Sociology 398: Sociology Research Project
Remote
Spring 2022
Course meeting times:
MW 11:30am-12:35pm
https://pdx.zoom.us/j/6070120839

Instructor: Professor Emily Shafer
Email: emily.shafer@pdx.edu DO NOT EMAIL ME THROUGH D2L
Office Hours on Zoom: Tuesdays 5pm-6pm and Thursdays 12pm-1pm and by
appointment
https://pdx.zoom.us/j/6070120839

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 https://pdx.zoom.us/j/6070120839

Course Description
This course is intended to provide applied research experience following successful
completion of Social Research Methods (SOC 397). It is a required course for
undergraduate sociology majors. The main purpose is to apply skills and knowledge
from SOC 397 to an original research project.

Course Goals
- ✓ Strengthen understanding of major concepts and methodologies in sociology
- ✓ Enhance data analysis skills using SPSS
- ✓ Write the "back end" of a research paper
- ✓ Critically evaluate quantitative sociological research

Prerequisites
Students must have taken and passed SOC 397 with a C or better (Social Research
Methods).

Required Textbook
None – You will be using materials from 397. I strongly suggest you rent SPSS this
quarter if you do not have access to computer labs on campus or if you struggled
with the VLAB last quarter.

Course Structure
In this class, you will answer a research question of your choice using General Social
Survey data (GSS) and SPSS. You will have several assignments leading up to your
final class paper. These are outlined below. In order to help you stay on track with
your assignments, I will create weekly "checklists" that refer you to readings,
assignments to submit, and other items to complete.

Requirements for the Class

Attendance (5% of grade): Although you are working independently on your project, attending class is important this quarter as you will be learning from each other as you move through the same steps to complete you project.

Syllabus quiz (5% of grade): During the first week of class you will take a syllabus quiz for the class, which you may take as many times as you need to get a 100%. I strongly encourage you to be exploring the GSS data (https://gssdataexplorer.norc.org/)for variables you may be interested in.

Initial Research Proposal Worksheet (10% of grade): During the second week you should choose a research topic that you will work on throughout the term. To help you pick, you will fill out "initial research proposal worksheet."

Identification of Variable #1 (interim step; no associated points, but necessary for your work moving forward) In the third week of class, you will visit the General Social Survey (GSS) Data Explorer (https://gssdataexplorer.norc.org/) and identify at least one dependent variable (DV), at least one independent variable (IV), and at least 2-3 sociodemographic control variables that might be used to answer your research question.

Research Plan (20% of grade): In the fourth week of class, you will take into account our feedback from the "initial research proposal worksheet." The initial research plan should include a (tentative) title, the motivation of the study (one or two paragraphs), your research question and hypothesis (or hypotheses), and the variable/s you are using for your dependent variable, MAIN independent variable, and control variables (we will discuss this more). The initial research proposal should be about 1-2 pages in length with double-spacing, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins.

Identification of Variables #2 (interim step, no associated points, but necessary for subsequent weeks): In the fifth week of class, you will get your dataset (https://gss.norc.org/get-the-data/spss) open in SPSS and develop a plan for cleaning/recording based on feedback received in week 4. This includes identifying variables from the codebook or the data file and then cleaning/recoding these variables as needed. Variables should measure your IVs, DV, and control variables, including sociodemographic information such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, educational attainment, employment status, income, marital status, and parental status, as needed.

Data Description (20% of grade): In this sixth week of class, you should write your data description. The data description should describe what your target population is, how your sample was recruited, what method(s) was used to collect your data, and the sample size. You can find this information on the GSS website. It should also include the variables used in the analysis and explanations about how they are

coded (or recoded). The data description should be about 2-5 pages, with double-spacing, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins.

Data Analysis #1 (10% of grade): In the seventh week of class, you will work on univariate and bivariate data analysis. Analyses should be conducted after cleaning the data and recoding variables as desired. In the data analysis, you should present summary sample characteristics by providing central tendencies, dispersions, and distributions of the relevant variables, as well as a bivariate table (or figure) of the two main variables (i.e. IV and DV).

Data Analysis #2 (10% of grade): In the eighth week of class, you will work on developing and presenting analyses conducted to answer research questions and confirm or reject hypotheses (with multivariate linear regression). These results should include some use of hypothesis tests and formal interpretations of results with significance values and be presented in a table.

Paper "Presentation" (10% of grade): In the ninth week of class you will present a mini-presentation of your results to the class. This will consist of 5-7 slides and should take 5-7 minutes.

Final Paper (10% of grade): In your final paper you will combine your (revised, based on feedback) research plan, data description, data analysis, and a discussion of your findings. The final paper will be least 7 pages but should not exceed 15 pages in length with double-spacing, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins. Follow ASA or APA style guidelines.

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%	

Week 1 April 3	**Introduction and Overview of Course** Syllabus quiz due at midnight
Week 2 April 10	**Research question and operationalization** Initial research proposal due at midnight
Week 3 April 17	**Questionnaire/Data** Identification of variables #1 (interim step – nothing to turn in)
Week 4 April 24	**Research plan** Research Plan due at midnight
Week 5 May 1	**Finalize variables & clean/recode** Identification of variables #2 (interim step – nothing to turn in)
Week 6 May 8	**Data description** Data description due at midnight
Week 7 May 15	**Data analysis #1** Data analysis #1 due at midnight
Week 8 May 22	**Data analysis #2** Finalized Data Analysis due by midnight
Week 9 May 29	**Presentations** "Present" your findings in a group chat by midnight
Week 10 June 5	**Final Paper** Final paper due

COURSE POLICIES

Writing Tips: All assignments for this course should use 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 below. These resources are also accessible on 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://guides.library.pdx.edu/c.php?g=271259&p=2613696

Late Assignments
Assignments are due by specified deadlines and should be turned in via Canvas. Because we are living through a national health crisis, I will accept late work IF you contact me and Jenna by email to explain what is going on. However, I urge you not to take advantage of this because completing on time so that you can get our feedback ASAP is key to your success in this class.

Students with Disabilities
Students with special needs should first register with the Disability Resource Center, 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150 or drc@pdx.edu so that appropriate accommodations may be made. DRC coordinates support services, accommodations, and equipment for students with disabilities. DRC works to ensure equal access to all University programs, services, and activities for students with disabilities. DRC certifies eligibility for services, determines reasonable accommodations, and develops plans for the implementation of accommodations.

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 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 questions, get put into the drop-in queue, or take care of other business as you would have at the front desk.
- If you already have accommodations through DRC, please contact Professor Shafer to make sure she has received the faculty notification letter and to ensure that all accommodations are being provided.

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 must 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 on D2L.

COVID-19: I will be flexible, understanding, and compassionate with students who are worried about or affected by the virus and its consequences. 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 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: https://www.pdx.edu/health-counseling/covid-19-resources.

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