**SOCY 3201: Sociological Research Methods, Spring 2019**

Monday & Wednesday @ 10 – 10:50 a.m. in CLRE 207

**Instructor:** Dr. Matthew Brown

**Office:** 159 Ketchum Hall

**Office Hours:** Monday/Wednesday 11 – 11:50 a.m.

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**TA:** Hillary Steinberg

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**Office Hours:** Monday 11 – 1 p.m.

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Sociological research relies on collecting and analyzing different types of data to investigate social phenomena. These methodological tools vary widely depending on the research questions a sociologist seeks to answer. This course will teach you to investigate the world through a sociological lens and give you experience designing studies and using many of the fundamental tools of sociological research. The purpose of this course is to build an understanding of sociological research methods and data analysis and to apply this understanding to real-world research questions. You will build a strong set of skills that may serve you well in your future workplace, including research design, critical thinking about data, construction and administration of qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments, data management, and applied statistical and textual analysis.

In this course, you will sharpen your research design and analytical skills by combining lectures with hands-on sociological research and data analysis. The course is divided into two main units. In the first unit you will learn about social science research methods and research design considerations. Then in the largest unit of the course, you will narrow your focus from research in general to three methodological tools in particular, learning how to design studies to give you the best possible data and analyze that data. You will collect original sociological data and write a short paper for each of these methods.

This class is intense and involves a lot of active learning. You will work in the computer lab and join a group to design studies and collect and analyze data. When you work on the papers you write as an individual, and you will be part of a group that will provide constructive feedback.

Please note that it is essential that you have taken a basic statistics course before enrolling in this class. We will teach you some basic statistical analysis, and we will assume that you have studied these statistics (though we will briefly refresh your memory).

**Course Contacts**

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Email/phone\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Email/phone \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**UNIVERSITY REQUIRED STATEMENTS**

# Accommodation for Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students/temporary-medical-conditions) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

# Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior) and the [Student Code of Conduct](http://www.colorado.edu/osccr/).

# Honor Code

# All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](https://www.colorado.edu/osccr/honor-code).

# Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, exploitation, harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking), discrimination, and harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](https://cuboulder.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0PnqVK4kkIJIZnf), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

# Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, if you tell us one week in advance we will offer a new due date or alternative assignment.

See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-andor-exams) for full details.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

*Readings*: There are two primary textbooks, both available at the bookstore.

1. *Making Sense of the Social World,* 6th edition, by Daniel F. Chambliss and Russell K. Schutt.

2. *The Practice of Research: How Social Scientists Answer Their Questions*, by Shamus Khan and Dana Fisher.

3. Additional readings will be posted online.

4. *USB flash drive or online storage*: Each student will need their own USB flash drive, external hard drive, or an online storage option like Dropbox or Google Drive, to store their data and analysis files. Students are responsible for maintaining the integrity and safety of their own data, and should therefore bring their flash drive to each lab meeting or have online data storage available. Students will also be using their Google Drive account through CU. This account has been set up for you and can be accessed using your CU email and Identikey password.

*5. Software*: In the survey unit, we will be using two types of software. The first is Qualtrics, an online survey design and administration package. This is free to CU affiliates at <http://qualtrics.colorado.edu>. The second is a statistical software program called SPSS. It is available in many computer labs across the campus (for a complete list of labs with SPSS, go to <http://webdata.colorado.edu/labs/softwaresearch/>, enter SPSS in the “software name” box and search). If you like, you may also purchase a short-term license for SPSS and put it on your own computer; contact OIT for details.

**Grading**

Your final grade will be based on the following course requirements. There are 165 points total.

The course grade will be based on the following calculation:

Mid-term exam: 50 points

Final exam: 50 points

Papers: 10 points (5 points each)

Group assignments: 15 points (5 points each)

Individual assignments: 30 points (10 points each)

Participation: 10 (1 point each)

**Total 165 points**

**Course Requirements:**

Two Exams

Exam One covers initial unit on sociological research methods. The exam will be mixed format including multiple choice and short answer.

The final exam covers all course material and will focus both on what you have learned about specific methods and how that links to the broader research methods material from the first unit.

CITI tutorial

Because you will be conducting sociological research, you will need to pass a short online tutorial on conducting research with human subjects that is required by the university. Students who have completed this tutorial in the past three years do not need to retake it and can simply submit a printout of their certificate of completion.

Papers

You will choose two of four paper options during the first unit of the course. These will be based on the Chambliss & Schutt textbook. These are intended to help with your synthesis of the textbook with your research interests and encourage your participation in class.

Three Group Components of the Methods Modules

You will collect a small amount of sociological data with your group using these three methods: surveys, in-depth interviews, and content analysis. You and your group will work on study design and data collection. You may use tools such as Google Drive and Google Hangouts to collaborate. The consequences of not participating during the group component of the methods modules will be a zero for the group component.

Three Individual Components of the Methods Modules

You will individually analyze your group-collected data and individually write-up your findings for these three methods: survey, in-depth interviews, and field observations.

Class Participation

You may receive one point toward your final grade for participation per week. There are 12 weeks that will be graded (spring break and test weeks are not). The lowest two scores will be dropped resulting in 10 participation opportunities being added to your course grade. Consequently, students will not be able to make-up class participation opportunities. Contributing to discussion in lecture or recitation at any point in the week will earn you .5 out of 1 point. Completing the in-recitation assignment will earn you .5 out of 1 point. Doing both in a week will earn you the full point.

Please be aware that some course requirements or assigned readings may change during the semester. However, we do not expect the overall workload to increase if changes are made.

**LATE POLICY: *Any assignment turned in after the due date will receive a 10% penalty. We do not accept any assignment, excluding the first four papers and the 12 class participation opportunities, more than three days after the due date (e.g. if an assignment is due Wednesday you have until Saturday before we will not accept it). If a due date is changed the new due date will be considered the due date for late assignments.***

**Grading Philosophy:** Below is the standard for the level of assessment of written assignments and overall evaluation for course grades. These standards may be higher than those you may have encountered previously. The distribution of final grades will meet the standards for fair and rigorous evaluation.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | **Percentage Grade** | **Description** |
| **A** | **90-100** | *Exceptional*: Exceeds all required elements of the assignment, and the quality of the work is considerably higher than what was required. The quality of the work is considerably above the class average and impressive to the evaluator. |
| **B** | **80-89** | *Good*: Meets all required elements of the assignment, and the quality of the work is better than what is required. |
| **C** | **70-79** | *Average*: Meets all required elements of an assignment, not more, not less. Quality of assignment is satisfactory for college level work. |
| **D** | **60-69** | *Below average*: Does not meet all the required elements of the assignment, and/or the quality of the assignment is considerably lower than satisfactory.  |
| **F** | **59 and below** | *Failing*: Few of the requirements of the assignment are met and/or the quality of the assignment is well below basic standards of writing, comprehension, and/or ability to follow instructions.  |

# COURSE ENVIRONMENT

# When you email us PLEASE put “SOCY 3201” in the subject header. We may delete the emails that do not have this as the subject heading and consequently not respond. We check emails at least once a day during weekdays before 5pm. Do not expect responses to emails sent after 5 p.m. on a weekday and over the weekend.

* Important announcements will be sent out over email to the addresses listed on the class roster. You are required to check this email account regularly over the course of the semester. Each week you will receive an email from Hillary with news about the upcoming week, what readings you will be expected to have done and any due dates. You are responsible for the information in these weekly emails.

# You are responsible for material and announcements presented during classroom time. We will not repeat material during office hours if you miss a class. It is your responsibility to get missed notes and updates from fellow students-NOT the instructor or TA. If a due date or other administrative changes are announced, that will supersede the “tentative schedule” found in this syllabus. You are responsible for all information communicated in class, whether or not you are in attendance.

* Please do not arrive late or leave early or begin to pack up prior to the end of lecture or discussion. This inhibits other students’ ability to hear and understand the material.
* We expect that you will attend regularly and participate in in-class activities. This course is very experiential – if you miss class you will be hampered in completing the assignments, and it is very likely that your grade will suffer.
* Please turn off cell phone ringers, and avoid engaging in side talking, reading, sleeping, texting, or surfing while in class.This is disrespectful of other students and the instructors and disruptive to the learning community. If we notice you doing any of these things the possible reactions range from polite requests to cease to light public ridicule to being asked to leave the room.
* Because they can distract you and other students, we do not allow the use of electronic devices for note taking in lecture. Studies are increasingly showing that students who use computers in the classroom receive lower grades than those who take notes by hand. However, use of smart phones will be allowed for participation in Poll Everywhere surveys.
* Please do the assigned readings for the week before the first-class meeting of the week (Monday). This makes class more enjoyable for everyone and more useful for you. The readings are on what may be new material or ideas and so require time and focused attention for deep comprehension and retention. While we may not cover each reading in class you are responsible for the content. If something is unclear in the reading or you are unsure how it relates to that week’s topic, it is your responsibility to bring that question up in class if you want it discussed in more detail.
* If you know you will be unable to take an exam on the day scheduled for any reason (religious, university event, or any other reason), please let us know as soon as possible to arrange for the essay makeup or other alternative. If you miss an exam, you have 24 hours to inform your instructors. If you do not inform your instructors within 24 hours of missing an exam you will be given a zero for that score. It is in your best interest to be at scheduled exams. Please check the syllabus now to determine if there are any conflicts you need to discuss with us.
* Please keep all returned work in the event that you have a grade dispute at the end of the semester.  If your calculation of your grade does not match our records, it is your responsibility to provide proof of graded work. You should keep track of your online grade book to catch any errors as early as possible.
* Web Page: We are using Canvas for this course. The syllabus, some readings, assignments, grades, and other information will be posted on Canvas. The most recent course information will be available there, as information in this syllabus (reading or assignment due dates) may be changed over the course of the semester. Email updates will be sent out when important material is posted Canvas.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (reading and assignment due dates may change)**

WEEK 1

M 1/14 Topic: Course Introduction

W 1/16 Topic: Thinking Sociologically

 Read: Chambliss Ch. 1

WEEK 2

M 1/21 **NO CLASS**

W 1/23 Topic: Intro to Social Research

 Read: Chambliss Ch. 2

 **Due: Paper 1**

WEEK 3

M 1/28 Topic: Process and Problems of Social Research

 **Due: Groups & CITI certificate**

W 1/30 Topic: Ethics

 Read: Chambliss Ch. 3

 **Due: Paper 2**

WEEK 4

M 2/4 Topic: Conceptualization & Measurement

 Read: Chambliss Ch. 4

 **Due: Paper 3**

W 2/6 Topic: Sampling

 Read: Chambliss Ch. 5

WEEK 5

M 2/11 Topic: Causation

 Read: Chambliss Ch. 6

**Due: Paper 4**

W 2/13 Topic: Causation & Experiments

 Read: Khan Ch. 1

WEEK 6

M 2/18 **EXAM 1 Part 1**

W 2/20 **EXAM 1 Part 2**

WEEL 7

M 2/25 Topic: Survey Design

 Read: Chambliss Ch. 7 and Khan Ch. 2

W 2/27 Topic: Survey Design

 Read: Chambliss Ch. 7 and Khan Ch. 2

WEEK 8

M 3/4 Topic: Survey Analysis

Read: Mojola and Everett

W 3/6 Topic: Survey Analysis *(bring laptop)*

Read: Mojola and Everett

**Due: Survey Questions (group component)**

WEEK 9

M 3/11 Topic: In-depth Interview

Read: Chambliss Ch. 9, Khan Ch. 5, and Tips for Interviewing

W 3/13 Topic: In-depth Interview

Read: Chambliss Ch. 9, Khan Ch. 5, and Tips for Interviewing

 **Due: Survey Analysis (individual component)**

WEEK 10

M 3/18 Topic: In-depth Interview

W 3/20 Topic: Qualitative Coding *(bring laptop)*

 **Due: Interview Questions (group component)**

WEEK 11 **SPRING BREAK**

WEEK 12

M 4/1 Topic: Qualitative Coding

W 4/3 Topic: Field Observation

 Read: Khan Ch. 4 and Observation Training Guide

**Due: Interview Analysis (individual component)**

WEEK 13

M 4/8 Topic: Field Observation

 Read: Khan Ch. 4 and Observation Training Guide

 Field Setting trip

W 4/10 Topic: Field Observation

 Read: Goffman

 **Due: Fieldnotes (individual component)**

WEEK 14

M 4/15 Topic: Content Analysis

 Read: Chambliss Ch. 11 and Khan Ch. 9

W 4/17 Topic: Content Analysis

 Read: Chambliss Ch. 11 and Khan Ch. 9

 **Due: Field Observation Analysis (individual component)**

WEEK 15

M 4/22 Topic: Content Analysis

 Read: Saguy & Gruys

W 4/24 Topic: Content Analysis

 Read: Saguy & Gruys

WEEK 16

M 4/29 Topic: Mixed Methods

Read: Kahn Ch. 9 and Harrison & Lloyd

**Due: Content Analysis (group component)**

Tu 5/1 Topic: Exam Review