

# Research Methods in Sociology Online Course

SOCI 3305, Spring 2016  
CRN# 10294

Kennesaw State University

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*(the best way to reach me is via D2L e-mail, not by phone!)*

**Assistant Professor of Sociology**

**I expect students to read this syllabus in its entirety! I will not be able to respond separately to every individual inquiry related to information already provided here.**

## Course description

This course provides an introduction to research design and data collection methods used in empirical sociological research. The course also addresses the connection between theoretical propositions and research methodology as well as the ethical considerations for conducting empirical research in the social sciences.

## Course Prerequisites

SOCI 1101 Principles of Sociology

SOCI 2210 Professional Development for Sociology Students

## Course Objectives (Learning Outcomes):

- CO1 → Understand, describe and exemplify the main principles of social science research methods.
- CO 2→ Describe and apply appropriate ethical practices in doing human-based research, including IRB processes
- CO3 → Become familiar with levels of measurement and sampling techniques.
- CO4 → Become familiar with basic quantitative and qualitative research methods
- CO5→ Learn the basic use of statistical analysis software such as SPSS
- CO6→ Learn how to design a research study to address specific research questions
- CO7→ Develop a research proposal.

## **Technology Requirements and Class Format**

**This is an entirely online course** and will be conducted entirely through the D2L platform. Students are expected to have the necessary computer background to work in this format, and are advised to seek additional technical assistance from computer services if needed [See resource links in Welcome Module]. Students will be expected to read each assigned chapter carefully, and then use the linked Lecture Notes and PowerPoint presentations as review material. Then, for each chapter, students will be expected to make substantive dialogue contributions to ongoing discussions that will occur online, on **discussion boards**.

## **Communication**

The **e-mail function** and the **Announcement** section in D2L will be our main forms of communication. I will email everyone or post a message under the “Announcements” section with important updates and general comments.

Students can always contact me via D2L e-mail. Expect responses within 48-72 hours, except in cases when I might be traveling.

## **Required Textbook**

Neuman, Lawrence W. 2009: Understanding Research, Pearson, 1st Ed,  
0-205-47153-6 / 978-0-205-47153-9

## **Course Requirements and Grading:**

HSR Certification	5%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Discussion Board Leader (DBL) Assignm.	15%
Weekly Board Activities (average):	15%\
- <i>Sampling Assignment</i>	
- <i>Survey Assignment (CA)</i>	
- <i>SPSS Application</i>	
- <i>Weekly Board Participation</i>	
Research Proposal (CA)	25%

Please do not negotiate for a higher grade at the end of the semester, unless you detect a legitimate error in calculation. Grades must be earned and cannot be adjusted for a variety of reasons, including financial aid eligibility, graduation requirements of any other reason.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This course includes 2 collaborative assignments (CA), all others are individual. While I am aware that collaborative assignments are not everyone's "cup of tea" it is important to understand that team work experience is becoming increasingly important for labor market success. Therefore, instructors are encouraged to include such assignments in their courses. One of the advantages of collaborative assignments is that you will have less work to do if everyone does their job 😊.

### **Human Subjects Research Certification**

This assignment includes learning modules and quizzes that will familiarize students with the ethical considerations involved in research with human subjects. As one of the requirements in this class will be to develop and administer a survey to at least several subjects, the KSU Institutional Review Board is responsible for ensuring that research participants are treated ethically. The HSR certification will also be useful if you complete your research project in Senior Seminar class.

The assignment requires one to two hours to complete.

1. Read the CITI Registration instructions posted on the course website.
2. Go to <https://www.citiprogram.org/>
3. Follow the instructions to create a personal profile with your username and password. Do not forget to add your affiliation to KSU. Your role is Student Researcher - Undergraduate.
4. Under "Select Curriculum" choose "Students conducting no more than minimal risk research." Complete the module, and the associated quiz.
5. Save a copy of the Course Completion Report with your name, and upload it in Drop Box. The quiz score will be the grade for this assignment.

### **Exams**

There will be two multiple-choice exams that will test your theoretical knowledge of the various stages of research we will study throughout the semester.

Please make a note of the exam schedule and plan accordingly.

Exams are open book but study and preparation are necessary because the exams are *timed* and the clock starts as soon as you begin, so there will not be time to look up answers. Many questions will involve applications so the answer cannot be directly identified in the textbook anyway. You must be prepared in advance to do well on the tests.

Both the Midterm and the Final will have 40 questions and will be allotted 1 hour and 15 minutes. The questions asked in exams will cover the major concepts covered in the textbook and on the Discussion Boards.

### **Discussion Board Leader Assignment**

During the week a student is assigned to act as a Discussion Board Leader (DBL) per schedule, he/she will be in charge of addressing the questions asked in the prompt of the weekly Discussion Board. The DBL team will also be responsible for the well-functioning of the board activity. Teams will typically include 2 students.

Every week:

- The instructor will open with some questions/board assignments at the top of the weekly Discussion Board. These questions will be marked DL1, DL2, etc.
- The DBL team will be responsible for addressing the questions in the prompt **by Thursday** of the week in question! Any exception will be noted in the schedule. DBL1 will answer the first question, DBL2 the second, etc. Please write your name and DBL1 or DBL 2 in the title of your main post!
- On each weekly board, all other students (non-DBL-s) will post in reply to at least one of the DBLs' main posts with specific **related** topics, questions, or remarks. This must be done **by Saturday** of the week in question. A minimum of 1 post per board is required of all students.
- The DBL team will also be responsible for engaging classmates by replying to their posts. Each DBL must respond to at least 5 posts by classmates. Do try to cover as many colleagues' posts as possible instead of all DBL-s focusing on a few colleagues only.
- **DBL-s may change during the drop/add period so please keep an eye on any updated versions of the syllabus!**

Generally speaking, the Discussion Boards are where class interaction takes place. It is the best place for students to ask questions, make comments, clarify concepts, and especially demonstrate that they have read and understood the chapters.

The instructor will reply to the DBL-s main posts during the upcoming week - with feedback. All students are expected to revisit the previous boards to read instructor's feedback and any other clarifications.

### **Weekly Board Activities**

In addition to the weekly "reply-to-DBL" participation that all students are expected to engage in, there will be some questions/activities on the boards that ALL students will be expected to complete, even if they are not part of the DBL team that week (details on each board). These include:

- A Sampling assignment (Ch 4 Board)

- A Survey assignment (for Ch 6) - *collaborative*.
- An SPSS application (Ch 9 I, II and III board)

*Sampling assignment (Ch 4 Board):* Students will be required to select subjects from a given sampling frame based on several sampling techniques.

*Survey assignment (Ch 6 board):* Students will work in groups (with assigned DBL colleague(s)) to design a survey and administer it to several subjects.

*SPSS Application:* Students will code responses in the survey they designed and enter the data in SPSS. They will also perform statistical analyses using a dataset that will be provided and present findings in a brief report. Detailed instructions will be provided in D2L.

### **Research Proposal (collaborative)**

The main objective of this entire course is to learn the stages of the research process and how to design a research project.

In this class you will NOT complete the actual research project (which would include full data collection, data analysis and presentation of findings) but you will write a **Research Proposal**. In other words, your term paper will explain *how you plan* to conduct your research project in the future.

Based on your proposal, you will be able to complete this project in Senior Seminar class. Rules governing this assignment:

1. You will collaborate with your assigned DBL colleague(s). While you may divide the work by sections, all students in the team are responsible for checking and providing approval/input for all sections of the paper, to ensure an adequate final product.
2. The ability to collaborate in order to produce a quality proposal - as opposed to individual grade-chasing - will be considered when calculating the grade on this assignment. Please avoid being the student who leaves no other option to colleagues but to report him/her for lack of willingness or interest to collaborate. If I receive such reports, your grade is guaranteed to suffer significantly! At the same time, please avoid reporting your colleagues frivolously.
3. Your paper must be approximately 10-12 pages and must include:
  - An introduction
  - Problem statement and why the topic is worth studying.
  - A brief theoretical perspective
  - A literature review (must include **ten** scholarly references from academic, peer-reviewed journals and/or scholarly books).

- Original hypothesis(hypotheses)
- Methodology (variables, variable measurement, sampling strategy, data collection procedures, data analysis plan).

Detailed instructions and a research proposal example will be provided in D2L.

**Academic Integrity:** Every student is responsible for upholding the provisions of Kennesaw State University's Codes of Conduct, including the Policy on Academic Integrity (Section 5C). The Codes of Conduct can be found at:

<http://scai.kennesaw.edu/codes.php>

***Any*** plagiarized portion of your research proposal will result in a grade of 0 for the assignment.

**Disability Clause:** Kennesaw State University provides support for students with disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to identify himself/herself as an individual with a disability. A qualified individual in the area of the identified disability must provide the documentation of the disability. This documentation must show how the disability creates a significant impact on the individual's academic performance; it should include suggested accommodations that are reasonable to provide in an academic setting.

**Please make appropriate arrangements with Disabled Student Support Services.**

**Please contact instructor privately for all personal hardships.**

**The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus as well as the schedule below - as needed!**

**TENTATIVE WORK SCHEDULE FOR READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

	WEEK	READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS DUE DATES
1	Jan 11	Orientation D2L Student Introductions Familiarization with Syllabus (please read carefully, even if you feel it is too long ☺!)
		Ch 1: Why Do Research? (Begin Readings)
2	Jan 11 wk	Ch.1: Why Do Research?
	Thursday...	<i>DBL1 Board Post due:</i> Anderson, Shaneka Biggs, Natalie Morgan
	Saturday...	<i>All students' posts due</i> <i>Same for all subsequent weeks:</i> <i>DBL post due on Thursday.</i> <i>All other students' posts due on Saturday.</i>
3	Jan 18	MLK Holiday
	Jan 20 wk	Ch 2: Planning A Study
		<i>DBL 2:</i> Edwards, Yuri Jasaan Fountain, Alexandria
4	Jan 25 wk	Ch 3: Becoming an Ethical Researcher
		<i>DBL 3:</i> Greene, Kendall Drew Herr, Shavonne Marie
5	Feb 1 wk	Ch 4: Sampling
		<i>DBL 4:</i> Holden, Renee Hyduke, Michaela
	<b>Deadline Feb 4</b>	<b>Sampling Assignment due in Drop Box</b> (DL2 must post on Feb 5(Friday), after Sampling Assignment deadline)

6	Feb 8 wk  <b>Deadline Feb 4</b>	Ch 5: Measuring Social Life  <i>DBL 5:</i> Jeziorski, Emily Jordan-Hayes, Asha  <b><i>Research Proposal Topic Due (Post on Discussion Forum)</i></b>
7	Feb 15 wk <b>Feb 18</b>	Preparation for EXAM 1 <b>EXAM 1</b>
8	Feb 22 wk	Ch 6: Quantitative Research: The Survey (I)  <i>DBL 6:</i> Little, Lauren Lumpkin, Sidney
9	Feb 29 wk  <b>Deadline March 4th</b>	Ch 6: Quantitative Research: The Survey (II)  <b><i>Survey Assignment Due in Drop Box</i></b>
10	Mar 7 wk	Ch 9: Making Sense of Numbers (I), SPSS Applications: <i>Data Entry, Frequencies, Measures of Central Tendency</i>  <i>DBL7:</i> Little, Lauren Shepherd Lumpkin, Sidney Fonda
11	Mar 14 wk	Ch 9: Making Sense of Numbers (II) SPSS Applications: <i>Correlations, ANOVA, Cross Tabulations</i>  <i>DBL 8:</i> Meseret, Abel Puckett, Amy Elizabeth
12	Mar 21 wk	Ch 9: Quantitative Research: Making Sense of Numbers (III) SPSS Applications:  <i>Independent and Dependent Variables, Hypothesis Testing.</i>  <i>DBL 9:</i> Scott, Tamera

	<b>March 25</b>	Stockman, Erin Conner <b>SPSS Assignment Due in Drop Box</b>
13	Mar 28 wk	Ch 10: Qualitative Research: Observing People in Natural Settings and Interview Guides.  <b>DBL 9:</b> Trupiano, Erin Susannah Vinson, Crystal Emily
	<b>Apr 4-Apr 10</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
14	Apr 11 wk	Ch 11: Looking at the Past and Across Cultures (Historical and Cross-Cultural Research)  <b>DBL 10:</b> Williams, Courtney Womack, Heather
15	Apr 18 wk	Finalizing Research Proposals Catching up on DL assignments  <b>DBL 11:</b> Wood, Lydia Eve
16	Apr 25 wk  <b>Apr 28th</b>	Preparation for Final  <b>Research Proposal Due</b>
17	<b>May 3rd</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>

**No make-ups for Final Exams will be approved after May 3!**