Posts (DUE by Thursday 11:59 PM)

DUE: Exam #1 (Open on Friday from 8:00am to 11:59pm)

UNIT 2

- **Week 5: Feb 13 – Feb 17: Processes and Problems**

READ: Ch. 2 *Science and Social Research: From Theory to Data and Back* (Textbook)
WATCH: Sociological Paradigms & Theories (Video)
WATCH: Sociology and the Scientific Method (Video)
VIEW: Lecture_Chapter 2 (PowerPoint)

DUE: Week 5 Discussion Board Posts (DUE by Thursday at 11:59 PM)

- **Week 6: Feb 20-Feb 24: Ethics pt 1**

READ: Ch. 3 *The Ethics and Politics of Research: Doing What's "Right"* (Textbook)
WATCH: Henrietta Lacks, the Tuskegee Experiment, and Ethical Data Collection (Video)
WATCH: TEDx Trust in research -- the ethics of knowledge production (Video)
VIEW: Lecture_Chapter 3 (PowerPoint)

DUE: Week 6 Discussion Board Posts (DUE by Thursday at 11:59 PM)

- **Week 7: Feb 27-March 3: Ethics pt 2 - APPLICATION – Deviance & Sexuality**

READ: Humphries, Laud. "Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places." (PDF)
READ: Example of Assessing Ethics in "The Tearoom Trade" (Link)
WATCH: Ethical Sociology (Video)
WATCH: Deviance (Video)

*DUE: [Application Assignment #1: Ethics \(DUE by Friday at 11:59 PM\)](#)
(No Discussion Board Post this week)*

- **Week 8: March 6-March 10: 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)

DUE: Week 8 Discussion Board Posts (DUE by Thursday at 11:59 PM)

EXAM: Exam #2 (Open on Friday from 8:00am to 11:59pm)

- **Week 9: March 13-March 17: SPRING BREAK (no classes)**

UNIT 3

- **Week 10: March 20-March 24: Surveys**

READ: Ch. 8 *Surveys: Questioning and Sampling* (Textbook)

WATCH: Sampling Methods and Bias with Surveys (Video)

VIEW: Lecture_Chapter 8 (PowerPoint)

DUE: Week 10 Discussion Board Posts (DUE by Thursday at 11:59 PM)

- **Week 11: March 27-March 31: Experiments**

READ: Ch. 7 *Experiments: What Causes What?* (Textbook)

WATCH: Research Methods: Experiments (Video)

VIEW: Lecture_Chapter 7 (PowerPoint)

DUE: Week 11 Discussion Board Posts (DUE by Thursday at 11:59 PM)

- **Week 12: April 3-April 7: Experiments pt 2 - APPLICATION – 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 Friday at 11:59 PM)
(No Discussion Board Post this week)*

Holiday Break – Thursday & Friday

*(*This is a short week, so you are encouraged to complete your assignment by Wednesday. For those of you who need the extra time, the dropbox will remain open until Friday at 11:59 PM.)*

- **Week 13: April 10-April 14: Content Analysis**

READ: Ch. 10 *Existing Data Analysis: Using Data from Secondhand Sources* (Textbook)

VIEW: Lecture_Chapter 10 (PowerPoint)

DUE: Week 13 Discussion Board Posts (DUE by Thursday at 11:59 PM)

EXAM: Exam #3 (Open on Friday from 8:00am to 11:59pm)

UNIT 4

- **Week 14: April 17-April 21: Field Research and Interviewing**

READ: Ch. 9 *Field Research and In-Depth Interviews* (Textbook)

WATCH: Ethnographic Method (Video)

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

VIEW: Lecture_Chapter 9 (PowerPoint)

DUE: Week 14 Discussion Board Posts (DUE by Thursday at 11:59 PM)

- **Week 15: April 24-April 28 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)

DUE: Week 15 Discussion Board Posts (DUE by Thursday at 11:59 PM)

- **Week 16: May 1-May 5: Concluding the Course – “Why we do what we do.”**

READ: Exam #4 Review

WATCH: Sociologists on Sociology (Video)

(No Discussion Board Post this week)

EXAM: Exam #4 (Open on Friday, from 8:00am to 11:59pm)

**The exam for this week is simply Exam #4, based on content from Unit #4. This is not a large, cumulative “final” exam. The exam will look very similar to the first three – 30 questions (T/R and Multiple Choice) timed at 40 minutes.*

FINALS WEEK: Dec 5-Dec 9

*****NO FINAL EXAM*****