



Course Syllabus: Sociological Inquiry

SOCL 1143, Section X20

Spring 2025

Instructor: Dr. Wesley Cohoon

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Course Modality: Online

Meeting Times: N/A

Class Location: Online

Office: Prothro-Yeager, 0-134

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:55 a.m. to 1:55 p.m. and Fridays
11:55 a.m. to 12:55 a.m.

Course Introduction

Course Quote

“Research is seeing what everybody else has seen and thinking what nobody else has thought.” – Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

Course Description

This course examines the means that sociologists use to gather information about social phenomena. Instead of simply teaching the student what sociologists know, 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 theoretical understanding of social life. This course will also introduce students to several core areas of inquiry that

sociologists study, including crime and deviance, gender and 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 the basic sociological research methods of inquiry.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Book: *The Process of Social Research*, Second Edition
Author: Dixon, Singleton, and Straits
ISBN: 9780190876654
Publisher: Oxford University Press

Who is the instructor?

My career has included a wide range of professional experiences, from teaching at universities to working in businesses, nonprofits, hospitals, and governmental agencies. My diverse professional journey has been united by my work with, love of, and curiosity for people. Although I have changed careers many times, sociology has been at the core of all my careers because I have dealt with people.

I am married with five children. My youngest three are 17, 15, and 13. My two oldest kids are adults who are both married and have children. We have three dogs at my house—Cupcake, Oreo, and Waffles. I love spending time with my family and hanging out.

I have earned two doctorates, two master's, and a bachelor's degree. Part of my research focus is on applying sociology in the real world. I have a sociology podcast called "As a Matter of Interact: Practical Sociology for Everyone." I am a Certified Clinical Sociologist through the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology and serve as an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Applied Social Sciences*.

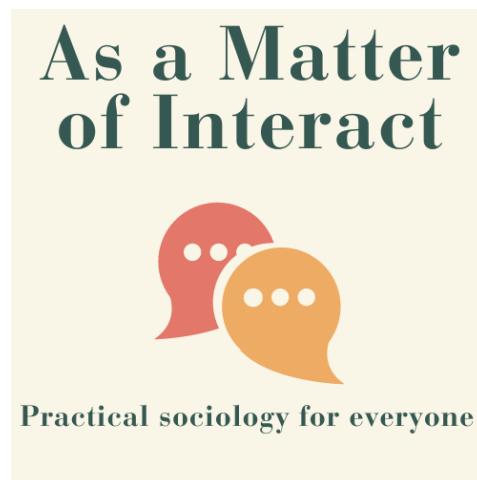
Teaching Philosophy

I want to come alongside students and help them discover themselves and their social world. In addition to providing information, I want to listen and learn from others and their experiences. While I care about students, I also want them to

grow and experience some level of discomfort. While people do not like tension and conflict, people experience growth through it. People need to feel some stress and have their existing knowledge challenged to gain new understanding. I encourage students to engage in an action/reflection model where they can learn, do something with their knowledge, come back and reflect on their experience, and repeat the process. Lastly, learning is difficult, but it is also fun. I welcome playfulness, humor, and student interaction throughout class time.

Additional Sociological Resource

To learn more about sociology and its practical applications, check out my bi-weekly podcast, [As a Matter of Interact: Practical Sociology for Everyone](#). The podcast helps people understand and evaluate social interactions, relationships, human behaviors, and systems. Check out the podcast to better navigate your life and make informed decisions as you practically apply sociology.



London Study Abroad: Sociology

I highly encourage students to consider participating in the Study Abroad program that MSU offers through its Global Education Office. In the summer of 2025, I will teach British Culture and Society (SOCL 4883, 4893). Students will earn six credit hours towards their degree in only five weeks. Studying sociology in London is a great learning opportunity, and it provides students with a chance to experience, live, and travel to a foreign country. The London classes last for five weeks with a one-week minibreak in between. The flight will depart on Thursday, July 3rd, and we will return to the United States on Monday, August 4th.

You can take my London sociology class with any major. Depending on your major and minor, this course could count towards your major, minor, or elective course requirements. My sociology class will compare British society and culture to American society and culture. The class will teach students how to evaluate and assess cultures, societies, and social interactions. The class will be highly

interactive, and several assignments will include activities and immersion into British culture.

Planning is critical to a successful study abroad experience. I will share the London Study Abroad finalized dates and information as soon as it is available through the Global Education Office. If you have any questions or concerns, you can always contact me or schedule a meeting with MSU's Global Education Office and Study Abroad. Remember, the application deadline is usually in March, and the Global Education Office is there to discuss financial aid and scholarship opportunities to ensure you are well-prepared for this exciting journey.

[MSU Global Education Office](#)

[MSU London Study Abroad](#)

Instructor Policies

Assignment Submission

Submit all your assignments via D2L, and they need to be in Word or PDF. Students are responsible for ensuring assignments are submitted on time and in an accessible format.

Assignment Feedback

I will provide assignment feedback within seven days of the due date. My feedback will be provided in the form of comments on the assignment in D2L. You are welcome to come and talk to me about any assignment and feedback that I have offered. Your grades will be posted in D2L.

Email Communication with the Instructor

Please follow the below template when sending me an email. Failure to follow this format will result in a response from me stating, "Please read the syllabus and follow the email formatting instructions." Students are welcome to ask questions, but I want them to first check the syllabus for the answer before asking or clarifying a question.

Dr. Cohoon

My name is (Xyz), and I am a student in your SOCL 1143: Sociological Inquiry class this spring semester. I am emailing to ask you about (blank). I looked in the syllabus, and it states (blank) about my question.

Thanks,

(Your Name)

Late Work

All assignments are due in D2L before 11:59 p.m. on their listed due date in Word or PDF. If the assignment does not upload, I do not have it. The student is responsible for ensuring that their assignments are uploaded. Corrupted documents do not count, and you need to ensure that the assignment is uploaded in the proper format. I will deduct ten percent per day for late assignments. There are no exceptions, and all late work will be deducted 10% for every day it is late. This late policy is generous, and students can still earn a good grade on an assignment when it is late.

Plagiarism

The appropriation, theft, purchase, or obtaining by any means another's work, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one's own offered for credit. Appropriation includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another's work without giving credit. Using AI technology (like ChatGPT) to write assignments is considered plagiarism. Students who plagiarize will receive a zero on the assignment and can face additional academic consequences. However, students are welcomed and encouraged to use proofreading applications like Grammarly. The difference between technology ChatGPT and Grammarly is that technology like Grammarly uses the student's original ideas and helps proofread.

Evaluation and Grading

All grades will be made available to students in D2L. Students have an opportunity to earn 1,000 points this semester. Therefore, students can easily calculate their current and potential final grades. For example, 900 points equals 90, 800 points equals 80, etc.

Discussion Board Posts – 40%

There will be 10 weekly discussion boards that you will post over the course of the semester—weeks 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 14, and 15. The discussion boards are individually worth 40 points each, which accounts for 40% of your final grade. Your satisfactory participation will be based on your engagement in and contributions to discussions. Be detailed in your work and demonstrate that you read/watched the week's content.

Initial Post:

Every week students will have an initial post. This includes one original comment of at least two paragraphs. I have listed questions for each week's discussion

board. I am mainly wanting students to engage in the content, and the purpose of my questions are to spark potential discussions. The initial posts are due Thursdays before the end of the day. While students can earn 40 points for each discussion board, half of that grade is calculated by their initial post.

Response Post

Every week students will have two response posts. This includes two response comments, at least one paragraph each to your classmates' post. The two response posts are due Saturdays before the end of the day. The two response posts are worth 10 points each for a total of 20 points.

Discussion Board Late Work Policy

A primary element of online education is the discussion board posts. Your classmates are depending on you to make an initial post, so they can earn full credit by providing a response post. Therefore, I will deduct 50% for each day that the initial post is late. It is not fair, and it limits discussion when students make their initial post on the same day that the response posts are due. The week's discussion board closes at the end of the day on Saturday, and I do not accept late work for discussion board response posts. Students are encouraged to post early and regularly.

Application Assignments – 20%

There will be two application assignments over the course of the semester. Application Assignment #1 is due on March 8th, and Application Assignment #2 is due on April 12th. The application assignments are individually worth 100 points (200 points combined), which accounts for 20% of your final grade.

Your assignments should be 3 pages minimum, double-spaced, 12-point font, with one inch-margins. The assignment should incorporate and summarize key methodological points from the assigned article (one page) and give a critical analysis of the article's methods (two pages). Detailed instructions are on the D2L course site.

Application Assignment Late Work Policy

I do accept late work for the two application assignments. I will deduct each assignment 10 percent for every day it is late. There are no exceptions, and all late work will be deducted ten percent for every day it is late. This late policy is generous, and students can still earn a good grade on an assignment even when it is late.

Grading Criteria for Application Assignments:

Well-written— 20%

- The paper meets the minimum 3-page requirement – 10%
- The paper is grammar and mistake-free – 5%
- The paragraphs are appropriate length – 5%

Formatted Correctly— 30%

- The paper is in Word or PDF with one-inch margins – 10%
- The font is 12-point, Times New Roman – 5%
- The student used proper citations – 5%
- The paragraphs are double-spaced and indented – 10%

Sociological Analysis –50%

- The paper incorporated and summarized the article’s key methodological points – 10%
- The paper identified sociological and methodological concepts – 5%
- The paper connects back to the assigned reading – 5%
- The student discussed if the author’s methods were robust and their agreement or disagreement with their chosen methods. – 5%
- The student discussed and explained if the author’s methods were appropriately applied. – 5%
- The student discussed the strengths of the author’s methodological approach. – 5%
- The student discussed the weaknesses of the author’s methodological approach. – 5%
- The student discussed any questions or concerns they were left with. The student also shared if they were thoroughly convinced by the author’s approach. – 5%

Exams – 40%

There will be four exams over the course of the semester. The exams are worth 100 points each for a combined total of 400 points. 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. The due dates for the exams are as follows: Exam #1 is due on Feb 15th; Exam #2 is due on March 22nd; Exam #3 is due April 16th; and Exam #4 is due May 10th.

Exams Late Work Policy

In rare situations, I will allow students to submit exams late. When students are allowed to submit the exam late, I will deduct each assignment 10 percent for every day it is late. There are no exceptions, and all late work will be deducted ten percent for every day it is late. If students have extenuating circumstances, please contact me privately.

Grading

Table 1: Total Points for Assignments

Assignments	Points
Discussion Board 1	40
Discussion Board 2	40
Discussion Board 3	40
Discussion Board 4	40
Discussion Board 5	40
Discussion Board 6	40
Discussion Board 7	40
Discussion Board 8	40
Discussion Board 9	40
Discussion Board 10	40
Assignment 1	100
Assignment 2	100
Exam 1	100
Exam 2	100
Exam 3	100
Exam 4	100
Total Points	1000

Table 2: Total Points for Final Grade

Grade	Points
A	90% and above
B	80%-89%
C	70%-79%
D	60%-69%
F	Below 60%

Course Schedule

This calendar represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunities. Any changes will be communicated clearly and as soon as possible.

Table 3: Class Assignments and Due Dates

Week	Class Assignment	Due Date
1	Read: Syllabus and Course Schedule	Jan 21st
1	Read: "15 Major Sociological Studies..."	Jan 21st
1	Watch: TEDx - The Wisdom of Sociology	Jan 22nd
1	Discussion Board: Week 1 Post	Jan 23rd
1	Discussion Board: Week 1 Response	Jan 25th
2	Read: Ferris Introduction to Sociology	Jan 26th
2	Read Mils Sociological Imagination	Jan 27th
2	Watch: What is Sociology	Jan 28th
2	Discussion Board: Week 2 Post	Jan 30th

2	Discussion Board: Week 2 Response	Feb 1st
3	Watch: Social Networks and Social Influence	Feb 2nd
3	Watch: Symbols, Values, and Norms	Feb 3rd
3	Watch: Cultures, Subcultures, and...	Feb 4th
3	Discussion Board: Week 3 Post	Feb 6th
3	Discussion Board: Week 3 Response	Feb 8th
4	Read Chapter 1	Feb 9th
4	Watch: Sociology Research Methods	Feb 10th
4	View: Lecture Chapter 1	Feb 11th
4	Exam #1 Review Guide	Feb 12th
4	Take Exam #1	Feb 15th
5	Read Chapter 2	Feb 16th
5	Watch: Sociological Paradigms & Theories	Feb 17th
5	Watch: Sociology and the Scientific Method	Feb 18th
5	View: Lecture Chapter 2	Feb 19th
5	Discussion Board: Week 5 Post	Feb 20th
5	Discussion Board: Week 5 Response	Feb 22nd
6	Read Chapter 3	Feb 23rd
6	Watch: Henrietta Lacks, the Tuskegee...	Feb 24th
6	Watch: TEDx Trust in Research	Feb 25th
6	View: Lecture Chapter 3	Feb 26th
6	Discussion Board: Week 6 Post	Feb 27th
6	Discussion Board: Week 6 Response	March 1st
7	Read: Humphreys Ethics	March 2nd
7	Read: Example of Assessing Ethics...	March 3rd
7	Watch: Ethical Sociology	March 4th
7	Watch: Deviance	March 5th
7	Due: Application Assignment #1	March 8th
N/A	Spring Break- No Classes	March 9-16th
8	Read Chapter 4	March 17th
8	Watch: Examples of Sociological Methods & Studies	March 18th
8	View: Lecture Chapter 4	March 18th
8	Exam #2 Review Guide	March 19th
8	Discussion Board: Week 8 Post	March 20th
8	Take Exam #2	March 22nd
8	Discussion Board: Week 8 Response	March 22nd
9	Read Chapter 8	March 23rd
9	Watch: Sampling Methods and Bias with Surveys	March 24th
9	View: Lecture Chapter 8	March 25th
9	Discussion Board: Week 9 Post	March 27th
9	Discussion Board: Week 9 Response	March 29th
10	Read: Chapter 7	March 30th
10	Watch: Research Methods: Experiments	March 31st
10	View: Lecture Chapter 7	April 1st

10	Discussion Board: Week 10 Post	April 3rd
10	Discussion Board: Week 10 Response	April 5th
11	Read: "The Mark of a Criminal Record"	April 6th
11	Watch: Race, Employment, and a Criminal Record	April 7th
11	Watch: Racial/Ethnic Prejudice & Discrimination	April 8th
11	Due: Application Assignment #2	April 12th
12	Read Chapter 10	April 13th
12	View: Lecture Chapter 10	April 14th
12	Exam #3 Review Guide	April 15th
12	Take Exam #3	April 16th
12	No Class on Friday- Holiday Break	April 17-20th
13	Read Chapter 9	April 21st
13	Watch: Ethnographic Method	April 22nd
13	Watch: The Seduction of Gangs	April 23rd
13	View: Lecture Chapter 9	April 24th
14	Read: Chapter 11	April 27th
14	Watch: Telling a Complete Story with Qualitative...	April 28th
14	View: Lecture Chapter 11	April 29th
14	Discussion Board: Week 14 Post	May 1st
14	Discussion Board: Week 14 Response	May 3rd
15	Watch: Why we do what we do	May 4th
15	Exam #4 Review Guide	May 5th
15	Discussion Board: Week 15 Post	May 8th
15	Discussion Board: Week 15 Response	May 10th
15	Take Exam #4	May 10th

University and Class Policies

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.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Change to 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).

Service for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

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

Smoking and 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.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “*Run. Hide. Fight.*” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU 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). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)