

SOCIOLOGY 3210 – SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Fall 2012

9:20 – 10:15 MWF, 224 Rogers-Stout Hall

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Nick Berigan (berigan@etsu.edu)

TEACHING ASSISTANT: Chris Becker (beckerc@goldmail.etsu.edu)

OFFICE HOURS: 218A Rogers-Stout; 9:00-12:00 Tuesdays and by appointment

REQUIRED TEXT BOOK: *The Basics of Social Research, Fifth Edition* by Earl Babbie (ISBN 978-0-495-81224-1)

LEARNING OUTCOMES: The goal of this course is to introduce students to research methods used by sociologists. By the end of the class, you will learn to do the following:

- Understand and utilize the scientific method in sociological research.
- Consider the ethical aspects of conducting sociological research.
- Collect research data using experiments, surveys, qualitative field studies, and content analysis.
- Summarize your results in a scholarly paper.

REQUIREMENTS: Because the course requires that you work with a number of difficult concepts, I will require much work to ensure that you understand and can apply what you're learning. The pace of the assignments will get progressively faster as we get further into the semester. There will be two exams: one midterm and one final. The exams will cover both the lecture material and the information from the readings. A fair amount of the material from the book will not be covered in lecture, so make sure you read and take notes over each assigned chapter. In addition to the exams, grades will entail the following:

- **Quizzes/Reading Activities:** You will be given a quiz on each day a reading assignment is due. If you take notes over the reading assignment, you may use your notes on the quiz.
 - *Quizzes will assess your understanding of the concepts presented in the text, and to encourage thinking about the topic.*
- **IRB Certification:** By law, researchers (such as sociologists) must first be certified as being competent in understanding the ethical considerations of research. Create an account and take the online course at www.citiprogram.com. You must print off the certification and hand it to me by the posted date; otherwise you will receive scores of zero for your research exercises and final paper. NO EXCEPTIONS.
 - *IRB Certification will help with your understanding of the ethical aspects of research, and make you eligible to conduct social research.*
- **Research Exercises:** Once we start learning about the various research methods, you will be given the opportunity to practice using the method. We will spend two days lecturing

about the method, and on the third day you will turn in a proposed way to try the method yourself (you get to pick what you do). The third day will entail an open discussion of our proposals, and so you can use this opportunity to improve your research exercises. Afterward, you will have time to actually conduct the research project around town. After conducting the research exercise, you will write a brief summary which provides the results (as dictated by the assignment).

- *Research exercises will give you experience conducting research.*
- ***Research Paper:*** Using the same research exercise as you used for your presentation, you will write the findings of the exercise as if it were to be submitted to a sociological journal. More information on the research paper will come later in the semester.
 - *The research paper will assess your ability to conduct original research, and to summarize your findings in a scholarly paper.*

GRADES: The grades will be determined as follows: 30% from the exams (one midterm and the final), 40% from the presentation and research paper (presentation, comments on others' presentations, and final paper), and 30% from the research exercises. No work will be accepted late without proper documentation (see the student handbook).

Grades are as follows: 94-100% A, 90-93.99% A-, 87-89.99% B+, 84-86.99% B, 80-83.99% B-, 77-79.99% C+, 74-76.99% C, 70-73.99% C-, 67-69.99% D+, 60-66.99% D, Under 60% F.

CLASS POLICIES

- **ADA Statement:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination 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 accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services (423-439-8346, or Room 326 CULP) to make appropriate arrangements and then contact me about those arrangements.
- In accordance with general University regulations, I reserve the right to automatically fail any student who is gone for more than three weeks worth of class periods. If you have a conflict with your class schedule which will make it difficult for you to be on time, or if you will need to attend any University-sponsored events, please let me know ASAP.
- You are responsible for everything that happens in class whether you are present in class or not. This includes but is not limited to announcements, schedule and syllabus changes, handouts, etc.
- Cheating and/or plagiarism will result in the pursuit of appropriate disciplinary action. Consult the student handbook for definitions of these terms.
- **Late Policy:** With the exception of an excused absence (e.g., sickness, death in the family, University-sponsored activities), late work will not be accepted. If you have an

emergency which will prevent you from having an assignment in on time, let me know ahead of the due date and we can work something out.

- You will have the option to turn in some, but not all, of the in-class assignments on D2L. For those which are turned in during class, please use lined notebook paper and remove all frayed edges before turning in any written assignment. Also, please use manuscript, rather than cursive. *If I cannot read your handwriting, I will mark your answer wrong.*
- Please turn off your cell phone when class starts. If I catch you using it in any capacity, I reserve the right to excuse you from class for the day. Let me know ahead of time if there is an emergency, etc. which requires access your phone during class.
- Please allow me a 24-hour e-mail blackout period before the exam. You need to give me proper time to answer your questions while I tend to my other responsibilities.
- No laptop use during class.
- In accordance with FERPA Laws, I will not discuss your grades or your general academic performance with your parents.

SCHEDULE (*I may adjust the schedule as needed*)

	Date	Day	Topic	Assignment
August	27	<i>Mon</i>	Introduction	
	29	<i>Wed</i>	The Science of Sociology	Read Chapter 1
	31	<i>Fri</i>		
September	3	<i>Mon</i>	NO CLASS - HOLIDAY	
	5	<i>Wed</i>	Building Theories	Read Chapter 2
	7	<i>Fri</i>		
	10	<i>Mon</i>	Ethics of Research	Read Chapter 3
	12	<i>Wed</i>		
	14	<i>Fri</i>		
	17	<i>Mon</i>	Research Design	Read Chapter 4
	19	<i>Wed</i>		
	21	<i>Fri</i>		IRB Certification
	24	<i>Mon</i>	Turning Theories into Measurements	Read Chapter 5
	26	<i>Wed</i>		
	28	<i>Fri</i>		
October	1	<i>Mon</i>	Indexes, Scales, and Typologies	Read Chapter 6
	3	<i>Wed</i>		
	5	<i>Fri</i>	Sampling	Read Chapter 7
	8	<i>Mon</i>		
	10	<i>Wed</i>	Review for Exam	
	12	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Midterm Exam</i>	

	15	<i>Mon</i>	NO CLASS - FALL BREAK	
	17	<i>Wed</i>	Writing a Research Paper	Read Chapter 15
	19	<i>Fri</i>		
	22	<i>Mon</i>	Experiments	Read Chapter 8
	24	<i>Wed</i>		
	26	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Discuss Experiment</i>	Vignette Study
	29	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Discuss Experiences/Problems</i>	
	31	<i>Wed</i>	Survey Research	Read Chapter 9
November	2	<i>Fri</i>		Vignette Write-Up
	5	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Discuss Survey</i>	Survey
	7	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Discuss Experiences/Problems</i>	
	9	<i>Fri</i>	Qualitative Field Research	Read Chapter 10
	12	<i>Mon</i>		Survey Write-Up
	14	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Discuss Field Research Project</i>	Field Research Plan
	16	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Discuss Experiences/Problems</i>	
	19	<i>Mon</i>	Content Analysis	Read Chapter 11
	21	<i>Wed</i>		Field Research Write-Up
	23	<i>Fri</i>	NO CLASS - HOLIDAY	
	26	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Discuss Content Analysis Project</i>	Content Analysis Plan
	28	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Discuss Experiences/Problems</i>	
	30	<i>Fri</i>	Quantitative Data Analysis	Read Chapter 14
December	3	<i>Mon</i>		Content Analysis Write-Up
	5	<i>Wed</i>	Review for Final Exam	
	7	<i>Fri</i>	Review for Final Exam	Final Paper Due

FINAL EXAM: Monday, December 10th at 8:00 AM