SOC 398: Sociology Research Project
Portland State University
Course Information Sheet
Winter Term 2017

Section(s): 001; Rm. UTS 206  
MW 2:00-3:50pm; hybrid – Monday required

Professor: Dr. Garcia-Alexander  
Email: gin5@pdx.edu
Office: CH 217S  
Office Phone: 503-725-9572
Office Hours: M 1:00-2:00PM; by appt.

TA:  Tristen Kade  
Email: tkade@pdx.edu
Office: CH 217X  
Office Hours: TBD

Course Description and Objectives
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 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 Textbooks and Materials
1. None – students will use materials from SOC 397.

Course Structure
Classes will meet in person Mon & Wed; we will review notes/lecture on Monday and have time for planning; students will have time to ask questions and work as a group on Wed. All assignments and materials are available and should be submitted in D2L. To access d2l, go to the http://www.d2l.pdx.edu. To login, enter your odin ID and your odin password. If you are not sure what your odin ID or password is, go to https://www.account.pdx.edu/ or contact the Information Technology Help Desk at help@pdx.edu or 725-HELP.

Course materials are organized online in learning modules. While the syllabus provides an overview of the class, the learning modules will contain the most up-to-date information and instructions for each week. Please be sure to check the Weekly Summary in each learning module at the beginning of each week.

- Students will form groups of 3 to 5 individuals to work with for entire term (pairs are allowed with prior approval)
- Group members should contribute equally (evaluations will determine a portion of your term paper grade)
- Students should strive for effective communication and accommodation of all group members
- Make a plan at the beginning of each week and be aware of assigned tasks
Requirements for the Class

Class Attendance (10% of grade): Class attendance on Mondays and during the last two weeks of the term for the paper presentations is mandatory. A sign-in sheet will be distributed at the end of the session on Mondays that must be signed for credit. Any additional discussion sections or labs are highly recommended. Everyone is also expected to participate in in-class work.

Initial Research Proposal – due at end of week 1 (10% of grade): During the first week groups should choose a research topic that they 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 1-2 pages in length with double-spacing, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins. See D2L for example proposals from past terms.

Literature Review with Identification of a Research Gap and Research Plan – due at end of week 3 (15% of grade): Using the tools available through the library, search for previous studies that are closely related to your topic, summarize and synthesize them, and identify a research gap. Organize your literature review by subsections to describe relevant prior studies and background information. The research plan should describe the focus of the project in detail and come after your literature review. It should present the research questions and hypotheses (1-3 paragraphs) and research design, which indicates the method that will be used (selected method must be approved in class). The literature review and research plan should be about 5-7 pages including at least 5 relevant articles in the reference list, with double-spacing, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins.

Questionnaires (or, Codebook and List of the Variables) – due at end of week 5 (10% of grade):

a. For groups conducting a survey – a questionnaire to be used to collect data should be sent in for approval before conducting survey research. It should be included as part of your submission along with the data description.

b. For groups using an existing survey data set or doing comparative historical analysis – include a list of the variables (and codebook or case summaries report) for use in analysis.

c. For groups doing content analysis – include a preliminary coding sheet.

Data Description – due at end of week 5 (15% of grade): The data description should have two sections. In the Data section, describe the target population, sample recruitment strategy, data collection method, and the sample size. In the Measures section, summarizes the variables used in the analysis and explanations about how they are coded (or recoded). The data description should be about 2 pages, with double-spacing, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins.

Data Analysis – due at end of week 7 (15% of grade): Your results section should begin by presenting summary sample characteristics (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). Finally, this section should include the results of analyses conducted to answer research questions/confirm or reject hypotheses (i.e. regression analyses). Analyses should be conducted after cleaning the data and recoding variables as desired. The results section should include Tables 1-3 embedded in text, summaries of tables, restatement of hypotheses, and formal interpretation of results (with significance values). *Preliminary findings may be included if data cleaning/collection is not yet complete. The results section should be about 3 pages including tables, with double-spacing, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins.

Paper Presentation (10% of grade): Toward the end of the term, each group will have an opportunity to present their research project to the class. The paper presentation will give students a chance to share their research interests, to provide/receive comments and feedback, 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 10 minutes and constructed using PowerPoint or similar presentation software.

**Term Paper** (15% of grade): The term paper should be at least 12 pages but should not exceed 20 pages in length with double-spacing, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins. It should incorporate the suggested changes made based on feedback provided throughout the term as well as all the required sections from previous weeks. In addition, a discussion/conclusions section should be added at the end of the document that summarizes the findings and discusses the implications of those findings. Finally, a copy of the questionnaire or codebook should be attached as an appendix at the end of the document. Tables should be embedded in text. Follow ASA or APA style guidelines.

**Evaluations** (5 points on term paper grade): Students will be asked to turn in evaluations at the midway point and end of the term. Because research projects are team projects, evaluations are used to assess individual contributions to the group project. Each student must submit a separate evaluation (forms can be found on D2L).

**Criteria for Grading**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>(%) of Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Proposal</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires/Codebook</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Description</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93.5-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>85.5-89.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>75.5-79.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>65.5-69.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>≤ 59.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>89.5-93.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82.5-85.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72.5-75.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>62.5-65.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>79.5-82.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>69.5-72.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>59.5-62.4</td>
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**Attendance Policy**

Class attendance on Mon and during the last 2 weeks of the term (Mon and Wed) during paper presentations is required. Any discussion sections and labs are highly recommended. All students are expected to actively participate in both in-class and D2L discussions. Excessive tardiness will not be tolerated. It is disruptive to the instructor and other students. **Students arriving any later than 15 minutes after the start of class will not be allowed to enter the classroom** and will not receive credit for any exercises or assignments on that day. (Door will be locked; please do not attempt to knock)

In the event that a student is no longer able to attend classes, they must withdraw from the class in order to receive a "W" rather than an "F". Please refer to the student handbook for more information.

**Classroom Policies**

No electronic devices (including but not limited to laptops, cell phones, etc) are to be used in the classroom. This includes talking on the phone, texting, playing games or any other inappropriate usage. Those caught using restricted devices will be asked to leave class.
**Late Assignments**
Assignments are due by specified deadlines and should be turned in via Dropbox folders in D2L. Any work turned in after the stated deadline is considered late and will receive a deduction of 10 points. Late assignments will be accepted up to 1 week after the due date with the understanding that each class day the assignment is not turned in results in a 10 point deduction. After one week the assignment will not be accepted.

Students who do not have a university excused absence will not be allowed to make up a missed examination or assignment. You must have written documentation for the absence and have notified the instructor within 24 hours of the absence in order to be able to schedule a make-up exam. No exceptions will be made.

**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.

**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.

**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 have to 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 in your D2L.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
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| Wk 1 | Mon, Wed, Fri | Introduction and Overview of Course  
Form Groups & Decide on Research Topic  
Narrow Down Research Topic  
**Initial Research Proposal due by 5pm (submit to dropbox in D2L)** |
| Wk 2 | Mon, Wed, Fri | Method  
Decide on Research Method (survey vs. secondary data analysis)  
Perform Literature Review & Find Research Gap |
| Wk 3 | Mon, Wed, Fri | Questionnaire/Data  
**University Holiday**; continue work on Lit Reviews  
Begin Questionnaire/Coding Sheet OR ID Dataset/Relevant Variables (see list of recommended datasets)  
**Literature Review with a Research Gap & Research Plan due by 5pm (submit to dropbox in D2L)** |
| Wk 4 | Mon, Wed, Fri | Survey/Finalize Variables  
Finalize Quest./Coding Sheet or Prepare Case Summaries (get approval in-class)  
Begin Surveying & Data Entry OR Prepare Data for Analysis/Coding |
| Wk 5 | Mon, Wed, Fri | Survey/Finalize Variables  
Cont. Surveying & Data Entry OR Prepare Data for Analysis/Coding  
Datasets should be prepared and ready for analysis  
**Data Description & Approved Quest. OR Codebook + List due by 5pm (submit to dropbox in D2L); submit evaluations (each group member must submit individually)** |
| Wk 6 | Mon, Wed, Fri | Data Analysis #1  
Descriptive Data Analysis (univariate & bivariate)  
Descriptive Data Analysis (univariate & bivariate) |
| Wk 7 | Mon, Wed, Fri | Data Analysis #2  
Advanced Data Analysis (regressions)  
Advanced Data Analysis (regressions)  
**Data Analysis due by 5pm (submit to dropbox in D2L)** |
| Wk 8 | Mon, Wed, Fri | Results  
Finalize Data Analysis and Refine Tables and Figures  
Finalize Data Analysis and Refine Tables and Figures |
| Wk 9 | Mon, Wed | Presentations  
Paper Presentations *all students must attend  
*Submit a copy of presentation by Friday at 5pm |
| Wk 10 | Mon, Wed | Presentations  
Paper Presentations *all students must attend  
*Submit a copy of presentation by Friday at 5pm |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3/17</th>
<th><strong>Term Paper Due</strong> Fri, Mar 17 by 5pm; <em>submit evaluations (each group member must submit individually)</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Discussion Sections and Labs; Locations TBA</em></td>
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