

Social Research Methods
Sociology 397, CRN# 13280, WEB
Fall 2020 Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR

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TEACHING ASSISTANT

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide an introduction to research methods in social science. It is required for undergraduate sociology majors. This course will cover key relevant concepts, including reliability and validity, variables, and major research methods, such as field research, content analysis, survey research, and secondary data analysis.

You will use the analytic skills and knowledge learned this quarter to conduct an original research project next quarter (Winter 2021) in Sociology Research Project (SOC 398) – I strongly encourage you keep all of your lecture notes, lab assignments, and SPSS syntax and output files from this course for SOC 398. In order to take SOC 398, you must get a grade of **C** or higher in this course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the major concepts and methodologies in social science,
2. To learn how to search for existing literature,
3. To learn how to conduct qualitative research,
4. To learn how to conduct quantitative research,
5. To learn how to analyze data using a statistical computer program called SPSS, and
6. To evaluate sociological research critically.

PREREQUISITES

You must have already taken and passed the following classes: SOC 200 (Introduction to Sociology), and STAT 243 (Introduction to Probability and Statistics I, or equivalent).

TEXTBOOK AND READINGS

The Process of Social Research by Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, Jr., Bruce C. Straits, Oxford University Press: New York City.

Other readings/video clips will be accessible via D2L.

COURSE WEBSITE AND EMAIL

Check D2L (<http://d2l.pdx.edu>) and your email at least once a week for important announcements and additional readings.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CLASS

This is a completely on-line course. In order to succeed, you must have reliable internet access which will allow you to navigate/search the web, use email, attach and upload documents, and download and save files.

All assignments (including the lab assignments) must be turned in to D2L by when they are due.

- Two assignments (i.e. **Experiment Assignment** and **Survey Assignment**) will be available on D2L.
- There will be **four lab assignments** throughout the course, and you need IBM SPSS program to do the assignments. There are two options to access to the SPSS: 1) visit PSU's virtual computer lab (VLAB) at <https://www.pdx.edu/technology/blog/introducing-virtual-computer-lab> and follow the instructions (ODIN required); and 2) if you would like to have it installed in your personal computer, you rent the program. Currently, the program can be rented for six months (for \$49) as from a website at <https://www.hearne.software/spss-selection>.
- There will be eight **weekly quizzes** and **the final exam** throughout the course. Among the eight weekly quizzes, the lowest score will be dropped and the seven higher scores will be counted. The final exam will be cumulative and a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions.
- No late assignments will be accepted and no make-up exam for the final exam except in extreme circumstances. If you need an extension or need to make up the final exam, please email me.

Final grades are determined by the above course requirements:

Grading Procedures

Experiment Assignment (due on 10/13)	10%
Survey Assignment (due on 11/22)	10%
Four Lab Assignments	20% (4×5)
Weekly Quizzes	35% (7×5)
Final Exam	25%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

A	94 – 100%	B+	86 – 89%	C+	76 – 79%	D+	66 – 69%	F	≤ 59%
A-	90 – 93%	B	82 – 85%	C	72 – 75%	D	62 – 65%		
		B-	80 – 81%	C-	70 – 71%	D-	60 – 61%		

Extra Credit Opportunity

Extra credit opportunity may be available. Stay tuned!

COURSE POLICIES

Net Etiquette: In all of your course communications, whether formal or informal, you are required to observe the rules of net etiquette. They include the following.

- Avoid using all CAPS as it can give the impression that you are shouting. If you want to emphasize a point, use *asterisks* around a word or underline a word.
- Avoid personal attacks, otherwise known as "flaming." If you read a message that you suspect might be a personal attack, resist the temptation to fire off a response. Instead, let your response sit before sending or request that your instructor resolve the situation.
- If you disagree with a fellow student, describe your perspective clearly and politely rather than primarily criticizing her/his comments. Avoid any personal criticism or potentially offensive language.

Additional Rules for the Class:

- Be respectful when making a comment or responding to others' comments. This rule is the same as for face-to-face classroom behavior. However, as we are not going to have body language and tone of voice in our online communications, please use formal English appropriately.
- Be extra polite, careful, and kind about how you express yourself while posting to a discussion board, and emailing me or your colleagues.
- Avoid lengthy post, and avoid posting dozens of messages a week. In the interests of time only, which I know none of you have enough of, please work on being succinct.
- Avoid the twitter and text message abbreviations. Not everyone knows them.
- Finally, if you run into any net etiquette-related problems—if something has offended or hurt your feelings, for instance—please e-mail me directly about it. I would like to be aware of any problems.

Writing Tips: All of the assignments for this course should be with double-spacing, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins. Please follow ASA style guidelines when you cite reference(s) in your assignments. I provide several resources that would help you write your written assignments as below. They will be also accessible via D2L.

- **Quick Tips for ASA Style:**
https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_ASA_Style.pdf

- **Plagiarism Resources:**
<https://www.slideshare.net/peter1t/an-introduction-to-plagiarism>
- **How to Avoid Plagiarism:**
<https://library.pdx.edu/diy/avoid-plagiarism>

Policy on Academic Dishonesty: Students who violate PSU rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the university. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of PSU, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For more information on university policies check the web page (<http://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct#AcademicDishonesty>).

In the context of this course, the first incident of academic dishonesty (including unauthorized collaboration on course assignments) will result in a zero for the assignment. Any further future incidents will result in an F for the course.

Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities: PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please discuss with me.

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations.

During the pandemic, DRC will hold appointments and drop-ins over the phone, via Zoom, and Google Hangouts. You can also email them at drc@pdx.edu or call us at 503-725-4150 and leave a detailed message. Someone will call you back soon. You can also “visit” their [virtual front desk](#) Monday-Friday 12pm-4pm. In this Zoom space, students can meet with someone to ask your questions, get put into the drop-in queue, or take care of other business as you would have at the front desk in our office. The DRC physical space is closed until at least the beginning of Winter term 2021, unless otherwise noted.

- Please feel free to contact me if you need accommodations for tests and quizzes and exam (i.e. extended time).
- For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the Fire and Life Safety webpage (<https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety>) for information.

Title IX Reporting Obligations: Portland State is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender or sex-based harassment and stalking). If you have experienced any

form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, know that help and support are available. PSU has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and on-housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. Information about PSU's support services on campus, including confidential services and reporting options, can be found on PSU's Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response website at: <http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help> or you may call a confidential IPV Advocate at 503-725-5672.

Please be aware that all PSU faculty members and instructors are required to report information of an incident that may constitute prohibited discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. This means that if you tell me about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence that may have violated university policy or student code of conduct, I have to share the information with my supervisor or the University's Title IX Coordinator or the Office of Affirmative Action. For more information about Title IX please complete the required student module Creating a Safe Campus in your D2L.

Land and Labor Acknowledgements: Portland State is located on the traditional homelands of the Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Tumwater, Watlala bands of the Chinook, the Tualatin Kalapuya, and many other indigenous nations of the Columbia River. We acknowledge the ancestors of this place and understand that we are here because of the sacrifices forced upon them. By recognizing these communities, we honor their legacy, their lives, and their descendants.

We remember that our country is built on the labor of enslaved people who were kidnapped and brought to the US from the African continent and recognize the continued contribution of their survivors. We also acknowledge all immigrant labor including voluntary, involuntary, trafficked, forced, and undocumented peoples who contributed to the building of the country and continue to serve within our labor force. We acknowledge all unpaid care-giving labor. Finally, we acknowledge that our institution relies on hourly, student, contingent, and unpaid labor and we recognize those contributions.

COVID-19: I will be flexible, understanding, and compassionate with students who are worried about the virus. Be aware that we will have a wide range of thoughts, feelings and reactions to the Covid-19 pandemic. If you need any assistance, visit Student Health and Counseling (SHAC) at <https://www.pdx.edu/health-counseling/>) or call them. SHAC's Nurse Line: 503-725-2515. SHAC's 24/7 Nurse Advice Line (after hours): 844-224-3145. For more information about COVID-19 related resources at PSU, please visit a website: <https://www.pdx.edu/health-counseling/covid-19-resources>.

Lecture Schedule (subject to change)

Week	Date	Section	Readings	Exam ¹	Activity Due ²	
1	M	9/28	Introduction & Sociological Research Questions and Key Concepts	Ch.1 & 2		
	Sun	10/4				Tell Us about Yourself by 10/4
2	M	10/5	Experiments	Ch.7		
	Sun	10/11				Quiz 1
3	M	10/12	Field Research and Ethics in Qualitative Research	Ch.9 & 3		
	Sun	10/18				Quiz 2
4	M	10/19	Survey Research	Ch.8		
	Sun	10/25				Quiz 3
5	M	10/26	Survey Research (cont'd)	Ch.8		
	Sun	11/1				Quiz 4
6	M	11/2	Data Analysis: Descriptive Statistics	Ch.12		
	Sun	11/8	Data Analysis: Bivariate Analysis	Ch.12		Quiz 5
7	M	11/9	Data Analysis: Regression Analysis	Ch.12		
	Sun	11/15				Quiz 6
8	M	11/16	Data Analysis: Regression Analysis	Ch.12		
	Sun	11/22				Quiz 7
9	M	11/23	Content Analysis	Ch.10		
	Sun	11/29				Quiz 8
10	M	11/30	Reading and Writing in Social Research	Ch.14		
	Sun	12/6	Ethics in Quantitative Research	Ch.3		
	M	12/7				Final Exam (open)
	F	12/11				Final Exam (close)
¹ The quizzes and final exam will open at 8:00am and close at 11:59pm on the dates indicated.						
² All the activities are due at 11:59pm on the dates indicated.						

Lab Schedule

Week	Date		Section	Lab Assignment ¹
1	M	9/28	Intro to Lab & SPSS	
2	M	10/5	Descriptive Statistics	
3	M	10/12	Univariate Analysis	
	Sun	10/18		Lab assignment #1 due
4	M	10/19	Bivariate Analysis I	
5	M	10/26	Bivariate Analysis II	
	Sun	11/1		Lab assignment #2 due
6	M	11/2	Bivariate Analysis III	
7	M	11/9	Multivariate Analysis I	
	Sun	11/15		Lab assignment #3 due
8	M	11/16	Multivariate Analysis II	
9	M	11/23	Multivariate Analysis III	
10	F	12/4	No lab	Lab assignment #4 due
¹ All the lab assignments are due at 11:59pm on the dates indicated.				