

- Course: SOC 4200: Methods of Social Research, Fall 2013
- Instructor: Megan Petersen- Doctoral Candidate, Wayne State University  
M.A. Sociology- Wayne State University  
M.A. Educational Psychology- Eastern Michigan University  
B.S. Education- Wayne State University
- Meeting Days & Times: August 28-December 17, Mondays 5:30-9:10, 025 State
- Office Hours: Monday 9:10-9:30 or By Appointment
- Contact: ae2925@wayne.edu or megan.petersen@wayne.edu  
Sociology Phone: 313-577-2930 (Not a personal line, you can leave a message with Chris Cowen or Michelle Love.)
- Required Text: *The Basics of Social Research*, Earl Babbie (any edition)  
Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard
- Catalogue Description: An elementary research methods course that covers the process of doing social research, including research design, data collection techniques, processing and analysis of data, as well as the interpretation of data. 4 Cr.
- Late Work Policy: Late work is not accepted without penalty, see individual assignment information for penalty details. All assignments MUST be turned in by the last class meeting (Dec 16) to be counted towards your grade.
- Withdrawals & Incompletes: Incompletes are only given in cases of medical or other verifiable emergencies. The withdrawal system at WSU is student-initiated, so if you are hoping to withdraw from the course you must do so yourself via pipeline. Students who do not formally withdraw from the course but stop attending and do not complete the course requirements will receive a failing grade in the course. Note that Sept. 11, 2013 is the last day to drop a class with tuition cancellation and November 9, 2013 is the last day to withdraw from class.
- Academic Dishonesty: Assignments must be clearly distinguishable from those of other students or sources. Plagiarism is considered cheating; any quoted material must be placed in quotation marks with proper references to the author included. "You may use statistical data or paraphrase other published works, but **ONLY** if you provide the complete citation, which includes author's last name and year. ***This means even if you use your own words, but the ideas are from something you read, you must give credit to that author***" (Brumley, 2008). If you think you might be plagiarizing, then you probably ARE! Copying entire paragraphs from sources is not appropriate even if citations are provided. Evidence of cheating or plagiarizing will result in automatic failure of the test/assignment and possibly the course. Please see the student code of conduct for more information on WSU's policies regarding academic integrity <http://doso.wayne.edu/student-conduct/PDF-Documents/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20Brochure.pdf>
- Disability Services: If you are a student with a disability or condition (physical, emotional, or other) that might affect your performance in this course, you should inform me of this as early as possible. Students with a range of disabilities can also receive help from Student Disability Services, located in the Undergraduate Library (phone number: (313) 577-1851; email: [studentdisability@wayne.edu](mailto:studentdisability@wayne.edu); website: <http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>).

### Grades & Extra Credit:

There are no extra credit assignments offered in this course. You can, however, help your grade tremendously by attending every single class meeting and earn some “cushion” points in that way. All written assignments will be graded via rubrics, which help to communicate clearly how grades have been assigned. You will be allowed to re-submit assignments for additional points, with the exception of journal entries. I implore you to not lower yourself to groveling for a grade you did not earn at the end of the semester (or ever!). **Grades are not magically bestowed by me but are earned through your effort.** I am careful to grade assignments as quickly as I receive them because I respect and honor your time and effort and ask that you do the same for me. Deadlines are created partially so that I have enough time to devote the attention and care to your assignments that they deserve. Submitting assignments late shows disrespect towards everyone (you, me, and your fellow classmates).

### Assignment Format:

All assignments must be typed, using standard (1 inch) margins, 12 pt. font (either Times New Roman or Arial), double spaced and follow ASA style guidelines for citations.

### Course Objectives- Upon successful completion of this course you will be able to:

- use the internet to conduct literature searches.
- carefully consider ethical dilemmas faced in research.
- understand how to organize and structure a literature review.
- articulate an answerable research question and develop appropriate hypotheses.
- understand the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research designs.
- understand the basics of sampling and be able to differentiate different sampling methods.
- understand the basics of measurement.
- evaluate existing research.
- successfully write a research proposal.

### General Course Expectations

- Attend all class meetings and actively **participate in** class.
- Contact me **immediately** when a class is missed.
- Read and complete all required assignments prior to coming to class.
- Ask questions right away if you do not understand an assignment!
- Get additional help from the The David Adamany Undergraduate Library Writing Center if necessary.
- Respect everyone in the classroom. This includes, but is not limited to, respectful means of communication, not disrupting class by using phones or other technology in ways that is not related to class, and quiet consumption of food & beverages.
- The best way to contact me is via e-mail. Please be sure to communicate in a professional manner.
- Blackboard and e-mail will be used by me to communicate with you. Be sure to check both frequently throughout the semester.
- Missing class does not excuse you from an assignment. If proper documentation is not presented you will earn less than full (or zero) credit on the assignment/assessment.
- Don't procrastinate! This goes both for assignments and in contacting me with questions or concerns.
- You can expect prompt, fair and thorough feedback from me regarding assignments and grades.
- **Have fun and get something out of class! I promise that this will not be a waste of your time as long as you put forth effort and keep an open mind.**

## Assignments & Grading

- **10 Reading Journal Entries:** Nearly every week you will be required to complete a journal entry regarding that week's assigned readings. These reflections should be approximately 1-2 pages and will be typed and uploaded into blackboard. There is a deadline for these journals on blackboard, you will not be able to upload your journal past the assigned due date and time, which is Monday at 5:30 p.m. (class start time). Once the window has closed on journal submissions you will not be able to turn them in.
  - In the first part of your journal entry summarize the assigned readings for that week (both from the textbook and **any assigned blackboard readings**). This section should be 3-4 paragraphs in length and is the bulk of your journal entry. However, in depth details are not necessary as this is partially an exercise in the ability to summarize the main ideas of scholarly material.
  - In the second part of your journal entry discuss how the readings are relevant to your research interests (even if those interests are limited to the required assignments in this class). **Remember that the focus of this course is on research, so focus on the research methods, not the topic, of any assigned articles.** Finally, briefly discuss any concerns, criticisms or other opinions you have regarding the readings. This section should be 2-3 paragraphs in length.
- **Article Comparison Paper & Presentation:** For this assignment you will be asked to compare two articles written on the same research findings, one from a peer reviewed scholarly journal and the other from a mainstream media outlet. You will need to look for any discrepancies between the two in addition to noting what details the mainstream media piece left out. This paper will be approximately 3-4 pages in length. The articles you will use, specific instructions and rubric will be provided two weeks prior to the assignment due date. You will also be required to briefly summarize your paper to the class.
- **Quantitative Research Project Proposal\*:** In this paper you will be asked to identify a research topic that you are interested in, a research question and hypotheses, relevant variables and to develop a literature review related to this topic. You will then develop an appropriate quantitative methods research PLAN and discuss how the data would be analyzed. More specific instructions and a rubric for the project will be provided two weeks prior to the due date.
- **Qualitative Research Project Proposal\*:** In this paper you will be asked to identify a research topic that you are interested in (which can be the same one used in the quantitative paper), a research question and sub-questions, and to develop a literature review related to this topic. You will then develop an appropriate qualitative methods research PLAN and discuss how the data would be analyzed. More specific instructions and a rubric will be provided two weeks prior to the due date.
- **Final Exam:** The final exam will consist of 15 short essay questions, of which you will select 10 questions to answer. The questions will be provided for you in advance to help in preparation, but you will be required to write out your responses during the final exam period.
- **Attendance/Participation:** Attendance is critical, especially in a course that meets weekly. This is not a standard lecture course; class will be comprised of many group activities, discussions & personal investigations. Points will be rewarded for each class attended 100% (arriving on time and staying for the duration of class). Students who arrive late or leave early (15 minutes) will receive partial attendance credit. **Students who attend class, but who do not participate, will also earn partial attendance credit.** Students may miss a total of 4 classes, no questions asked, without losing credit. Students who miss fewer than 4 classes will earn extra credit. Please contact me immediately if you are going to miss class for some reason and be sure to check blackboard for any handouts or announcements that you may have missed.

**\* PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU ARE NOT ACTUALLY CONDUCTING RESEARCH OR COLLECTING DATA FOR THIS COURSE!**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Pts. Each</u>	<u>Total Points</u>	<u>Grade %</u>
<b>Attendance &amp; Participation</b>	10**	2.5	25	12.5%
<b>Reading Journals</b>	10	5	50	25%
<b>Article Comparison</b>	1	25	25	12.5%
<b>Quantitative Proposal</b>	1	25	25	12.5%
<b>Qualitative Proposal</b>	1	25	25	12.5%
<b>Final Exam</b>	1	50	50	25%

<b>A</b> 185-200 Points	<b>A-</b> 179-184.5 Points	<b>B+</b> 173-178.5 Points	<b>B</b> 165-172.5 Points
<b>B-</b> 159-164.5 Points	<b>C+</b> 153-158.5 Points	<b>C</b> 145-152.5 Points	<b>C-</b> 139-144.5 Points
<b>D+</b> 133-138.5 Points	<b>D</b> 125-132.5 Points	<b>D-</b> 119-124.5 Points	<b>E</b> 0 -118.5 Points

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Assignments Due in Class</u>
9/9	Human Inquiry & Science Paradigms, Theory & Research	Babbie Chapters 1 & 2	
9/16	Ethics & Politics of Social Research Research Design	Babbie Chapters 3 & 4	Journal Entry 1 due by 5:30
9/23	Conceptualization, etc... Indexes, Scales & Typologies	Babbie Chapters 5 & 6	Journal Entry 2 due by 5:30
9/30	Reading & Writing Social Research	Babbie Chapter 15 Blackboard Reading 1	Journal Entry 3 due by 5:30
10/7	Sampling	Babbie Chapter 7	Article Comparison Paper & Presentation Due in Class
10/14	Experiments	Babbie Chapter 8 Blackboard Reading 2	Journal Entry 4 due by 5:30
10/21	Survey Research	Babbie Chapter 9 Blackboard Reading 3	Journal Entry 5 due by 5:30
10/28	Quantitative Data Analysis	Babbie Chapter 14 Blackboard Reading 4	Journal Entry 6 due by 5:30
11/4	Qualitative Field Research	Babbie Chapter 10	Quantitative Research Project Proposal Due in Class
11/11	Unobtrusive Research	Babbie Chapter 11 Blackboard Reading 5	Journal Entry 7 due by 5:30
11/18	Evaluation Research	Babbie Chapter 12 Blackboard Reading 6	Journal Entry 8 due by 5:30
11/25	Qualitative Data Analysis	Babbie Chapter 13 Blackboard Reading 7	Journal Entry 9 due by 5:30
12/2	Autoethnography & Mixed Methods	Blackboard Reading 8 Blackboard Reading 9	Journal Entry 10 due by 5:30
12/9	Final Exam Review		Qualitative Research Project Proposal due in Class
12/16	Final Exam		

**\*\* Class meets 14 times during the semester; you can miss four classes without losing any attendance points. Students with perfect attendance will earn extra credit up to a maximum of 10 points (4x2.5).**