Sociology 397: Social Research Methods

Winter 2022

Department of Sociology

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Course Description

This course is designed to promote understanding and knowledge of research methods in the social sciences. It is required for undergraduate sociology majors. These methods include both quantitative and qualitative skills, and students will be introduced to a wide range of statistical techniques for analyzing social science data. This course will cover key concepts including: concepts, indicators, causality, reliability, validity, and research methods (survey research, content analysis, and field research, among others). Students will also learn how, when and why statistics are used and why it is necessary to understand them. Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared to conduct an original research project next quarter (SOC 398).

Course Outcomes/Learning Objectives

1. To be able to compare and contrast methodologies in social science,
2. To begin to conduct sociological research,
3. To analyze data using a statistical computer program called SPSS.
4. To evaluate sociological research critically.

Course Prerequisites

You must have taken and passed the following courses: SOC 200 (Introduction to Sociology) and STAT 105, 243 (Introduction to Probability and Statistics I), or SOC 399

Required Materials

The Process of Social Research, 2019 (2nd edition) by Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, JR, & Bruce C. Straits, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- First edition will also work, but you will be responsible for finding material if I refer to specific page numbers in the 2nd edition.

Two children's picture books that won the Caldecott award for children's books (search online for a list). Our library has copies, but in print form.

Other readings or video clips accessible through Canvas.

Suggested Materials

Using IBM SPSS Statistics for Research Methods and Social Science Statistics, 2020 (7th edition) by William E. Wagner, Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, California.

- available as an e-book through our library

Major Assignments

This is a completely remote course. 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 via Canvas by the associated due dates/times. The assignments for this class (both 397 and the associated lab, 397L) are comprised of the following:

- Four assignments:
    - Assignment #1: Library Assignment   **Due: 01/23**
    - Assignment #2: Basics of Social Research   **Due: 02/06**
    - Assignment #3: Content Analysis   **Due: 02/27**
    - Assignment #4: Regression Analysis   **Due: 03/13**

- There will be **SEVEN lab assignments** throughout the course.
    - Lab #1: Intro, Creating Variables, Frequencies   **Due: 01/16**
    - Lab #2: Levels of Measurement   **Due: 01/30**
    - Lab #3: Mode, Median, Mean   **Due: 02/06**
    - Lab #4: Cross-Tab   **Due: 02/13**
    - Lab #5: Bivariate Regression   **Due: 02/20**
    - Lab #6: Multivariate Regression   **Due: 03/06**
    - Lab #7: Qualitative Coding   **Due: 03/13**

You will need IBM SPSS to complete these lab assignments. There are two options to access SPSS:

1. Visit PSU's virtual computer lab (VLAB) at either: https://rdweb.wvd.microsoft.com/arm/webclient/index.html or vlab.pdx.edu. From there, follow the login instructions (ODIN required); or
2. If you would like to have SPSS installed in your personal computer, you can rent it. Currently, the program can be rented for six months (for $49) at

https://www.hearne.software/spss-selection. You will want to get the "standard" version.

- There will be **TEN weekly quizzes**. These quizzes are multiple choice and based on your reading, lecture videos, and any other assignment content. For the weekly quizzes, the lowest score will be dropped and only the nine highest scores will count toward your final grade.

Grading Criteria

Weekly quizzes	15%
Discussion posts	5%
Library Assignment	15%
Experiment Assignment	15%
Survey Assignment	15%
Existing Data/Content Analysis Assignment	15%
Lab Assignments	20%

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%	

Flexibility Statement

The instructor reserves the right to modify course content and/or substitute assignments and learning activities in response to institutional, weather, or class situations.

Course Calendar/ Reading Schedule (NOTE: Dixon = *The Process of Social Research* Wagner = *Using IBM SPSS Statistics for Research Methods and Social Science Statistics*)

Week 1　　　　Introduction to Research Methods
　　　　　　　Reading Due: Chapter 1 of Dixon
　　　　　　　NO LAB
　　　　　　　Suggested reading: None
Week 2　　　　Science, Social Research, and Ethics
　　　　　　　Reading Due: Chapter 2 of Dixon
　　　　　　　Lab #1: Introduction to SPSS

Suggested reading: Chapter 1 of Wagner

Week 3 Research Design
    Reading Due: Chapter 4 of Dixon
    NO LAB
    Suggested Reading: None

Week 4 Measurement
    Reading Due: Chapter 5 of Dixon
    Lab #2: Levels of Measurement
    Suggested Reading: Chapter 2 of Wagner

Week 5 Sampling
    Reading Due: Chapter 10 of Dixon
    Lab #3: Mode, Median, Mean
    Suggested Reading: Chapter 4 of Wagner

Week 6 Content Analysis and Experiments
    Reading Due: Chapter 7 of Dixon
    Lab #4: Cross-Tabs
    Suggested Reading: Chapter 6 of Wagner

Week 7 Surveys
    Reading due: Chapter 8 of Dixon
    Lab #5: Bivariate Regression
    Suggested Reading: Chapter 7 of Wagner

Week 8 Field Research
    Reading due: Chapter 9 of Dixon
    NO LAB

Week 9 Quantitative Data Analysis
    Reading due: Chapter 12 of Dixon
    Lab #6: Final Quant Lab
    Suggested Reading: Chapter 8 of Wagner

Week 10 Qualitative Data Analysis
    Reading due: Chapter 13 of Dixon
    Lab #7: Qualitative coding
    Suggested Reading: NONE

Course Attendance and Make-up Policies

As this is a fully online course, there is no attendance taken. Late assignments are docked 10% for each day they are late. However, if you have a personal emergency and need an extension, please do not hesitate to contact your TA or instructor.

Email

The instructor and TA regularly communicate with the class via PSU email so be sure that you are receiving our emails. It is your responsibility to check your email daily during the school week and respond in a timely manner.

In emails to the instructor and TA, please put the title of the course in the subject line and sign your emails using your first and last name. Use the email addresses on the first page of the syllabus. The instructor and TA will generally respond to email within 24 hours. Emails sent after 5:00pm on Friday will generally be answered by 5:00pm on Monday.

Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty

It is expected that the students will maintain the highest level of academic integrity while participating in this class. As per university guidelines, students will be subject to disciplinary action for academic misconduct (includes but not limited to: cheating, fraud, plagiarism, etc) or violations of the code of conduct (includes but not limited to: disruption of teaching, harm or threat of harm, etc). Any of the above mentioned violations will result in the appropriate disciplinary penalties including an "F" in the class, suspension, and/or expulsion. Please refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information at http://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct

If a student is asked to leave the classroom because of uncivil behavior, the student may not return to that class until he or she arranges a conference with the instructor: it is the student's responsibility to arrange for this conference.

PSU Policies & Resources

Academics
https://www.pdx.edu/academic-affairs/psu-bulletin

PSU Grading System
Undergraduate: http://pdx.smartcatalogiq.com/2020-2021/Bulletin/Undergraduate-Studies/Grading-System-for-Undergraduates

Graduate: http://pdx.smartcatalogiq.com/2020-2021/Bulletin/Graduate-School/Enrollment/Graduate-grading-system

Drop/Withdraw Deadline: **http://pdx.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2020-2021/Bulletin/Academic-Calendar**

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is a vital part of the educational experience at PSU. Please see the [PSU Student Code of Conduct](#) for the university's policy on academic dishonesty. A confirmed violation of that Code in this course may result in failure of the course.

Incomplete Policy
Students do not have a right to receive or demand an Incomplete grade. The option of assigning an Incomplete grade is at the discretion of the instructor when the following criteria are met.

Eligibility Criteria:
1. Required satisfactory course completion/participation.
2. Reasonable justification for the request.
3. Incomplete grade is not a substitute for a poor grade.
4. Written agreement. (See [Incomplete Contract](#))
5. Resolving the Incomplete.

For the full Incomplete Policy see https://www.pdx.edu/registration/grading-system#/?section=incompletegradei

Student Services

Disability Access Statement

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/disability-resource-center/

Safe Campus Statement

Portland State University desires to create a safe campus for our students. As part of that mission, PSU requires all students to take the learning module entitled Creating a Safe Campus: Preventing Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Assault. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources on PSU's Enrollment Management & Student Affairs: Sexual Prevention & Response website at http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault

Basic Needs at Portland State

It can be challenging to do your best in class if you have trouble meeting basic needs like safe shelter, sleep, and nutrition. Resource centers across campus are here to provide assistance, referrals, and support. Please contact anyone on this list for assistance:

- **Basic Needs Hub:** basicneedshub@pdx.edu
- **Portland State Food Pantry:** https://psufp.com, pantry@pdx.edu
- **C.A.R.E. Team:** askdos@pdx.edu, (503) 725-4422
- **Student Health & Counseling:** askshac@pdx.edu, (503) 725-2800

Title IX Reporting

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. Please be aware that as a faculty member, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual violence or discrimination to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of those individuals on PSU's Enrollment Management & Student Affairs: Sexual Prevention & Response website at http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault. For more information about Title IX please complete the required student module "Creating a Safe Campus: Preventing Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Assault" in the "My Courses" section of Canvas.

Cultural Resource Centers

The Cultural Resource Centers (CRCs) create a student-centered inclusive environment that enriches the university experience. We honor diversity, explore social justice issues, celebrate cultural traditions, and foster student identities, success, and leadership. Our centers include

the Multicultural Student Center, La Casa Latina Student Center, Native American Student & Community Center, Pan African Commons, Pacific Islander, Asian, Asian American Student Center and the Middle Eastern, North African, South Asian program. We provide student leadership, employment, and volunteer opportunities; student resources such as computer labs, event, lounge and study spaces; and extensive programming. All are welcome!

Technology

Technical Requirements

Data Privacy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that affords students certain rights with respect to their academic records, such as "the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent." FERPA protects students from having their information disseminated to third parties without consent.
In accordance with this law, Portland State University has adopted rules to govern the gathering, use, and disclosure of student records with the aim of guaranteeing the privacy of such records. Under the Student Record rules, most of the records that the University maintains with regard to a student can only be disclosed to the student, University officials, sponsors of disbursed financial aid, or government agencies upon receipt of lawful subpoenas.

Recording Technology Notice

We will use technology for virtual meetings and recordings in this course. Our use of such technology is governed by FERPA, the Acceptable Use Policy and PSU's Student Code of Conduct. A record of all meetings and recordings is kept and stored by PSU, in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy and FERPA. Your instructor will not share recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include your fellow students, TAs/GAs/Mentors, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners that we may engage with. **You may not share recordings outside of this course. Doing so may result in disciplinary action.**

Turnitin

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com page service is subject to the Usage Policy and Privacy Pledge posted on the Turnitin.com site.