



## SOCL-1143: Sociological Inquiry, Spring 2024

**Instructor:** Dr. Wesley Cohoon

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**Course Modality:** Online

**Office:** 0-134

**Office Hours:**

- Mon, Wed, & Fri from 7:50 a.m. to 8:50 a.m.
- Mon & Wed from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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“Research is seeing what everybody else has seen  
and thinking what nobody else has thought.”

Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

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*(Instructor reserves the right to amend all syllabus information as necessary)*

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### **Course Introduction**

I am very happy that you are taking my course, and I look forward to learning with you this semester! Sociology is involved in every aspect of life. No matter what your career or personal goals, you will utilize the sociological concepts and theories that we go over in this class. Since sociology is useful in every aspect of life, my goal for this course is for you to reflect and integrate sociology into your life and experiences.

This course provides a basis for understanding human behavior through a sociological lens. I will outline key sociologists and sociology theories. Students will learn how sociology permeates through all social interactions and gain a sociological foundation.

## 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.

## Required Text

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

*All additional readings are available in D2L in PDF format.*

## Who is the instructor?

I have taught classes at several universities. In addition to my academic teaching, I have presented on religion as it relates to disability and caring for others at several venues. My education is a mixture of sociology and religion. I have earned a Ph.D. in Sociology, a Doctor of Ministry, an M.S. in Sociology, a Master of Divinity, and a B.S. in Religion.

My professional experience is not limited to academia. I have several years of practical experience incorporating sociology in various settings like businesses, nonprofits, hospitals, and governmental agencies. I am a Certified Clinical Sociologist through the Association of Applied and Clinical Sociology.

I am married with five children. My youngest three are 15, 13, and 11. My two oldest children are married and live with their spouses. My oldest son has a daughter, which makes me a grandpa. We have three dogs—Cupcake, Oreo, and Waffles, and I love spending time with my family.

## 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.

## Course Requirements

Please pay attention to these instructions. Failure to submit assignments as instructed will result in a zero for the assignment.

### Submitting and Returning Assignments

#### Assignment Submission

Submit all your assignments via D2L – upload in Word or PDF format. Students are responsible for ensuring that assignments are submitted on time and in an accessible format.

#### Assignment Feedback

I will provide assignment feedback within seven (7) 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 assignments and any feedback that I have provided.

Your grades will be posted to the D2L.

#### Communication with the Instructor

Please follow the below template when sending me an email. Failure to follow this format will result in a response email from me stating, “Please read the syllabus and follow the email formatting instructions.” Students are welcome to ask any questions, but I want the students 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 a Word document. 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 have a slightly different late work policy for each of the discussion boards, application assignments, and exams.

### **Evaluation & 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.

#### **A. 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.

Every week, you should post:

- 1) **Initial Post:** 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.
- 2) **Response Post:** 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.

## **B. Application Assignments – 20%**

There will be two application assignments over the course of the semester. Application Assignment #1 is due on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Application Assignment #2 is due on April 6<sup>th</sup>. 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— 30%

- Paper meets the minimum word and page requirements – 10%
- Grammar and mistake-free – 10%
- Paragraphs are appropriate length – 10%

#### Formatted Correctly— 30%

- Word or PDF document with one-inch margins – 10%
- The font is 12-point, Times New Roman – 5%
- Used proper citations – 5%
- Paragraphs are double-spaced and indented – 10%

#### Sociological Analysis – 40%

- The paper incorporated and summarized the article's key methodological points – 10%
- Identified sociological and methodological concepts – 10%
- Connects back to the assigned reading – 10%
- Provided in-depth analysis by addressing questions in assignment instructions– 10%
  - Do you think the author's methods are robust? Do you agree with their chosen methods? Do you think they were appropriately applied? What do you think was strong about their methodological approach? Was there anything you thought was weak about their methods (why)? Were you left with questions or concerns? Were you thoroughly convinced by their approach?

### C. Exams – 40%

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. The due dates for the exams are as follows: Exam #1 is due on Feb 10<sup>th</sup>; Exam #2 is due on March 9<sup>th</sup>; Exam #3 is due April 16<sup>th</sup>; and Exam #4 is due May 4<sup>th</sup>.

#### 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.

Final Grade	Final Points/Average
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.

Class Assignment	Due Date
<b>Week 1</b>	Jan 16th-20th
Read: Syllabus and Course Schedule	Jan 16th
Read: "15 Major Sociological Studies..."	Jan 16th
Watch: TEDx - The Wisdom of Sociology	Jan 16th
Discussion Board: Week 1 Post	Jan 18th
Discussion Board: Week 1 Response	Jan 20th
<b>Week 2</b>	Jan 21st-27th
Read: Ferris Introduction to Sociology	Jan 22nd
Read Mils Sociological Imagination	Jan 22nd
Watch: What is Sociology	Jan 22nd
Discussion Board: Week 2 Post	Jan 25th
Discussion Board: Week 2 Response	Jan 27th

<b>Week 3</b>	Jan 28th- Feb 3rd
Watch: Social Networks and Social Influence	Jan 29th
Watch: Symbols, Values, and Norms	Jan 29th
Watch: Cultures, Subcultures, and...	Jan 29th
Discussion Board: Week 3 Post	Feb 1st
Discussion Board: Week 3 Response	Feb 3rd
<b>Week 4</b>	Feb 4th-10th
Read Chapter 1	Feb 5th
Watch: Sociology Research Methods	Feb 5th
View: Lecture Chapter 1	Feb 5th
Exam #1 Review Guide	Feb 8th
Take Exam #1	Feb 10th
<b>Week 5</b>	Feb 11th-17th
Read Chapter 2	Feb 12th
Watch: Sociological Paradigms & Theories	Feb 12th
Watch: Sociology and the Scientific Method	Feb 12th
View: Lecture Chapter 2	Feb 12th
Discussion Board: Week 5 Post	Feb 15th
Discussion Board: Week 5 Response	Feb 17th
<b>Week 6</b>	Feb 18th-24th
Read Chapter 3	Feb 19th
Watch: Henrietta Lacks, the Tuskegee...	Feb 19th
Watch: TEDx Trust in Research	Feb 19th
View: Lecture Chapter 3	Feb 19th
Discussion Board: Week 6 Post	Feb 22nd
Discussion Board: Week 6 Response	Feb 24th
<b>Week 7</b>	Feb 25th- March 2nd
Read: Humphreys Ethics	Feb 26th
Read: Example of Assessing Ethics...	Feb 26th
Watch: Ethical Sociology	Feb 26th
Watch: Deviance	Feb 26th
Due: Application Assignment #1	March 2nd
<b>Week 8</b>	March 3rd-9th
Read Chapter 4	March 4th
Watch: Examples of Sociological Methods & Studies	March 4th
View: Lecture Chapter 4	March 4th
Exam #2 Review Guide	March 7th
Discussion Board: Week 8 Post	March 7th
Take Exam #2	March 9th

Discussion Board: Week 8 Response	March 9th
<b>Spring Break- No Classes</b>	<b>March 10th-17th</b>
<b>Week 9</b>	March 18th-23rd
Read Chapter 8	March 19th
Watch: Sampling Methods and Bias with Surveys	March 19th
View: Lecture Chapter 8	March 19th
Discussion Board: Week 9 Post	March 21st
Discussion Board: Week 9 Response	March 23rd
<b>Week 10</b>	March 24th-30th
Read: Chapter 7	March 25th
Watch: Research Methods: Experiments	March 25th
View: Lecture Chapter 7	March 25th
Discussion Board: Week 10 Post	March 28th
Discussion Board: Week 10 Response	March 30th
<b>No Class on Friday- Holiday Break</b>	
<b>Week 11</b>	March 31st- April 6th
Read: "The Mark of a Criminal Record"	April 1st
Watch: Race, Employment, and a Criminal Record	April 1st
Watch: Racial/Ethnic Prejudice & Discrimination	April 1st
Due: Application Assignment #2	April 6th
<b>Week 12</b>	April 7th-13th
Read Chapter 10	April 8th
View: Lecture Chapter 10	April 8th
Exam #3 Review Guide	April 11th
Take Exam #3	April 13th
<b>Week 13</b>	April 14th-20th
Read Chapter 9	April 15th
Watch: Ethnographic Method	April 15th
Watch: The Seduction of Gangs	April 17th
View: Lecture Chapter 9	April 17th
<b>Week 14</b>	April 21st-27th
Read: Chapter 11	April 22nd
Watch: Telling a Complete Story with Qualitative...	April 22nd
View: Lecture Chapter 11	April 22nd
Discussion Board: Week 14 Post	April 25th
Discussion Board: Week 14 Response	April 27th
<b>Week 15</b>	April 28th- May 4th
Watch: Why we do what we do	April 29th



Exam #4 Review Guide	May 1st
Discussion Board: Week 15 Post	May 2nd
Discussion Board: Week 15 Response	May 4th
Take Exam #4	May 4th

## **University and Class Policies**

### **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.

### **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.

### **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).

### **Services 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/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.