

SOCY 3201: Sociological Research Methods, Fall 2015

Mondays and Wednesdays 3:00-4:15 p.m. in Hale 230

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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 quantitative and qualitative 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 four 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, 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 _____

Course Materials:

Readings: There are two primary textbooks, both available at the bookstore. (1) Making Sense of the Social World, 4th edition, by Daniel F. Chambliss and Russell K. Schutt. ISBN: 1452217718. (2) The Practice of Research: How Social Scientists Answer Their Questions, by Shamus Khan and Dana Fisher. Additional readings will be posted on the course website.

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.

Clickers: We also require that you register an iClicker (<http://www.iclicker.com>) number online for use in class. Online registration of your clicker is done through the iClicker database with instructions at <http://myCUInfo.colorado.edu>. You may borrow an iClicker from someone else, but you will not be able to share an iClicker with another student in this class. If you do not already own an iClicker and cannot borrow one from a friend who does not have a class at the same time, they are available for purchase at the CU Bookstore.

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. Percentage grades will be converted to letter grades using the following criteria: A (93-100), A- (90-92), B+ (88-89), B (83-87), B- (80-82), C+ (78-79), C (73-77), C- (70-72), D+ (68-69), D (63-67), D- (60-62), and F (0-59).

The course grade will be based on the following calculation:

20%	Research methods unit exam
20%	Final exam
48% (12% each)	4 research projects (survey, interview, observation, and content analysis)
6%	Online video presentation
6%	In-class activities, attendance, and participation in class and online

Course Requirements:

Exams

You will take an exam after the initial unit on sociological research methods. The exam will be multiple choice, matching, and short essay. The final exam will cover 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.

Method-specific research projects

You will work individually and/or with a group (depending on the method) to collect a small amount of sociological data using a different method for each of the four projects: surveys, in-depth interviews, field observations, and content analysis. You or your group will work on study design, data collection, data analysis, and a write-up of findings. You will have some time in class to work on group aspects of the projects, and otherwise you may use tools such as Google Drive and Google Hangouts to collaborate.

Human subjects 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.

Online video presentation

In the first week, you will sign up to work alone or with a partner to create a short instructional video using VoiceThread that will be loaded onto our D2L class website. Your video will teach your classmates about a particular topic related to the class, chosen from a list we will provide. You should use slides or graphics as well as a voiceover.

Team activities, attendance, in-class and online participation, and adherence to classroom policies

During the course of the semester you will be asked to do as part of a group. We will ask for input from your classmates regarding your participation in these activities. We will take note of your attendance in class and verbal participation in large-group and small-group discussions throughout the semester. Your responses to clicker questions in class will be graded as response/no response and will provide us with additional information about your attendance in lectures. Although we will not grade you only on your overall attendance, students with spotty attendance or participation will receive low grades in this part of the class. Your online participation in viewing other students' instructional videos and answering weekly, ungraded study quiz questions is another aspect of this grade. Finally, we will assess whether you adequately adhere to the course policies that are designed to maintain an orderly and safe learning environment.

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.

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.

Letter Grade	Percentage Grade	Description
A	90-100	<i>Exceptional:</i> 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	<i>Good:</i> Meets all required elements of the assignment, and the quality of the work is better than what is required.
C	70-79	<i>Average:</i> Meets all required elements of an assignment, not more, not less. Quality of assignment is satisfactory for college level work.
D	60-69	<i>Below average:</i> 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	<i>Failing:</i> 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 Policies:

In the classroom

1. Getting to class late, leaving early, sleeping, talking with other students during lecture, reading your email, using your cell phone, or otherwise being distracted and distracting, are not acceptable classroom activities. Please turn your cell phone off when class starts.
2. Class ends at 4:15 p.m. I will start promptly and respect your time by ending promptly. Make sure to respect our class time by arriving by 3:00 and not packing up your things until class is over.
3. Because they can distract you and other students, we strongly discourage the use of laptop or tablet computers in the classroom (except for the computer labs we will do together). Studies have consistently shown that students who use computers in the classroom receive lower grades than those who take notes by hand. Students who must use a computer during lecture are required to sit in the back or on the sides of the classroom to avoid distracting their peers. Lecture slides will be available on the class website before each class in case you want to print them out and take notes on them.
4. Let us know immediately if you have a health problem or disability that necessitates leaving the room during class time, or if you have a conflict that regularly prevents you from getting to class on time. Otherwise, please be on time and leave only to use the restroom.
5. All lecture material will be presented during class hours. We will not repeat material during office hours if you miss a class. If you miss a class and would like notes beyond the slides posted on the class website, you should contact a classmate for their notes. You are responsible for all information communicated in class, whether or not you are in attendance.
6. Important announcements will be sent out over email to the addresses listed on my class roster. You are required to check this email account regularly over the course of the semester.

Assignments

1. All assignments must be completed on time and handed in as instructed, typically online on D2L by beginning of class on the day they are due.
2. Emailed assignments will not be accepted without prior permission from one of us.
3. Late assignments will be docked by one letter grade (10%) for each portion of a 24-hour period they are turned in late. For example, if an assignment is 4 hours late, it will be docked one letter grade. After 9 days, you cannot receive partial credit for turning in an assignment.

Attendance

1. We expect that you will attend regularly and participate in in-class activities.
2. 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.

Office hours/getting help: Students who email us beforehand to set up an appointment during office hours will be given priority. We are happy to talk with you about academic issues that are unrelated to course material, such as deciding whether to major in sociology, writing an honors thesis, graduate school, etc. We are happy to answer appropriate questions over email and will check class-related emails once a day on weekdays.

Web Page: The course web page is on Desire2Learn (the new campus system that is being phased in this semester), accessed at <http://learn.colorado.edu>. The syllabus, some readings, lecture materials, examples, grades, instructional videos, quizzes, and other information will be posted on the website. The most recent

course information will be available here, as information in this syllabus may be changed over the course of the semester. Email updates will be sent out when important material is posted on the website.

Students with Disabilities: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by email at dsinfo@colorado.edu. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Medical Conditions: Injuries, Surgeries, and Illnesses guidelines under Quick Links at Disability Services website and discuss your needs with your professor.

Religious Observances: 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, you should notify me at least two weeks ahead of time to request special accommodation if you have a conflict. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

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 differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. 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. See policies at:

<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at:

http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

Discrimination and Harassment: The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities. (Regent Law, Article 10, amended 11/8/2001). CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://hr.colorado.edu/dh>.

Honor Code: All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both

academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at: <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and <http://honorcode.colorado.edu>. Some of the work in this class will be done together with other students, while other work will be required to be completed independently and will represent an Honor Code violation if done collaboratively. I will make it clear what kinds of collaboration are acceptable versus not, but ask me if you have any questions. **Be aware that giving your clicker to another student to use for you in this class, or using another student's clicker for them in this class, are violations of the Honor Code.**

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE (reading assignment is due before the first listed class):

	Topic	Reading	Assignments
UNIT 1	SOCIOLOGY RESEARCH METHODS		
WEEK 1			
Aug 24 – M	Course introduction	Course syllabus	
Aug 26 – W	Syllabus review, intro to social research	Chambliss Ch. 1	Video signup
WEEK 2			
Aug 31 – M	Process and problems of social research	Chambliss Ch. 2	Clickers start
Sept 2 – W	Ethics in social research	Chambliss Ch. 3	
WEEK 3			
Sept 7 – M	<i>Labor Day – no class</i>		
Sept 9 – W	Conceptualization and measurement	Chambliss Ch. 4	HRC certificate due
WEEK 4			
Sept 14 – M	Conceptualization and measurement		
Sept 16 – W	Sampling	Chambliss Ch. 5	
WEEK 5			
Sept 21 – M	Causation	Chambliss Ch. 6	
Sept 23 – W	Causation, experiments	Khan Ch. 1	
WEEK 6			
Sept 28 – M	Evaluation research	Chambliss Ch. 11	
Sept 30 – W	Exam #1: Research Methods		
UNIT 2	METHODS AND ANALYSIS		
WEEK 7			
Oct 5-7	Survey design	Khan Ch. 2, Chambliss Ch. 7	
WEEK 8			
Oct 12-14	Survey analysis— MEET IN CLRE 111 (COMPUTER LAB) ON WED.	Chambliss Ch. 8, P. England article	
WEEK 9			
Oct 19-21	In-depth interviewing	Khan Ch. 5, Chambliss Ch. 9	Survey project due Wed. noon
WEEK 10			
Oct 26-28	Interviewing continued	Chambliss Ch. 10, Irvine article, Tips for interviewing	
WEEK 11			

Nov 2-4	Field observations	Khan Ch. 4, Goffman article	Interview project due Wed. noon
WEEK 12			
Nov 9-11	Observations continued	Observation training guide	
WEEK 13			
Nov 16-18	Content analysis	Khan Ch. 7-8, D. England article	Observation project due Wed. noon
WEEK 14	<i>Thanksgiving break – No classes</i>		
WEEK 15			
Nov 30- Dec 2	Content analysis		
WEEK 16			
Dec 7 – M	Mixed-method studies, evaluations	Khan Ch. 9, Harrison article	Content analysis project due
Dec 9 – W	Course conclusion, exam review	Chambliss Ch. 12	
WEEK 17			
Dec 16 – W	Final exam, Wed. Dec. 16 1:30-4:00 p.m. (scheduled by registrar's office)		Final exam

Additional Readings (articles marked with a * are required reading, the other articles are optional)

1) Surveys

*England, Paula and Jonathan Bearak. 2014. "The sexual double standard and gender differences in attitudes toward casual sex among U.S. university students." *Demographic Research* 30(46):1327-1338.

Mojola, Sanyu A. and Bethany Everett. 2012. "STD and HIV Risk Factors among U.S. Young Adults: Variations by Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Sexual Orientation." *Perspectives in Sexual and Reproductive Health* 44(2):125-133.

Zissimopoulos, Julie, and Lynn A. Karoly. 2010. "Employment and Self-Employment in the Wake of Hurricane Katrina." *Demography* 47(2):345-67.

Brayne, Sarah. "Surveillance and System Avoidance Criminal Justice Contact and Institutional Attachment." *American Sociological Review* (2014): 0003122414530398.

2) In-depth interviews

*Irvine, Leslie. "Animals as Lifechangers and Lifesavers Pets in the Redemption Narratives of Homeless People." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 42.1 (2013): 3-30.

Wilkins, Amy C. "'So Full of Myself as a Chick' Goth Women, Sexual Independence, and Gender Egalitarianism." *Gender & Society* 18.3 (2004): 328-349.

Perrin, Karen M., Ellen M. Daley, Sandra F. Naoom, Jennifer L. Packing-Ebuen, Holly L. Rayko,

McFarlane, Mary and Robert J. McDermott. 2006. "Women's Reactions to HPV Diagnosis: Insights from In-Depth Interviews." *Women and Health* 43(2):93-110.

Carr, Patrick J., Laura Napolitano, and Jessica Keating. "We never call the cops and here is why: a qualitative examination of legal cynicism in three Philadelphia neighborhoods." *Criminology* 45.2 (2007): 445-480.

3) Field observations

*Goffman, Alice. "On the run: Wanted men in a Philadelphia ghetto." *American Sociological Review* 74.3 (2009): 339-357.

Thorne, Barrie and Zella Luria. 1986. "Sexuality and Gender in Children's Daily Worlds." *Social Problems* 33(3):176-190.

Lutfey, Karen and Freese, Jeremy. 2015. "Toward Some Fundamentals of Fundamental Causality: Socioeconomic Status and Health in the Routine Clinic Visit for Diabetes." *American Journal of Sociology* 110(5):1326-1372.

Ruwanpura, K. N. 2009. 'Putting houses in place.' *Disasters* 33(3):436-456.

4) Content analysis

*England, D. D., Descartes, L., & Collier-Meek, M. 2011. "Gender Role Portrayal and the Disney Princesses." *Sex Roles* 64(7/8):555-567.

Saguy, A. C., & Gruys, K. 2010. "Morality and Health: News Media Constructions of Overweight and Eating Disorders." *Social Problems* 57(2):231-250.

McCright, A. M., & Dunlap, R. E. 2000. "Challenging global warming as a social problem: An analysis of the conservative movement's counter-claims." *Social Problems* 47(4):499-522.

Oliver, Mary Beth. "Portrayals of crime, race, and aggression in "reality-based" police shows: A content analysis." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 38.2 (1994): 179-192.

5) Mixed methods

*Harrison, Jill Lindsey, and Sarah E. Lloyd. 2013. "New Jobs, New Workers, and New Inequalities: Explaining Employers' Roles in Occupational Segregation by Nativity and Race." *Social Problems* 60(3):281-301.

Armstrong, Elizabeth, Laura Hamilton, and Brian Sweeny. 2006. "Sexual Assault on Campus: A Multilevel, Integrative Approach to Party Rape" *Social Problems* 53(4):483-499.

Mollborn, Stefanie and Janet Jacobs. 2012. "'We'll Figure a Way': Teenage Mothers' Experiences in Shifting Social and Economic Contexts." *Qualitative Sociology* 35(1):23-46.

Norgaard, K. M. 2007. "The Politics of Invasive Weed Management: Gender, Race, and Risk Perception in Rural California." *Rural Sociology* 72(3):450-477.