**Sociology 4996**

**Sociology: Capstone Course**

**Fall 2016**

**217 State Hall**

**Monday 4:30-8:10/ UGL LAB A**

**Professor**: David M. Merolla, PhD **Office**: 2253 FAB

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**Office** **Hours:** Tuesday/Thursday 12-2

**Teaching Assistant:** Whitney Hunt

**Email:** whitney.shepard@wayne.edu

**COURSE MATERIALS**

**Readings:**

All Required readings will be posted on Blackboard

**Software:**

This course requires the use of SPSS Statistical Software. Students may obtain a free rental copy of SPSS that you can install on your personal computer. You can obtain your copy at <https://commerce.wayne.edu/clearinghouse/> (click student software). Please contact me ASAP if you are having trouble getting access to SPSS. SPSS is also available in several WSU on campus computer labs:

https://library.wayne.edu/services/computing/labs/

**General Social Survey Data:**

You will use data from the General Social Survey to conduct your research. More information on the GSS can be found at: [www.norc.org/GSS+Website](http://www.norc.org/GSS+Website). A codebook which includes the question text can be found at: <http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Codebooks/GSS2014_CB.asp>

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course reviews and expands the knowledge of sociology majors and represents the culmination of your undergraduate sociological training. The main course requirement will be to develop an original empirical sociological research paper that includes a discussion of the research questions, a review of relevant literature, hypotheses, an analysis of quantitative data, and a presentation of findings. The paper will be modeled after manuscripts published in sociological journals. In addition, the course will discuss potential career paths for sociology majors and the process of applying for graduate school.

This course fulfills the university writing intensive requirement, which states: “All students must demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively with specialized or professional audiences by completing successfully the writing requirements (courses incorporating major writing assignments) specified by the departments.” Thus, writing is a critical part of the course requirements. Remember that the University has a great resource, the Writing Center, located on the second floor of the Adamany Undergraduate Library in room 2310. You can make an appointment at the Writing Center by calling 313-577-2544 or going on-line at http://clasweb.clas.wayne.edu/writing.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of the term students will be able to:

1. **Develop** a specific aim and research question for a research project.

2. **Locate** relevant sociological literature on a research topic using a scientific database.

3. **Chose** an appropriate theoretical/conceptual approach to understanding a sociological topic.

4. **Write** a critical literature review that **synthesizes** and **evaluates** information from research articles.

5. **Develop** testable hypotheses related to a research topic.

6. Use the SPSS to **generate** data analyses for frequencies,

descriptive statistics (variable means, medians, standard deviations), zero-order correlations, t-

tests, chi-square tests, regression analysis.

7. **Construct** tables to report statistical results.

8. Accurately **interpret** findings from statistical analyses.

9. **Draw** conclusions based on empirical patterns and discuss directions for future research and social policy.

10. **Develop** and give an oral presentation of your research findings using power point.

Your ability to learn these skills will be evaluated based mainly on two deliverables: A research paper and an oral presentation of research via a power point presentation.

**GENERAL COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance:** **Attendance is required**. It will be exceptionally difficult to succeed in this course without attending. Students may miss 1 course period without penalty. After 1 course, students will lose 2 points for each missed course period (if you miss 6 courses, you will get 0 attendance points). Students who arrive more than 30 minutes late to class will be counted as absent. For 4 weeks in the semester we will have class in computer Lab A of the UGL; missing more than 1 of these labs could affect your ability to complete your final paper.

**Homework Assignments.** Students are required to complete all assignments by the due date; students who have difficulty with a particular assignment are expected to contact the instructor to discuss these problems prior to the assignment due date**. Assignments not completed by the due date for any reason will not be eligible for full credit and will be evaluated at the instructor’s discretion.** All assignments must be submitted through the course Blackboard page. The homework assignments in this course build towards your final paper, if you fall behind you may not be able to catch up; **students who fall two homework assignments behind may be asked to drop the course.**

**Writing.** This course fulfills the Writing Intensive requirement for sociology majors. Appropriate grammar and style will consist of **20%** of the grade for each written assignment. **Writing standards will become more stringent as the term progresses.**

**Reading. Although this course does not have an assigned text, there are required readings nearly every week.** Students are required to read all course materials by the time class begins and notify the instructor if they have difficulty completing required reading. **Students are encouraged to ask questions about course readings in class.**

**Office Hours.** Office hours are designed for me to answer specific questions or assist with specific aspects of an assignment. Please come to office hours with questions ready and attempt to complete assignments independently prior to coming to office hours. If you think you will need more that 20 minutes of time, please schedule an appointment.

**Final Grades.** Final grades submitted by the instructor are **final.** If you believe that there has been a clerical error or other mistake you may inquire for an accounting of your grade, however, grades are based solely on your scores on course assignments and **will not be arbitrarily adjusted** at the end of the term.

**Academic Honesty.** Students are expected to display academic integrity in all of their work for this course. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism. Any student suspected of dishonesty in their work will receive a zero for the assignment in question and referred to the department chair for further disciplinary action. If you have any questions about academic honesty, please contact me immediately.

### Honor Code. Students are bound by the Wayne State University honor code that states: “Wayne State University holds its students to the highest academic standards. Pride in the University and in oneself requires students to maintain an environment free from any breach of academic honesty. As lifelong representatives of Wayne State, we seek to cultivate honor, integrity, and civility in order to ensure that we earn our degree honestly and that we provide an ethical platform for our continued success”

### Registration. Students may drop this class through September 28.  Classes that are dropped do not appear on the transcript. Beginning the fifth week of class students are no longer allowed to drop but must withdraw from classes. It is the student’s responsibility to request the withdrawal through the registrar’s office. Failure to do so will result in a grade of F. Students must be passing at the time of the request to receive a grade of ‘WP.’ After November 13, you cannot withdrawal from the course and you will receive a letter grade. Incomplete ‘I’ grades are given in very limited circumstances to students who are passing the course and cannot complete final assignments due to extraordinary circumstances. Students that get a grade of incomplete must complete all assignments by February 1 2017.

### Disability. If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you need to register with Student Disability Services (SDS) for coordination of your academic accommodations. The Student Disability Services (SDS) office is located at 1600 David Adamany Undergraduate Library in the Student Academic Success Services department. SDS telephone number is 313-577-1851 or 313-577-3365 (TDD only). Once you have your accommodations in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss your special needs. Student Disability Services’ mission is to assist the university in creating an accessible community where students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience at Wayne State University.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

All assignments will be described in detail in class; all assignments are graded on a 10 point scale.

1. Attendance and Participation (10%)
2. Research description/ Specific Aims (5%) **Due: (9/26)**
3. Annotated bibliography (10%) **Due: (10/10)**
4. Table of Correspondence and Hypothesis (10%) **Due: (10/24)**
5. Literature Review Outline (10%) **Due: (11/7)**
6. Tables and Figures (10%) **Due: (11/14)**
7. Final Paper (30%) **Due: (12/19)**
8. Final Presentation (10%)

**COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to change)**

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**Week 3: September 12**

Introduction to the Course; Course Requirements and Syllabi; Review of the sociological perspective \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Week 4: September 19**

Starting the Research Process; Formulating a Research Question; Finding Relevant Research;

**Reading:**

Aneshensel, Carol. 2002. Introduction to Theory-Based Data Analysis.

Aneshensel, Carol. 2002. The Logic of Theory-Based Data Analysis.

**Week 5: September 26**

Understanding Observational Survey Research; Correlation and Causation; Control Variables

**Reading:**

Aneshensel, Carol. 2002. Associations and Relationships.

Aneshensel, Carol. 2002. The Focal Relationship: Demonstrating Internal Validity.

Ferguson, Christopher. 2014. The Uses and Misuses of Bivariate Correlations: The Case of Video Game

Violence Research

**Week 6: October 3**

­Using theory, formulating a literature review

**Reading:**

Atkins, Liz and Susance Wallace. 2012. Writing a Literature Review.

Walliman, Nicholas. 2006. Writing a Literature Review.

Pride, W. James. 2001. Avoiding Writing Traps.

**Week 7: October 10**

Concepts, Measurement; Validity and Reliability

**Reading**

Mueller, Charles. 2004. Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement

Angnot, Jacques and Patricio Milano. 2001. Linking Concepts and Data

**Week 8: October 17; Meet in Lab A**

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Associations

**Reading**

Collier, Jacqueline. 2010. Increasing the Usability of Data.

Collier, Jacqueline. 2010. Syntax for Manipulating Numeric Variables.

Collier, Jacqueline. 2010. Syntax for Data Exploration.

**Week 9: October 24: Meet in Lab A**

Regression Analysis SPSS

**Reading:**

Kahane, Leo. 2008. An Introduction to Linear Regression Analysis.

Collier, Jacqueline. 2010. Syntax for Linear and Logistic Regression Analysis

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**Week 10: October 31 Meet in Lab A**

**Reading:**

Linear Modelling: Regression and Logistic Regression

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**Week 11 November 7 Meet in Lab A**

Adding Control Variables to a Statistical Model

**Reading:**

Kahane, Leo. 2008. Multiple Regression Analysis.

Collier, Jacqueline. 2010. Syntax for Linear and Logistic Regression Analysis

Ma, Shang-Chun, Ian D. Rotherham and Shang-Min Ma. 2014. Winning Matches in Tennis Grand Slam Men’s Singles: A Logistic Model

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**Week 12 November 14 :**

Interpreting Results

**Readings:**

Aneshensel, Carol. 2002. Ruling Out Alternative Theoretical Explanations: Additional

Independent Variables

Aneshensel, Carol. 2002. Elaborating the Focal Relationship: Antecedent and Consequent Variables.

Aneshensel, Carol. 2002. . Ruling Out Alternative Explanations: Spuriousness and Control Variables.

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**Week 13: November 21**

Making an Effective Presentation

**Week 14: November 28**

Individual Meetings

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**Week 15: December 5**

Student Presentations

**Week 16: December 12**

Student Presentations

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