Class time: Mondays 2:00-4:50, 265 Cramer Hall
**Instructor: Professor Daniel Sullivan**
Office: CH 217 H; Office Hours: Thursdays, noon-1:50.
Email: dsulliva@pdx.edu [Please do not contact the instructor via the D2L email system.]

**Course Description**
SOC 590 is the first course on research methods for first-year sociology Master’s students. This course is designed to help you develop the tools to be a professional sociologist and the skills you will need to design and conduct research for your master’s thesis. We will explore various research methods in sociology including surveys, content analysis, secondary data, and various qualitative methods (e.g., interviews and participant observation). As you are already familiar with the basics of research methods from your undergraduate coursework (in fact, this course assumes that students have already taken lower-level courses in research methods and basic statistics), in this course you will be (1) reading, understanding, and evaluating PSU sociology faculty’s research, and (2) designing your own research project. While doing so, you will deepen your understanding of general methodological issues such as validity, reliability, correlation, causation, concepts, indicators, sampling, and representativeness.

**Learning Goals**
- To continue the long process of thinking, writing, and speaking like a social science researcher.
- To understand and critically evaluate social science research.
- To design a research project.
- To become familiar with PSU sociology faculty’s research.

**Readings**
- *Constructing Social Research*, by Charles C. Ragin (Pine Forge Press, second edition). Available at the PSU Bookstore. FYI: You may be able to obtain this book via the Internet or from second-year graduate students (who used the same book last year).
- You will need access to a sociology research methods textbook/online resource to review basic concepts throughout the term. A textbook that you used in an undergraduate social science course is fine.
- PSU sociology faculty’s research will be posted on D2L.
- Other readings may be assigned throughout the term.
Class Requirements
Requirements include but are not limited to readings, class attendance/participation, individual assignments, and a final paper and oral presentation. There also may be opportunities for you to attend lectures and Master’s defenses that use empirical research.

- **Attendance/Participation (20%)**: Graduate seminars are not lecture classes. Students are expected to read the course material and do the weekly assignments before class so that they are ready and able to discuss the topic of the week in class. Students are expected to attend all of the class sessions (unless they are sick). As a part of participation, students may be asked to prepare and lead discussion in a particular class.

- **Assignments (30%)**: There will be weekly assignments that will involve reading and writing. You will also assess the quality of your weekly assignments.

- **Final Paper and Oral Presentation (50%)**: Students will ask a research question(s) and detail a research design to collect data in order to answer that question. Since it is an introductory course, however, students will not conduct the research that they design. We will have oral presentations during Week 9 and 10. The final paper is due during exam week.

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### Class Schedule
(tentative – updated 9/27/13)

[Note: Below is a tentative schedule because it is unclear when sociology professors will be available to participate in our seminar. In addition, opportunities may arise for us to attend thesis defenses, job talks, or lectures on campus.]

**PART I: EXPLORING DIFFERENT METHODOLOGIES & YOUR RESEARCH INTERESTS**

**Week 1, September 30**
- Complete assignment 1 before class on September 24 and bring to class, including reading Ragin’s Preface, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2.
- Introductions, syllabus, set up small groups, and discuss and work on final project.
- **Hand out** oral presentation and final paper guidelines.

**Week 2, October 7 [Qualitative 1]**
- Read Ragin Ch. 5 and two articles (Blazak; Collier & Mogan) for Week 2.
- Discuss completed homework assignment(s) and readings. [*I introduce Randy Blazak and lead Q&A*]

**Week 3, October 14 [Qualitative 2]**
- Discuss completed homework assignment(s) and read two articles (Jaffe; Lubitow) for Week 3. [*___ introduce Dan Jaffe and lead Q&A*]
Week 4, October 21 [Comparative]
- Read Ragin Ch. 6, p. 135-151, and article(s) for Week 4.
- Discuss completed homework assignment(s) and readings. [___ introduce Bob Liebman and lead Q&A]
- Directions from Social Science Librarian, Kim Pendell, on how to get secondary data set [3:30-4:30. Then assignment there is an assignment regarding how to find survey/codebook (and relevant survey questions) for Week 5.

Week 5, October 28 [Quantitative: Surveys]
- Read Ragin Chapter 7, pages 163-182 and two articles for Week 5 (Stepick; Carlson or Sullivan or Kelly & Wilkenson).
- Discuss completed homework assignment and readings. [___ introduce Alex Stepick and lead Q&A]
- DUE: survey question/codebook assignment.

Week 6, November 4 [Quantitative and Qualitative: Content Analysis]
- Read two articles for Week 6 (Kelly: Padin or Thompson).
- Discuss completed homework assignment(s) and readings. [___ introduce Maura Kelly and lead Q&A]
- Hand out: Begin working on your Oral Presentation/Final Project.
- DUE ON FRIDAY, NOV. 8 AT NOON: Pages 1 and 2 of Final Project. Send as MS Word attachment to the instructor (dsulliva@pdx.edu)

PART II: FOCUSING ON YOUR FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT

Week 7, November 11 [NO CLASS DUE TO VETERANS DAY]
- Work on Oral Presentation/Final Project.
- You will possibly read an article.

Week 8, November 18
- Due: First draft of oral presentation PowerPoint slides, including the notes section. (Bring a paper copy to class and give to Daniel at the end of class.)
- Due: Self-assessment document of first six assignments.

Week 9, November 25
- Some students’ oral presentations.

Week 10, December 2
- The remaining students’ oral presentations.

Exam Week
- Due: Final Written Paper and Self-Evaluation due on Monday, December 9, 2013 by 10 a.m. Send as a MS Word attachment to dsulliva@pdx.edu