

SOCY 3301: Survey Methods, Spring 2015

Lectures: 12-12:50 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in DUAN G4125

Instructor: George Washington Williams IV
Email: george.williams@colorado.edu

Office: Armory Trailer (on Grandview)
Office Hours: Wed. 9-11:30 a.m. and by appointment

Sociological research often relies on quantitative methods (statistical analyses) to investigate social phenomena. Researchers use large national surveys, public opinion polls, census data, or their own survey data to document, describe, and explain a wide range of sociologically motivated research questions. The purpose of this course is to build an understanding of survey methods and quantitative 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, survey construction and administration, data management, and applied statistical analysis.

The course is divided into three units, each following logically from the next. You will sharpen your statistical analysis and survey design skills by combining lectures with hands-on data analysis and survey creation. In the first unit you will learn about social science research methods. Next you will narrow your focus from research in general to surveys in particular, learning how to design surveys to give you the best possible data and handle and analyze data collected from surveys. In the third unit you will develop your own research questions, use data from the General Social Survey to analyze the questions, and write an 8-10 page final paper.

This class is intense and involves a lot of active learning. You will work in the computer lab and join a group to design a survey and collect and analyze data. When you work on your individual final paper, 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 applied analysis for many types of statistical tests that are covered in a statistics course, and we will assume that you have studied each of these tests in the past (though we will briefly refresh your memory).

Course Contacts:

Name _____ Email/phone _____

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Course Materials:

Readings: The primary textbook is Making Sense of the Social World, 4th edition, by Daniel F. Chambliss and Russell K. Schutt, available at the bookstore. ISBN: 1452217718. Additional readings will very occasionally be assigned and posted on the course website.

USB flash drive or online storage: Each student will need their own USB flash 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.

Clickers: We also require that you register an iClicker (<http://www.iclicker.com>) number online for use in each non-lab class. New for this semester, 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: The statistical software program we will be using is called SPSS (also known as PASW). 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). You may also purchase a short-term license for SPSS and put it on your own computer. SPSS can be rented for 6 months for \$46.49 at: <http://e5.onthehub.com/WebStore/ProductSearchOfferingList.aspx?srch=spss&ws=49c547ba-f56d-dd11-bb6c-0030485a6b08&vsro=8>, or see: <http://www.its.colorado.edu> for other purchase options.

Course Points: Your final grade will be calculated as a percentage of **600 possible points**. 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 points are distributed as follows:

240 points (40%)	Research methods and lab practical exams (120 points each)
130 points (22%)	Final paper (120 points) and final paper draft (10 points)
100 points (17%)	Homework assignments (lab and otherwise)
60 points (10%)	Group survey project
50 points (8%)	Survey design quiz
20 points (3%)	<u>In-class activities and adherence to classroom policies</u>
600 points (100%)	Total

Course Requirements:

Examinations

You will take exams after the units on research methods and data analysis and a quiz after the unit on survey design. (Your performance in the last unit will be assessed by your final paper, so there will be no final exam.) The first exam and the quiz will be multiple choice and short answer. The second exam will be a statistical “practical” exam that will take place in the lab, testing your abilities to use SPSS and manipulate and analyze data in a timely fashion.

Final paper

The final project for this course is a paper in which you will apply the skills you have learned this semester to a topic of your own choosing. You will use the General Social Survey (GSS), develop hypotheses that can be tested with your data, test the hypotheses, and interpret the results. To get you started on your project, one of your homework assignments will be a paper proposal that is 1-2 double-spaced pages in length. It will contain your general research ideas, a description of the data and variables you will use, and your hypotheses. You will also submit a rough draft of your paper. Your group will provide feedback on the proposal and rough draft.

Your final paper should be approximately 8-10 typed, double-spaced pages of text. You will be provided with a very specific outline for the structure of your paper, but in general, it will contain your theory, a description of the data and indicators, descriptive statistics, hypothesis tests, and conclusions. The paper will be due online on D2L at the end time of our officially scheduled final exam, **Tuesday, May 5 at 4:00 p.m.** There will be no final exam.

Homework assignments

You will have two types of homework assignments – five homework assignments that you do on your own in a lab using SPSS (5 points each) and five non-lab homework assignments (15 points each).

Group survey project

This project simulates demands a survey researcher often faces in the workplace. For this project you will work with a group to construct a short survey using online software, collect data online, analyze the data, and write a brief report.

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 two years do not need to retake it and can simply submit a printout of their certificate of completion.

Team activities, participation, and adherence to classroom policies

During the course of the semester you will be asked to be 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 strictly on your overall attendance, students with spotty attendance or participation will receive low grades in this part of the class. We will also contribute to this portion of your grade by assessing 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 conducive to our time together. Please turn your cell phone on silent at the start of class
2. Lecture ends at 12:50. I will start promptly and respect your time by ending promptly. Make sure to respect our class time by arriving on time and not **packing up your things until class is over**.
3. I do not regulate computer use in the classroom. Studies have consistently shown that students who use computers in the classroom receive lower grades than those who take notes by hand.
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. I will not repeat material during office hours if you miss a class. If you miss a class and would like notes, 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 the instructor.
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. Because much of the material starting in week 8 is statistical and lab-based, you must come to class to receive valuable information on how to complete the practical course assignments.
3. 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, accessed at <http://learn.colorado.edu>. The syllabus, some readings, lecture materials, examples, grades, 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:

	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
UNIT 1	SOCIOLOGY RESEARCH METHODS		
WEEK 1			
Jan 12 – M	Course introduction, syllabus review	Course syllabus	
Jan 14 – W	Science, society, and social research	Chambliss & Schutt Ch. 1	
Jan 16 – F	Process and problems of social research	Chambliss & Schutt Ch. 2	
WEEK 2			
Jan 19 – M	<i>No class</i>		
Jan 21 – W	Ethics in social research	Chambliss & Schutt Ch. 3	HRC tutorial
Jan 23 – F	Conceptualization and measurement	Chambliss & Schutt Ch. 4	HW #1
WEEK 3			
Jan 26 – M	Conceptualization and measurement		
Jan 28 – W	Sampling	Chambliss & Schutt Ch. 5	
Jan 30 – F	Causation	Chambliss & Schutt Ch. 6	HW #2