

RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIOLOGY
SOC 204, Section 2
Spring 2017

Instructor: Mikaela Smith
Office: Building 5, Room 228-A
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Class Schedule: MWF 11:45am-12:50pm, Building 6, Room 204
Course Code: 31387

Course Objective

The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with various research method techniques employed within the discipline of sociology. Research methods encompass the processes through which social scientists conceptualize social research and collect and analyze data. The readings for this course will connect a wide range of sociological theories with different methodological approaches. Through course readings and lecture, students should obtain a strong understanding of multiple research methodologies as well as how different methodologies aid in answering varying questions and problems facing society. This course will emphasize quantitative methods, theoretical approaches and critical debates.

Each class will consist of a combination of lecture and small group discussions.

Learning Goals:

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Describe, analyze and compare the major approaches to research in sociology, including questionnaire generation, surveys, comparative and historical methods, existing data analysis, and experimental and quasi-experimental methods
- Describe, compare and contrast, and apply the different paradigms underlying social science research
- Demonstrate an ability to distinguish independent from dependent variables, and enumerate the criteria to establish causality
- Generate hypotheses and operationalize hypotheses.
- Demonstrate a basic familiarity with statistical techniques appropriate for the analysis of sociological data
- Apply the different covered methods to hypothetical situations.
- Compose a literature review

Required Readings: There are two required books for this course, which are available at the campus bookstore (Schutt) and on Blackboard (Galvan). You are responsible for completing the readings prior to the date listed on the syllabus. For example, readings assigned for a Monday class should be completed prior to so that we may discuss them in class.

Schutt, Russell. 2015. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 8th Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. (ISBN: 9781483350677)

Galvan, Jose L. 2014. *Writing Literature Reviews: A Guide for Students of Social and Behavioral Sciences*. New York, NY: Routledge. Available through Blackboard.

Any other readings or supplemental documents will be available through Blackboard.

Course Requirements

Homework Assignments (20%): I will assign short assignments that will help you work on your literature review and understand how to conduct research. Handouts will be provided to give further instructions on these assignments. All homework assignments must be turned in as a hard (paper) copy.

Literature Review (First Draft: 15%; Final Draft: 25%): Students will write a 6-10 page, double-spaced literature review on the topic of your choice. Your paper must include at least 7 outside references. A handout will be provided to give further instructions on this assignment.

- *Outside References for the Literature Review:* Outside references may include social science books and/or academic journal articles but *not* novels or articles from newspapers or magazines.
- The library offers a series of online tutorials for starting a research project. We will be covering some of these topics in class as well, but if you would like to go more in-depth on your own: <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheCPPLibrary>

Midterm (20%) and Final (20%) Exams: Midterm and final exams will include a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay response questions. The midterm will cover all material discussed in lecture or in the readings up to the exam date. The final exam will not be cumulative (each exam will cover material from one half of the quarter).

Grade Breakdown:

93-100 = A

83-86 = B

73-76 = C

63-66 = D

90-92 = A-

80-82 = B-

70-72 = C-

60-62 = D-

87-89 = B+

77-79 = C+

67-69 = D+

Below 60 = F

Instructor Policies

Academic Honesty: Neither I, nor Cal Poly Pomona tolerate academic dishonesty. I expect your work to be your own unless you are explicitly permitted to work cooperatively. Cheating includes: copying a classmate's work or knowingly and willingly letting others copy your work; handing in work that is not your own; sabotaging someone else's work; and/or taking an examination for someone else. Plagiarism means: stealing and passing off as your own the ideas or words of another person; and/or failing to give credit for direct quotations or for ideas, arguments, or information that are not your own. For further clarification of Cal Poly Pomona's policies regarding academic honesty, please follow the link: <https://www.cpp.edu/~studentconduct/academic-integrity-resources/academic-integrity.shtml>.

Any act of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the class and further disciplinary action by the university

Late policy: Assignments and papers handed in late will lose 10 points for each day that they are late. Exceptions only in emergency situations communicated to me in a timely manner.

Contacting Me: Email (mhsmith@cpp.edu) is the best way to reach me. I ask that you allow for a 48-hour turnaround for email replies. I will do my best to respond as quickly as possible. You are also welcome to come to my office hours to talk about the course.

Technology: Please turn off all cell phones during class. If you bring a laptop to class, please use it for taking notes. Using laptops for other purposes is highly distracting to your classmates.

Blackboard: It is very important that you have access to the Blackboard page. Supplemental readings, assignments, and other course materials will only be available here so register yourself as soon as possible. <https://blackboard.cpp.edu/>

Other Accommodations: The university provides accommodations to students with documented physical and learning disabilities. If you need any special accommodations, it is important that you contact me as soon as possible; every attempt will be made to accommodate students as needed. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) located in Building 9 room 103 coordinates all documentation of disabilities. They can be contacted at 909.869.3333 or <https://www.cpp.edu/~drc/>.

Note: You are required to know the material both in the assigned texts and in lectures. The lectures may highlight some points in the text but you cannot rely on the lectures alone. Relying only on the lectures will not be sufficient to get a good grade in the class nor to learn the important skills taught in the class.

Course Outline

Note: Any changes to requirements, readings, or other structural aspects of the class will be announced in class. Also, changes to the course structure, reading schedule, or policies will be updated on the syllabus, which will be posted to the course website. The version of the syllabus on the website is always the most recent and takes precedence over any previous versions.

Readings should be completed before class

Week 1: Class Orientation/Science, Society and Social Research

3/27 Schutt, Ch. 1

3/29 Schutt, Ch. 1

3/31 NO CLASS

Week 2: The Process and Problems of Social Research

4/3 Schutt, Ch. 1 & 2

4/5 Schutt, Ch. 2

4/7 NO CLASS

Week 3: Research Ethics and Research Proposals

4/10 Schutt, Ch. 2 & 3; ***Research topic and 5 sources due***

4/12 Schutt, Ch. 3

4/14 Schutt, Ch. 4

Week 4: Conceptualization and Measurement

4/17 Schutt, Ch. 4

4/19 Schutt, Ch. 5

4/21 Schutt, Ch. 5; Galvan, Ch. 8

Week 5: Sampling and Generalizability

4/24 Schutt, Ch. 6; ***Annotated bibliography due***

4/26 Schutt, Ch. 6

4/28 Midterm Review

Week 6: Research Design and Causation

5/1 ***Midterm***

5/3 Schutt, Ch. 7; Galvan, Ch. 9

5/5 Schutt, Ch. 7; Galvan, Ch. 10

Week 7: Experiments

5/8 Schutt, Ch. 8

5/10 Schutt, Ch. 8

5/12 Schutt, Ch. 8; ***Draft of literature review due***

Week 8: Surveys Research

5/15 Schutt, Ch. 9

5/17 Schutt, Ch. 9

5/19 Schutt, Ch. 9

Week 9: Quantitative Data Analysis

5/22 Galvan, Ch. 12 *****Peer review - bring draft of lit. review*****

5/24 Schutt, Ch. 12

5/26 Schutt, Ch. 13

Week 10: Historical and Comparative Research and Content Analysis

5/29 NO CLASS

5/31 Review Schutt Ch. 9 *****Meet in computer lab 5-122*****

6/2 Final Review

*****Final literature review due*****

*****Final Exam: Friday, June 9 @ 7:00-9:00am*****