Sociology Research Project
Sociology 398, CRN# 43122, WEB
Winter 2020 Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide research experience after Social Research Methods (SOC 397). It is required for undergraduate sociology majors. In this course, students, as a group, are expected to produce an original empirical research project using a statistical software, IBM SPSS, based on what they learned in SOC397.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To strengthen students' understanding of major concepts and methodologies in sociology,
2. To enhance students' data analysis skills using IBM SPSS,
3. To perform a research presentation,
4. To write a research paper, and
5. To critically evaluate quantitative sociological research.

PREREQUISITE

Students must have already taken and passed SOC 397 (Social Research Methods).

TEXTBOOKS and NOTES

No new textbooks are required: Use the textbook, and your lecture/lab notes from SOC 397.

COURSE WEBSITE

Check D2L (http://d2l.pdx.edu) and your email (i.e. @pdx.edu, or an email address in the PSU system) daily basis for feedback on your research project, 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 must be turned in to D2L by when they are due. See the next page for more information on the course activities.

1. **Class Participation** (5% of grade):

Everyone is expected to actively participate in online activities/discussion on D2L.

2. **Research Project**:

   2-1. Initial Research Proposal (5% of grade): During the first week you as a group should choose a research topic that you will work on throughout the term. The initial research proposal should include a (tentative) title, the motivation of the study (one or two paragraphs), and the specific aims of the paper (one or two paragraphs). The initial research proposal should be 1-3 pages in length with double-spacing, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins.

   2-2. Literature Review with a Research Gap (5% of grade): Using the research tools such as 'SocINDEX,' 'Web of Science,' and 'Google Scholar,' search for previous studies that are closely related to your topic, summarize them and find a research gap. The literature review should be built upon your initial research proposal, which includes the research title, the motivation of the study (one or two paragraphs), and the specific aims of the paper (one or two paragraphs). This assignment should be about 4-6 pages including at least 5 relevant articles in the reference list, with double-spacing, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins.

   2-3. Research Plan (5% of grade): Research plan should describe the focus of the project in details. Building on the literature review with a research gap, the research plan (no more than 10 pages, with double-spacing, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins) should also include the research questions and hypotheses (1-3 paragraphs) and research design.

   2-4. Questionnaire (5% of grade): Your questionnaire should consist of several core questions to measure your IV, DV and MV, and a few questions to ask about basic sociodemographic information, such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, educational attainment, employment status, income, marital status, and parental status, as needed. A total number of the questions may be around 20 questions.

   2-5. Data Collection and Description (20% of grade): It should describe what your target population is, how you recruited your sample, what method(s) was used to collect your data, and what the sample size is. It should also include the variables used in the analysis and explanations about how they are coded (or to be recoded). Data description alone should be about 2-5 pages, with double-spacing, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins.

   2-6. Data Analysis #1 (5% of grade): It should present: (1) sample characteristics by providing central tendencies, dispersions, and distributions of the relevant variables, as well as a bivariate table (or figure) of two main variables (i.e. IV and DV) after cleaning the data and recoding variables as desired; and (2) interpretations of the results. For this assignment, there should be at least two tables for your descriptive analysis, and appropriate interpretation of your results in about one to two paragraphs.

   2-7. Data Analysis #2 (5% of grade): It should include: (1) results of regression analysis to address the research questions; and (2) interpretations of the results. For this assignment, there should be at least one table for your regression results, and interpretation of your results in about two paragraphs.

2-8. Paper Presentation (5% of grade): Toward the end of the term, you will have an opportunity to present your group research project to the class. The presentation will give students a chance to share their research interests, to provide/receive comments, and to refine the ideas and analysis prior to submitting a final draft of the term paper. The paper presentation should be no longer than 15 minutes and constructed using PowerPoint (about 15-25 slides).

2-9. Term Paper (10% of grade): The term paper should be at least 15 pages but not exceed 30 pages in length with double-spacing, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins. Follow ASA style guidelines. The guidelines document is found on D2L.

3. **Nine Evaluations** (5% of grade):

Students are expected to turn in evaluations after group activities throughout the term. Because research projects are team projects, peer evaluations will show what specific contributions you and your team members have made, as well as what you have learned while working on the activities.

4. **Reflections on Peer Group Presentations** (5% of grade):

Students are expected to ask questions and required to turn in reflections on all the other groups' project presentations. For the reflections, you can answer a few specific items I provide on D2L. The reflections are due on the day that the projects are presented.

5. **Revisions** (10% of grade):

Students are responsible to fully address comments and feedback on their weekly work provided by the Instructor and the Teaching Assistant throughout the term. After the first assignment (i.e. Initial Research Proposal), students are expected to turn in two versions of revised work: (1) one with all the track changes, addressing comments; and (2) the other with all the track changes and comments removed (i.e. clean version). Revisions of the assignments are due on the following Wednesdays (See the course schedule on the last page of the syllabus for the due dates).

FINAL GRADES ARE DETERMINED BY THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:

1. Class Participation	5%
2. Research Project	
2-1. Initial Research Proposal	5%
2-2. Literature Review with a Research Gap	5%
2-3. Research Plan	5%
2-4. Questionnaire	5%
2-5. Data Collection and Description	20%
2-6. Data Analysis #1	10%
2-7. Data Analysis #2	10%
2-8. Paper Presentation	5%
2-9. Term Paper	10%
3. Nine Evaluations	5%
4. Reflections on Group Presentations	5%
5. Revisions	10%
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%		

GROUND RULES

- All students should do their part to accomplish each of the weekly group activity successfully.
- All students should strive for efficient communication and accommodation of all team members.

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.

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).

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. Our 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 notify 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. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, https://www.pdx.edu/drc.

- If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and discuss your accommodations.
- Students who need accommodations for tests and quizzes are expected to schedule their tests to overlap with the time the class is taking the test.
- Please be aware that the accessible tables or chairs in the room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not useable.
- 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 sexual 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. You may report any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, to either the Office of Equity and Compliance or the Office of the Dean of Student Life.

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, the University's Title IX Coordinator or the Office of the Dean of Student Life. For more information about Title IX please complete the required student module Creating a Safe Campus in your D2L.

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)

Week	Date			Activities
1	M	1/6		Form a Group and Discuss for a Research Topic
	Fri	1/10		Initial Research Proposal (IRP) & Evaluation#1 Due†
2	M	1/13		Perform Literature Review & Find a Research Gap
	Sun	1/19		Revision of IRP and Literature Review with a Research Gap (LR) & Evaluation#2 Due†
3	M	1/20		(No class on MLK)
	Tue	1/21		Create a Questionnaire & Decide Sampling Strategies
	Sun	1/26		Revision of LR, Research Plan & Evaluation#3 Due†
4	M	1/27		Conduct a Survey & Data Entry
	Sun	2/2		Revision of Research Plan (i.e. Questionnaire & Sampling Strategies) & Evaluation#4 Due†
5	M	2/3		Conduct a Survey & Data Entry – cont'd
	Sun	2/9		Upload a data file to D2L (under your group folder)
6	M	2/10		Data and Methods
	Sun	2/16		Data Description & Evaluation #5 Due†
7	M	2/17		Data Analysis #1 (Descriptive Analysis)
	Sun	2/23		Revision of Data Description, Data Analysis #1 & Evaluation#6 Due†
8	M	2/24		Data Analysis #2 (Regression Analysis)
	Sun	3/1		Revision of Data Analysis #1, Data Analysis #2 & Evaluation#7 Due†
9	M	3/2		Finalize Data Analysis & Revise Tables/Figures
	Sun	3/8		Revision of Data Analysis #2 Due†
10	M	3/9		Paper Presentations & Evaluation#8 Due
	Sun	3/15		Reflections on Peer Presentations, Term Paper & Evaluation#9 Due†

Notes: †All of the assignments (including term paper) should be posted under your group Discussion folders, and evaluations should be turned in via individual D2L Assignment folders.