

- Course: SOC 4200: Methods of Social Research, Spring/Summer 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: May 5, 2013- August 1, 2013, Wednesdays 5:30-9:10, 127 State
- Office Hours: Wednesday 5:00-5:30, 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: *Understanding Research*, Lawrence W. Neuman
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 other than the final paper MUST be turned in by the last class meeting (July 24) 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 May 18, 2013 is the last day to drop a class with tuition cancellation and July 13, 2013 is the last day to withdraw from a 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; website: <http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>).

Appropriate Sources:

You have likely been told numerous times that not all internet sources are appropriate for scholarly work. That mantra will hold particularly true in this course. While the internet will be useful in helping you locate journal articles, it is imperative that we strive to maintain a community of intellectual rigor as academics. This means that you are only to use the Internet for limited research, restricted almost entirely to downloading articles from peer-reviewed journals available through the WSU library. A *partial* list of the types of peer-reviewed journals that you may gather research from is listed below. You may NOT use magazines, newspapers, documents, papers, television programs or descriptions posted on websites on the Internet.

Social problems	Sociological Forum
American Sociological Review	Sociological Perspectives
Gender and Society	Sociological Quarterly
Social Forces	Theory and Society
American Journal of Sociology	City and Community
Contemporary Sociology	European Journal of Social Theory
Latin American Research Review	Sociological Spectrum
Journal of Marriage and the Family	Demography
European Sociological Review	Journal of Health and Social Behavior
Annual Review of Sociology	Sociological Inquiry

Assignment Format:

All assignments must be typed, using standard (1 inch) margins, 12 pt. font (either Times New Roman or Arial), and double spaced. Assignments may be e-mailed, but note that until you receive a confirmation message from me you have not successfully submitted your assignment.

Citation Guidelines:

You must use ASA/ASR/Chicago Style guidelines for Bibliography/Text Citations.

For a Book:

Eckstein, Susan. 1989. *Power and Popular Protest*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

For a Chapter in an edited Book:

Castells, Manuel. 1982. "Squatters and Politics in Latin America: A Comparative Analysis of Urban Social Movements in Chile, Peru, and Mexico." In *Towards a Political Economy of Urbanization in Third World Countries*, edited by Helen Safa. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

For a Journal Article:

Fox, Jonathan. 1994. "The Difficult Transition from Clientelism to Citizenship: Lessons from Mexico." *World Politics* 46:151-184.

Paraphrasing of multiple authors:

In recent years, scholars of social sciences have begun to recognize the importance of non-governmental organizations, particularly as advocates for citizenship rights (Alvarez 1997, 1998; Lind 2000; Schild 1998).

Paraphrasing of only one author:

The term "non-governmental organization" was coined back in 1945 because the United Nations needed to differentiate between its participating country members and international private associations (Willetts 1996).

Direct quote using author's name:

As Segarra (1997:489) argues the "apparent failure of the state-centered model of development has provoked increasing interest in the role that associations in civil society can play."

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.
- demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between theory and research.
- successfully write a research proposal.

General Course Expectations

- I expect students to attend class and to **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.
- **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.**

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 a rubric which helps to communicate clearly how grades have been assigned. You will be allowed to re-submit assignments for additional points, with the exception of the final project. Resubmissions will be accepted only if completed within one week of when the assignment was returned. 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. Keep in mind that I have responsibilities to post grades on time, so late submission of the final project cannot be tolerated. 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).

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 5:30 p.m. (class start time). You may miss one journal entry during the course of the semester.
 - 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. For example, for readings regarding research findings you do not need to include any numbers reported or statistical tools employed, simply stick to the overall conclusions drawn from the data.
 - 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). This section should be 2-3 paragraphs in length.
 - Finally, briefly discuss any concerns, criticisms or other opinions you have regarding the readings. This should be the briefest section of your journal, 1-2 paragraphs maximum.
 - While formal citations are not required in journal entries please clearly identify the reading material you are summarizing.
- **Research Proposal Project Parts 1-3:** Throughout the semester you will work towards the development of a research proposal, which you will complete in stages over the course of the semester. Each part of the research project serves to help with the final research project and has specific instructions. It is important that you consider the feedback provided by me for each of these assignments in the final research proposal project. Refer to the course schedule for due dates. Specific instructions and rubrics for each part of the project will be provided at least two weeks prior to the due date.
 - **Research Project Part 1 – Introduction & Literature Review (4-6 pages):** In this paper you will be asked to identify a research topic that you are interested in, the specific research question, hypotheses, sub-research questions, a discussion of relevant variables in addition to developing a thorough literature review related to your topic.
 - **Research Project Part 2- Quantitative Methods (4-6 pages):** In this paper you will be asked to take the research topic identified in the first paper and develop an appropriate research plan utilizing a quantitative methodology including analysis of validity and reliability issues.
 - **Research Project Part 3- Qualitative Methods (4-6 pages):** In this paper you will be asked to continue with the original research topic and develop an appropriate research plan utilizing a qualitative methodology including analysis of validity and reliability issues..
- **Final Research Project & Presentation (approximately 10 pages):** The final research project will serve as a cumulative exercise in which you will merge the first three papers into a (nearly) fully developed research plan, very similar to a dissertation proposal. You will also be required to briefly present your plan to your fellow classmates.
- **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 may miss a total of 2 classes, no questions asked, without losing credit. Students who miss fewer than 2 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.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Pts. Each</u>	<u>Total Points</u>	<u>Grade %</u>
Research Project Parts 1-3	3	25	75	30%
Final Research Project & Presentation	1	100	100	40%
Reading Journal	9*	5	45	18%
Attendance & Participation	10**	3	30	12%

A 232-250 Points	A- 224-231 Points	B+ 217-223 Points	B 207-216 Points
B- 199-206 Points	C+ 192-198 Points	C 182-191 Points	C- 174-181 Points
D+ 167-173 Points	D 157-166 Points	D- 149-156 Points	E 0 -148

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Assignments Due in Class</u>
5/8	Why do research?	- Neuman Chapters 1 & 2	Journal Entry 1- Due 12
5/15	Planning Research & Ethical Considerations	- Neuman Chapters 3 - Blackboard Reading #1	Journal Entry 2
5/22	Sampling & Measurement	- Neuman Chapters 4 & 5	Journal Entry 3
5/29	Quantitative Methods Week 1	- Neuman Chapters 6 & 7 - Blackboard Reading #2	Journal Entry 4 Research Project Part 1
6/5	Quantitative Methods Week 2	- Neuman Chapters 8 & 9 - Blackboard Reading #3	Journal Entry 5
6/12	Catch Up & Project Work Day		
6/19	Qualitative Methods Week 1	- Neuman Chapters 10 & 11	Journal Entry 6 Research Project Part 2
6/26	Qualitative Methods Week 2	-Blackboard Reading #4 & 5	Journal Entry 7
7/3	No Class Meeting – Project Work Day & Catch Up	-Blackboard Reading #6	Journal Entry 8
7/10	Mixed Methods	-Blackboard Reading #7 & 8	Journal Entry 9 Research Project Part 3
7/17	Writing A Research Report	- Neuman Chapter 12	Journal Entry 10
7/24	Summary & Reflections		
7/31	Final Exam Week		Final Research Project & Presentations

* Note that while there are 10 journal entries listed on the syllabus, you must only complete 9.

** Class meets 12 times during the semester; you can miss two classes without losing any attendance points. Students with perfect attendance will earn extra credit.