

SOCIOLOGY 405: QUANTITATIVE SOCIAL RESEARCH SEMINAR

Spring 2012

12:40-2:05 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays 217 CWH

University of Wisconsin- La Crosse

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:20-10:20 a.m. or by appointment

Texts

American Sociological Association. 2007. *American Sociological Association Style Guide, 3rd edition*.

Washington, DC: American Sociological Association.

Johnson, William A., Jr., Richard P. Rettig, Gregory M. Scott, and Stephen M. Garrison. 2004. *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual, 4th edition*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall Education, Inc.

Marek, Rosanne J. 2004. *Opportunities in Social Science Careers*. VGM

Nardi, Peter. 2006. *Interpreting Data: A Guide to Understanding Research*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Neuman, W. Lawrence. 2004. *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Course Description

This course guides students through the completion of an independent quantitative sociological research project. Students conduct research on a topic related to their own interests within the field of sociology using standard quantitative methods such as survey research, evaluation research, or secondary data analysis. Each student formulates a sociologically relevant research hypothesis, designs the appropriate research methodology, reviews relevant theoretical and empirical literature, and gathers and analyzes data in a step-by-step process. The results of the research process are presented in a formal research paper. Prerequisites: SOC 350; 390 or 395.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. *Students will be able to formulate a viable sociological research question and related hypothesis/hypotheses.* This course student learning outcome is related to the Sociology Program Student Learning Objectives: 3. Instilling quantitative and qualitative sociological research skills; 3c. Demonstrating basic quantitative research skills.
2. *Students will be able to demonstrate basic quantitative research skills, including research method design and data analysis.* This course student learning outcome is related to the Sociology Program Student Learning Objectives: 3. Instilling quantitative and qualitative sociological research skills; 3c. Demonstrating basic quantitative research skills.
3. *Students will be able to apply and use research-relevant sociological theory and sociological concepts to explain research findings.* This course student learning outcome is related to the Sociology Program Student Learning Objectives: 1. Acquiring core disciplinary knowledge; 1a. Comprehension and use of core sociological concepts; 3b. Comprehension and use of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology; 3. Instilling quantitative and qualitative sociological research skills; 3d. Showing ability to critically evaluate published research.
4. *Students will be able to explain, in writing and orally, the ASA code of ethics as it relates to the protection of human subjects in sociological research.* This course student learning outcome is related to the Sociology Program Student Learning Objectives: 3a. Understanding basic philosophical, ethical and methodological principles underpinning social science.

5. *Students will be able to write a cogent quantitative sociology research paper using proper grammar, spelling, and ASA-style citations and references.* This course student learning outcome is related to the Sociology Program Student Learning Objectives: 4. Building strong communication skills; 4a. Being proficient in the use and evaluation of appropriate social science-related resources, such as library and electronic sources; 4b. Communicating effectively in written and oral forms as part of required coursework; 4c. Writing cogent sociological papers with proper grammar, spelling and ASA-style citations and references.
6. *Students will be able to explain in writing and orally, how their research findings can be applied and used in a real-world setting.* This course student learning outcome is related to the Sociology Program Student Learning Objectives: 5. Promoting the use and application of sociological skills and concepts; 5b. Application of sociological research and analytical skills to private, public and non-profit agencies.

Sociology and Archaeological Studies as Writing-in-the-Major Programs

The Sociology and Archaeological Studies majors in the Department of Sociology and Archaeology are both “writing-in-the-major” programs (WIMP). The purpose behind the program is to insure that any undergraduate who completes a major in Archaeology or Sociology has experienced sufficient informal and formal writing experiences so that graduates are proficient at communicating through a variety of formats. In all your anthropology, archaeology and sociology courses, you will be writing, and in each class, you may be asked to do a wide variety of types of writing. The department sees writing as an extremely important skill and as a mechanism to enhance student learning. In addition, you will learn the referencing and citation style used by archaeologists or sociologists. By completing the archaeology or sociology major, you will be completing the “writing emphasis” component of your general education requirements. The objectives of the writing-in-the-major program are available at: <http://www.uwlax.edu/wimp/>. The student learning outcomes for sociology and archaeology majors at UW-L are available on the department webpage at <http://www.uwlax.edu/sociology/>.

Disability Access

Any student with a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, or hearing) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the instructor and the Disability Resource Services Office (165 Murphy Library) at the beginning of the semester. Students who are currently using the Disability Resource Services office will have a copy of a contract on file in the Disability Resource Services office that verifies that they are qualified students with disabilities.

Academic Misconduct (Cheating and Plagiarism)

Academic misconduct is a violation of the [ASA code of ethics](#) and the [student honor code](#). Plagiarism, including inadequate referencing or citation of other research is unacceptable. All work handed in for this class must be the students’ own individual work. Plagiarism or cheating in any form may result in failure of the assignment or exam, failure of the course, and may include harsher sanctions. Refer to the Eagle Eye for a detailed definition of [academic misconduct](#). For helpful information on how to avoid plagiarism, go to <http://www.uwlax.edu/MurphyLibrary/research/plagiarism.html>. You may also visit the Office of Student Life if you have questions about plagiarism or cheating incidents. I encourage you to discuss any concerns regarding plagiarism or cheating with me directly and well before any assignments are handed in. Failure to understand what constitutes plagiarism or cheating is not a valid excuse for engaging in academic misconduct.

Student Honor Code

We, the students of UW-La Crosse, believe that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental to the mission of higher education. We, as students, are responsible for the honest completion and representation of our work and respect for others’ academic endeavors. We, as students and responsible citizens of the city of La Crosse, will aim to uphold the integrity of the University throughout the La Crosse community. It is our individual responsibility as students to uphold these ethical standards and to respect the character of the individuals and the university.

Course Requirements

1. Class attendance is **REQUIRED**. You must attend class, keep up with assigned projects and reading, participate in discussion and in-class activities. Your decision to enroll in this class is a decision to attend class every time we meet. Successful completion of this course will require self-discipline and time management due to the independent nature of the projects. Students should expect to spend at least 6 hours each week outside of class on course-related work.
2. Use of American Sociological Association (ASA) referencing style. Use ASA referencing style for **ALL** writing assignments where citations are necessary.
3. Completion of a quantitative sociology research paper proposal, draft assignments, and final research paper. Each student formulates a sociologically relevant research hypothesis, designs the appropriate research methodology, reviews relevant theoretical and empirical literature, and gathers and analyzes data. The results of the research process are presented in a formal research paper. Details of the project and related assignments will be discussed in class.
4. A 15-minute oral presentation of your final research project.
5. Completion of the Sociology Program Assessment exam. This exam is used to evaluate the knowledge and skill level of sociology majors as a group. Details on assessment activities will be discussed in class.
6. Completion of the Sociology Program Assessment senior exit survey. The senior exit survey is used to evaluate the sociology program and gives students the opportunity to provide input regarding future improvements to the sociology program.

Materials Required for Class

1. One flash drive. Be absolutely certain to back up EVERYTHING you do- drafts, final copies, data files- each version/change, SPSS printouts, electronic PDF's of articles. You should always back it up to your university online file storage.
2. One folder to be handed in with final project materials with your name and course number on the front.

Grading

There is a total of 400 possible points in this course. The points are distributed as follows:

Assignment/Activity	Possible Points	Your Grade
Attendance and Active Class Participation	15	
# 4: IRB certificate completion	5	
# 5: Formal Hypothesis, list & definition of dependent and independent variable(s)	15	
# 6: Final version of IRB research proposal	35	
# 7: Survey Questionnaire or Secondary Data Codebook	10	
# 8: Draft of Introduction, Literature review and methods sections	30	
# 9: Draft of descriptive statistics section	15	
# 10: Draft of bivariate analysis and bivariate tables	15	
# 11: Draft of multivariate analysis and multivariate tables	15	
# 12: Draft of results and discussion sections	15	
# 13: Final version of research paper	200	
Oral paper presentation	20	
Sociology program assessment participation	10	Attend & Contribute thoughtfully? Yes/No
Total	400	

**The total points/grades will be distributed as follows:
A=372-400; AB=356-371; B=332-355; BC=316-331; C= 280-315; D=240-279; F =239 or less**

Class & Assignment Schedule

All readings listed for a scheduled class should be **read prior to attending that class.**

Assignments are available on the course D2L page.

Date	Topic & Reading Assignments	Assignments Due
T, 1/24	Introduction to the class, Choosing a topic Read: Johnson, et al. Introduction	Topic exercise Assignment #1: Bring topic idea sheet to class or email prior to class
R, 1/26	Choosing a topic: Realities of Secondary data and Survey Construction Read: Johnson, et al. Ch. 1,2,3,4,6 Neuman Ch. 1	Assignment #2: Come to class with 3-5 SPECIFIC and thought out topic ideas- typed.
T, 1/31	Formulating the Research Problem: Hypotheses Read: Johnson, et al. Ch. 5 Nardi Introduction (Pp. 1-5) Neuman Ch. 4, Pp. 89-104	Have a meeting set up with one Sociology faculty member who has expertise in your topic for the week of 2/3 Work on completion of IRB certificate due 2/ 7 (see handout)
R, 2/2	Conceptualization & Measurement and the Research Proposal Read: Johnson, et al. Ch. 11 Neuman: Ch. 5, Pp. 105-122	Assignment #3: Bring to class copies of three articles from peer-reviewed journals related to your topic or two articles each for two topics.
T, 2/7	Ethics and the IRB Research Proposal Read: ASA Code of Ethics, sections 11-14 Neuman Ch. 3, Johnson, et al. Ch. 5	Assignment #4: Bring completed IRB certificate to class. Download the ASA Code of Ethics and read sections 11, 12, 13 & 14 prior to coming to class.
R, 2/9	Literature Review & methods Read: Neuman Ch. 4 Johnson, et al. Chs. 2, 3, 4, 8, and pp. 182-188 in Ch. 10	Assignment #5: Formal Hypotheses, Data source, dependent and independent variables.
T, 2/14	Theory & Research Read: Neuman Ch. 2 Karolyn Bald Career Services: Careers for Soc Majors	Getting a Job or into Grad School!
R, 2/16	Research Design: Secondary Data Analysis and Codebooks Read: Johnson et al. Ch. 11 Neuman Ch. 9- pp. 228-237 Research Design: Sampling Read: Neuman Ch. 6	
T, 2/21	Research Design: Survey Design Read: Neuman Ch. 7	
R, 2/23	Work on assignments	Assignments #6:IRB proposal due Assignment # 7: Completed questionnaire or secondary data codebook due.
2/28	Data collection and analysis	

	Read: SPSS Chs. 1-4	
R, 3/1	Work on assignments	Assignment # 8: Draft of Introduction, Literature Review, Theory and Methods section due.
T, 3/6	Univariate Analysis and Recoding Read: Nardi Ch. 1, Neuman Ch. 10, SPSS Ch. 5-10	Survey Students: Conduct Surveys Secondary Data Students: Work on data
R, 3/8	Work on assignments/data	Survey Students: Conduct Surveys Secondary Data Students: Work on data
	SPRING BREAK	
T, 3/20	Work on assignment	Survey Students: Conduct Surveys
R, 3/22	Scales, indexes, and data cleaning	Assignment #9: Descriptive statistics section due Descriptive statistics table, frequency table, written description of each variable.
T, 3/27	Bivariate Analysis Read: SPSS Ch. 11, Nardi Ch. 2-4	
R, 3/29	Bivariate Analysis	Assignment #10: Bivariate tables and draft of bivariate analysis due. Sign-up for individual meetings
T, 4/4	Multivariate Analysis Read: Nardi Ch. 5	
R, 4/5	Multivariate Analysis	Assignment #11: Multivariate tables and draft of multivariate analysis due.
T, 4/10	Individual meetings	
R, 4/12	Individual meetings	Assignment #12: Draft of results and discussion due.
T, 4/17	Individual meetings	
R, 4/19	Assessment Exam and Senior Exit Survey	Attendance Required
T, 4/24	Final Paper Presentations	FINAL PAPERS, FLASH DRIVE AND COMPLETED NOTEBOOKS DUE REMEMBER TO MAKE AND HAND IN A SECOND COPY OF THE PAPER WITHOUT YOUR NAME ON IT (FOR PROGRAM ASSESSMENT) Attendance Required
R, 4/26	Final Paper Presentations	Attendance Required
T, 5/1	Final Paper Presentations	Attendance Required
R, 5/3	Final Paper Presentations	Attendance Required

Final Folder Contents

Final Paper [Final research paper, complete with references AND tables.]

ALL graded assignment drafts

Flash Drive with all outputs, PDF's of articles and SPSS data files.

Assignment Due Date	Assignment
Tuesday, 1/24	# 1: Topic Idea
Thursday, 1/26	# 2: Typed topic list
	Meeting with SOC faculty set up for next week
Thursday, 2/2	# 3: Bring three printed articles that you have read on your topic to class
Tuesday, 2/7	# 4: IRB certificate completion
Thursday, 2/9	# 5: Formal hypotheses, list and table with definitions of dependent and independent variables.
Thursday, 2/23	# 6: IRB research proposal AND # 7: Survey questionnaire or secondary data codebook
Thursday, 3/1	# 8: Draft of Introduction, Literature Review, Theory and Methods sections
Thursday, 3/22	# 9: Draft of descriptive statistics section and table
Thursday, 3/29	# 10: Draft of bivariate analysis and bivariate tables
Thursday, 4/5	# 11: Draft of Multivariate analysis and multivariate tables
Thursday, 4/12	# 12: Draft of results and discussion sections
Tuesday, 4/24	# 13: FINAL VERSION OF RESEARCH PAPER
4/24-5/3	Oral paper presentations/ Power Point