**Advanced Sociological Research Methods**

**Sociology 7200**

**Fall 2019**

**Course Time: Tuesday 5:00-7:30pm**

**Course Location: 224 Manoogian**

**Instructor**: David M. Merolla, Ph.D.

**Office**: 2253 FAB

**Telephone**: 313-577-2930 (Main Sociology Number)

**Office Hours:** Thursday 2-4, or by appointment

**email**: dmerolla@wayne.edu

Readings:

Required course readings are available through either the WSU library system or the course Canvas page. Contact me immediately if you have problems obtaining course readings. Please do not pay to access a course reading.

Suggested/Supplemental Readings and Online Sources

• While not required you may find a research methods textbook to be a helpful supplement to the required readings. Any research methods text would be a sufficient supplement.

•There is a wealth of relevant resources available via Sage Research Methods Online, available through the WSU library system. I encourage you to take some time to familiarize yourself with this resource.

• The Social Science Jargon Buster may be a particularly useful tool to find definitions for unfamiliar terms used in the social sciences (see http://methods.sagepub.com/book/the-social-science-jargon-buster).

**Course Description:**

This course is the graduate level research methods survey course. This course will introduce students to the broad spectrum of research methodologies and approaches in the social sciences. The course will begin by reviewing the logic of scientific inquiry and empirical research, as well as the role of theory in the research process. In addition, students will learn how sociologists do research; topics including experimental design, measurement, survey research and sampling, qualitative research, unobtrusive methods and quasi-experimental designs will be covered. This class will focus both on the technical skills needed to perform sound social research, and how each aspect of the research process is related to the logic and philosophy of science. In addition, this course will familiarize students with debates and controversies with social science regarding the strengths and weaknesses of particular research methodologies, the appropriate role of sociology in society, and different perspectives on sociology as a science.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. **Formulate** a theoretically informed research question.
2. **Develop** an appropriate research design for a specific research question.
3. **Describe** the criteria for establishing causality in social research.
4. **Execute** an experimental study.
5. **Describe** the strengths and weaknesses associated with various research designs.
6. **Identify** the various ethical concerns associated with conducting research on human subjects.

**General Course Policies**

**Attendance:** Attendance in class is mandatory. Students who miss more than two meetings will not be eligible for a grade of A. Repeated absences may result in being asked to drop or withdraw from the course with a failing grade. Students arriving more than 15 minutes late will be counted as absent. Please contact me immediately if you cannot consistently be in class and ready to begin at 5:00pm.

**Assignments.** Students are required to complete all assignments by the due date; students who have difficulty with completing a particular assignment on time 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. Student cannot pass the course without completing all course assignments.**

**Reading.** Students are **required** to read all course materials by the time class begins and notify the instructor if they have difficulty completing or finding a required reading. I expect that some of the readings will be challenging, and will likely introduce concepts and terminology that is new to you. I encourage students to come to class with questions regarding readings. You are not assumed to know the course content prior to taking this course. The idea is that by taking this course, you will become more comfortable with advanced methodological concepts and ideas.

**Office Hours.** Open 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. I am on campus nearly every day, so if you need more that 20 minutes of time, please schedule an appointment.

**Focus.** Students are expected to be focused on class discussions during class time. Excessive cell phone use in class is strictly prohibited; students who are habitually distracted by cell phones in class will not be eligible for a final grade of A, no exceptions

**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 will be 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 or plagiarism, please contact me.

### Honor Code. Students are bound by the Wayne State University honor code which 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 11th. Classes that are *dropped* do not appear on the transcript. After September 11th, students are no longer allowed to drop but must *withdraw* from the class. It is the student’s responsibility to request the withdrawal through the registrar’s office. After November 10th you cannot withdrawal from the course and will receive a letter grade.

### Incomplete grades are given in very limited circumstances to students who are passing the course and cannot complete final assignments due to unforeseen, extenuating circumstances. Students that get a grade of incomplete must complete all assignments by January 31st 2020.

**Disability.** Wayne State University is working to build a community that is inclusive and welcoming to all people, including those with disabilities. If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services 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](callto:+1313-577-1851) or [313-577-3365](callto:+1313-577-3365) (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. Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from me without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services. 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. Please refer to the SDS website for further information about students with disabilities and the services we provide for faculty and students: <http://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>

**Assignments and Grading**

There are six categories of assessments in this course. These assessments provide students the ability to demonstrate achievement of course learning goals in a variety of ways.

1. **Preparation, Participation & Reading Summaries (15%)**

Students are expected to actively participate in course discussions and be ready to ask and answer questions in class. To facilitate full preparation and participation, you are required each week to prepare a 2-3 page essay wherein you concisely summarize some of the main epistemological or methodological insights offered by readings and or provide a critique of the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology of the assigned research articles. You should end your weekly summary paper by posing 5 questions related to the reading. These questions can be technical and specific or more general in nature and will be used to facilitate class discussion. Weekly summaries are due by **9am Tuesday** and should be emailed directly to me with the subject line: SOC 7200 Weekly Response. Twice during the semester you may skip submission of a weekly summary.

**2. Homework Assignments (15%)**

There will be 3 homework assignments in this course, 2 of which will be related to your final project. Each assignment will be explained in detail during class.

1. Annotated Bibliography & Research Idea

2. Table of Correspondence Assignment

3. Research Proposal Table of Correspondence

**3. Mid-term Exam (20%)**

There will be a take-home midterm exam that will require you to answer essay questions based on the course readings; this exam will be described in detail in class.

**4*.* Human Subjects Research Modules (10%)**

Each student in the class should go to the Wayne State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) website and complete each of the required CITI training modules (<http://research.wayne.edu/irb/mandatory-training.php>). After completing the mandatory modules you should receive an email indicating that you have completed the mandatory CITI training program. Forward this email to me so that I can give you credit for doing so.

**5. Research Proposal (30%)**

Each student will complete a research proposal for this class. All students will propose a survey based experimental study to assess a research question of their choice. This requirement means that each student’s survey must have a **manipulation** of some kind and that this manipulation will be assigned **randomly** to the survey respondents. You will produce hypotheses about the **causal effect** of your manipulation. This assignment will be explained in more detail during class.

**6**. **Multiple Choice Exam (10%)**

There will be a multiple choice exam at the end of the term.

**Course Schedule (subject to change)**

**Week 1 (September 3):** Introduction to the Course and Course Requirements

**Week 2 (September 10):** Understanding Social Science: The logic of (social) science and the research process

*Readings:*

Zald, Mayer. 1991 “Sociology as a Discipline: Quasi-Science and Quasi-Humanities.” *The American Sociologist* 22(3/4): 165-87.

Boelen, W.A. Marianne. 1992 “Street Corner Society: Cornerville Revisited.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. 21(1): 11-51.

Whyte, William, Foote. 1996. “Qualitative Sociology and Deconstructionism.” *Qualitative Inquiry* 2(2): 220-26.

Denzin, Norman. 1992. “Whose Cornerville Is It, Anyway.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 21 (1): 120-32.

Billsberry, Jon. “A Longitudinal Empirical Study into the Build-Up of Fluff in My Belly Button.” *Journal of Management Education* 37(5) 595-600.

**Week 3 (September 17):** Week 3 (September 15th): The Contested Terrain of Sociological Knowledge

*Readings*:

Duster, Troy. 2006. “Comparative Perspectives and Competing Explanations: Taking On the Newly Configured Reductionist Challenge to Sociology.” *American Sociological Review* 71(1):1-15.

Hammersley, Martyn. 2009. “Challenging Relativism: The Problem of Assessment Criteria*.” Qualitative Inquiry* 15 (1): 3- 29.

Burawoy, Michael. 2004. “Public Sociologies: Contradictions, Dilemmas, and Possibilities.” *Social Forces* 82(4): 1603-18.

Nielsen, Francois. 2004. “The Vacant “We”: Remarks on Public Sociology.” *Social Forces* 82(4): 1619-27.

Tittle, Charles R. 2004. “The Arrogance of Public Sociology.” *Social Forces* 82(4): 1639-43.

**Week 4 (September 24):** Experiments and the Logic of Causation I

*Readings*:

Marini, Margaret Mooney and Burton Singer. 1988. “Causality in the Social Sciences.” *Sociological Methodology* 18: 347-409.

Sampson, Robert. 2008. “Moving to Inequality: Neighborhood Effects and Experiments Meet Structure.” *American Journal of Sociology* 114(11): 189-231.

Hahl, Oliver, Minjae Kim, and Ezra W. Zukerman Silvan. 2018. “The Authentic Appeal of the Lying Demagogue: Proclaiming the Deeper Truth about Political Illegitimacy.” *American Sociological Review* 83(1): 1-33.

Howe, Kenneth. 2004. “A Critique of Experimentalism.” *Qualitative Inquiry* 10 (1): 42-61.

**Week 5 (October 1):** Experiments and the Logic of Causation II

*Readings:*

Phelan, Jo C. Bruce G. Link and Naumi Feldman. 2013. “The Genomic Revolution and Beliefs about Essential Racial Differences: A Backdoor to Eugenics?” *American Sociological Review* 78(2):167-91.

Lauster, Nathanael, and Adam Easterbrook. 2011. “No Room for New Families? A Field Experiment Measuring Rental Discrimination against Same-Sex Couples and Single Parents.” *Social Problems* 58(3):389-409.

Pager, Devah, Bart Bonikowski, and Bruce Western. 2009. “Discrimination in Low-Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment.” *American Sociological Review* 74(5): 777-799.

Rivera, Lauren A., and András Tilcsik. 2016. "Class Advantage, Commitment Penalty: The Gendered Effect of Social Class Signals in an Elite Labor Market." *American Sociological Review* 81(6): 1097-31.

**\*Assignment 1: Annotated Bibliography Due October 4th\***

**Week 6 (October 8):** Turning Concepts into Variables I

Clark, Lee Anna, and David Watson. 1995. “Constructing Validity: Basic Issues in Objective Scale Development.” *Psychological Assessment* 7(3): 309-19.

Tolman, Deborah and Michelle V. Porche. 2000. “The Adolescent Femininity Ideology Scale: Development and Validation of A New Measure for Girls.”  *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 24 (4): 365-76.

Henry, Patrick J., and David O. Sears. 2002. "The Symbolic Racism 2000 Scale." *Political Psychology* 23(2): 253-83.

Jones, Malia, Anne Pebley, and Narayan Sastry. 2011 “Eyes on the Block: Measuring Urban Physical Disorder through In-Person Observation.” Social Science Research, 40(2): 523-37.

Maxwell, Joseph. 2010. “Using Numbers in Qualitative Research.” *Qualitative Inquiry* 16(6): 475-82.

Cho, Jeaski and Allen Trent. 2006. “Validity in Qualitative Research Revisited.” *Qualitative Research* 6(3):319-40.

**Week 7 (October 15):** Turning Concepts into Variables II

Dobash, Russel, E Emerson Dobash, Margo Wilson and Martin Daly. 1992. The Myth of Sexual Symmetry in Marital Violence. *Social Problems* 39(1): 71-91.

Felson, Richard and Alison Cares. 2005. “Gender and the Seriousness of Assaults on Intimate Partners and Other Victims.” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 67(5):1182-95.

Sinozich, Sofi and Lynn Langton. 2014. *Rape and Sexual Assault Victimization Among College-Age Females 1995-2013*. US Department of Justice: Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 248471

Best, Joel. 2005. “Lies, Calculations and Constructions: Beyond “How to Lie with Statistics.” *Statistical Science* 20(3): 210-14.

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo and Gianpaolo Baiocchi. 2001. “Anything but Racism: How Sociologists Limit the Significance of Racism.” *Race and Society* 117-31.

**\*Table of Correspondence assignment due on October 18\***

**Week 8 (October 22): Midterm Exam: No Class**

**\*\*Midterm Exam Due by Midnight on October 27th\*\***

**Week 9 (October 29):** Doing Research: Doing Research: Sampling and estimation

Pp 1-90 in Groves et al, “Survey Methodology” (**Posted on Black Board)**

Kalleberg, Arne et al. 1990. “Comparing Organizational Sampling Frames.” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 35(4): 658-88.

Simmons, Alicia and Lawrence Bobo. 2015. “Can Non-Full-Probability Internet Surveys Yield Useful Data? A Comparison with Full-Probability Face-To- Face Surveys in the Domain of Race and Social Inequality Attitudes.” *Sociological Methodology* 45: 357-87.

Bhutta, C. B. (2012). Not by the book: Facebook as a sampling frame. *Sociological Methods &*

*Research*, 41(1), 57-88.

Ferguson, Douglas A. 2009. “Name-Based Cluster Sampling.” *Sociological Methods and Research* 37(4): 590-98.

Magnani, Robert, Keith Sabin, Todi Saidel and Douglas Heckathorn. 2005. Review of Sampling hard-to-reach and hidden populations for HIV surveillance.” *AIDS* 19 (S2): 567-72.

**Week 10 (November 5):** Doing Research: Qualitative Data Collection

Ambert, Anne-Marie, Patricia Adler, Peter Adler and Daniel Detzner. 1995. “Understanding and Evaluating Qualitative Research.” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 57(4):879-93.

Tracey, Sarah. 2010. “Qualitative Quality: Eight ‘Big Tent’ Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research.” *Qualitative Inquiry* 16(10): 837-51.

Small, Mario Luis. 2009. "How Many Cases Do I Need? 'On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research." *Ethnography* 10(1): 5-38.

Culyba, Rebecca, Carol A. Heimer and JuLeigh Coleman Petty. 2004. “The Ethnographic Turn: Fact, Fashion, or Fiction.” *Qualitative Sociology* 27 (4): 365-89.

Flick, Uwe. 2015. “Qualitative Inquiry- 2.0 at 20? Developments, Trends and Challenges for the Politics of Research.” *Qualitative Inquiry* 21: 599-608.

**Week 11: (November 12):** Doing Research: Content Analysis

*Read:*

Turner, Jacob. 2013. “A Longitudinal Content Analysis of Gender and Ethnicity Portrayals on ESPN’s *SportsCenter* from 1999 to 2009.” *Communication & Sport* 2(4): 302-37.

Brown, Hana. 2013. “Race, Legality, and the Social Policy Consequences of Anti-Immigration Mobilization.” *American Sociological Review* 78(2): 290-314.

Bonikowski Bart, Gidron Noam. 2015. “The populist style in American politics: Presidential campaign discourse, 1952–1996.” *Social Forces* 94(4):1593-621.

Ray, Rashawn, Melissa Brown, Neil Fraistat, and Edward Summers. "Ferguson and the death of Michael Brown on Twitter:# BlackLivesMatter,# TCOT, and the evolution of collective identities." *Ethnic and racial studies* 40, no. 11 (2017): 1797-1813.

**\*Table of Correspondence for Proposal due November 15th\***

**Week 12: (November 19):** Doing Research: Ethics and Controversies

American Sociological Association Code of Ethics (Find at ASA webpage)

Homan, Roger. 1980. “The Ethics of Covert Methods.” *The British Journal of Sociology* 31(1):46-59.

Haggerty, Kevin D. 2004. “Ethics Creep: Governing Social Science Research in the Name of Ethics.” *Qualitative Sociology* 27(4): 391- 413.

LaCour, Michael J. and Donald P. Green. 2014 “When Contact Changes Minds: An Experiment on Transmission of Support for Gay Equality.” *Science* 346(6215): 1366-69.

Singal, Jesse. 2015. “The Case of the Amazing Gay-Marriage Data: How a Graduate Student Reluctantly Uncovered a Huge Scientific Fraud.” <http://nymag.com/scienceofus/2015/05/how-a-grad-student-uncovered-a-huge-fraud.html>

Godlee, Fiona, Jane Smith, and Harvey Marcovitch. 2011. “Wakefield’s Article Linking MMR Vaccine and Autism was Fraudulent: Clear Evidence of Falsification of Data Should Now Close the Door on this Damaging Vaccine Scare.” *British Medical Journal* 342(7788): 64-66. (see <http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(97)11096-0.pdf)>.

**Week 13 (November 26): The Publication Process**

Safi, Michael. 2014 “Journal accepts bogus paper requesting removal from mailing list.” *The Guardian,* [*https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/nov/25/journal-accepts-paper-requesting-removal-from-mailing-list*](https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2014/nov/25/journal-accepts-paper-requesting-removal-from-mailing-list)

Mazieres, David and Eddie Kohler. “Get Me off Your F\*\*\*ing Mailing List.”

Bohannon John. 2013 “Who’s afraid of peer review.” *Science*:342(6154).

**Week 14 (December 3): In Class Exam**

**Week 15 (December 10): University Study Day- No Classes**

**Final Proposals Due December 17th**