**Sociology 398: Sociology Research Project**

401 CH

Tuesdays & Thursdays, noon-1:50

**Instructor:** Professor Daniel Sullivan  
**Office:** 217Q Cramer Hall  
**E-mail:** dsulliva@pdx.edu  
**Office hours:** Tuesdays, 3-4 p.m.

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**Introduction**

This course completes the sociology majors’ undergraduate research methods training. Therefore, students are required to have already taken SOC 397 (and received a grade of C or higher). The main purpose of SOC 398 is for students to apply the knowledge gained in SOC 397 to an original research project. In essence, this course is Part II of SOC 397.

**Goals**

To design and conduct a research project.  
To present research findings in a written and oral report.  
To hone your SPSS computing skills.  
To practice the “language of research.”  
To deepen your knowledge of social science research methodology.  
To sharpen your critical thinking, especially when evaluating the quality of social science research.

**Required Readings**

There are no new books to buy. You will use the textbook (as well as your lecture and lab notes) from last term. You will also be reading books, articles, and/or reports that are appropriate for your literature review.

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**Class Schedule (short version)**

Week 1: Form Groups, Decide on Research Topic, and Write Initial Research Proposal


Weeks 4 & 5: Administer Survey or Conduct Content Analysis

Week 6: Enter Data and Prepare for Data Analysis

Weeks 7 & 8: Analyze Data and Write Up Findings

Weeks 9 & 10: Prepare and Perform Oral Presentation, and Write Final Draft

The final written project is due Tuesday, March 20 by 10 a.m.
**Week 1: Form Groups, Decide on Research Topic, Write Initial Research Proposal**

This will be a very busy week. We will get people into research groups and then each group will develop a research project (in the form of a 2-3 page research proposal).

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Written Material Due:  
Post on D2L by Monday, January 16, at 9 a.m.


During these two weeks you will be expanding your research proposal, filling in all of the details of your research design, performing your literature review, and constructing your survey/coding sheet. You will also write and submit your complete research proposal and the individual supplementary reports.

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Written Material Due:  
Complete Research Proposal  
Post on D2L by Monday, January 30 at 9 a.m.

**Weeks 4, 5 & 6: Administer Survey/Conduct Content Analysis, Enter Data, and Clean Data**

You will spend these three weeks collecting data -- whether from a survey or content analysis. While you are collecting the data you can begin entering the data into a SPSS file. In the computer lab session you will learn how to set up your SPSS file and clean the data. By the end of Week 6 you will have collected all of your data, entered them into a SPSS file, and cleaned them. You will also review your 397 lab notes and homework assignments and prepare to perform the data analysis.

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Computer Lab, Attendance Required:  
Thursday, February 9 [448 NH]

Note 1: Only two people per group are required to attend the computer lab, although more are welcome.  
Note 2: Students not attending lab can use our regular classroom during class time.

Written Material Due: Code book and data set (cleaned and all data entered) by Tuesday, February 21 at class time. You do not have to post on D2L or print out a paper copy; just show the codebook and data set on a computer to the instructor during the lab.
**Weeks 7 & 8: Analyze Data and Write Up Findings**

You will analyze your data using SPSS, create tables and charts, and write up your findings. You will also write the second drafts of your literature review and data and methods and the first draft of your intro and conclusion.

- **Computer Lab, Attendance Required:**
  - Tuesday, February 21 [448 NH]
  - Attendance Recommended: Thursday, February 23
  - Tuesday, February 28
  - Thursday, March 1

Note 1: Only two people per group are required to attend the computer lab, although more are welcome.

Note 2: The instructor may conduct a brief review, but most of the time will be dedicated to each group’s data analysis. Use the instructor’s email message and data analysis handout to prepare for lab.

Note 3: Students not attending lab can use our regular classroom during class time.

**Written Material Due:**
Write-up of analyses, accompanied by tables and/or charts.
Post on D2L by Monday, March 5 at 9 a.m.

**Weeks 9 & 10: Prepare and Perform Oral Presentation and Write Final Draft**

The last two weeks of the term will be spent preparing and presenting your research findings to the class. You will also write the second draft of your introduction, conclusion, and findings section.

- **Attendance Required:**
  - Tuesday, March 6 (go over oral presentations)
  - Tuesday, March 13 (oral presentations)
  - Thursday, March 15 (oral presentations)

- **Attendance Recommended:**
  - Thursday, March 8

**Written Material Due:**
A paper copy of your presentation, for example PowerPoint slides and any other visual aids or handouts, is due on the first day of oral presentations at noon (no matter on which day you present).

**Final Written Report** is due by Tuesday, March 20, at 10 a.m. Please turn in only one final written report per group. Post one copy of the final written report per group on D2L and put one paper copy per group in Professor Sullivan’s 217 CH mail box.

**Two Assessments** are due by Thursday, March 22. The evaluation of yourself and your group members is due by 10 a.m. and the evaluation of your final paper is due by noon. Send to dsulliva@pdx.edu. Please do not post on D2L in order to preserve confidentiality.

**Should I Go to Class on “Recommended” Days?**
Professor Sullivan will be in the classroom during our scheduled time to assist you. I recommend that your group meet in the classroom during these recommended days to coordinate your project. There are two advantages to this strategy: (1) all group members are guaranteed to be available at this time, and (2) you can get assistance from the instructor if you have questions.

**Group Grade:** Each research group will be given a grade based on their oral presentation (15%) and written report (70%).

**Individual Grade Modification:** Your individual grade will be determined in large part by your group’s grade, with the following modifications:

- The quality of your independent assessment of your group’s written reports is worth 10%.
- The quality of your assessment of your individual contribution and each group member’s contribution to the research project is worth 5%.
- The evaluation of your contribution to the project by other members of your group. [Note: Typically this means that if a person does not do their fair share of the work they will receive a lower grade than the other group members.]