

Research Methods in Sociology

SOCI 3305, Spring 2017

CRN# 10074

SS Bldg 3025

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

Please read this syllabus in its entirety from the beginning of the semester! I will not be able to respond repeatedly 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.

Class Expectations:

Class meetings will consist of lectures interspersed with class exercises, discussions led by an assigned student leader, and other forms of class instruction.

I expect students to turn off all electronic devices during class. Computers in the lab cannot be used for working on any assignments unrelated to this class or for addressing any kind of personal issues during class time. Students must cover assigned readings prior to coming to class on Tuesday, to take notes during lectures and to actively participate in class exercises and discussions.

Attendance: Regular and punctual attendance in class is required and will impact your participation grade. If you must be absent please be aware that you will be responsible for all announcements, assignments, and materials covered in class in your absence.

Communication:

Please use the **e-mail function** in D2L to contact me. Avoid using my KSU e-mail address where your message might risk getting lost among many other messages coming from different KSU offices and other external sources.

Required Textbook

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

Course Requirements and Grading:

HSR Certification	5%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Class Discussion Leader Assignment.	15%
Class Participation Activities (average):	15%
- <i>Sampling Assignment</i>	3%
- <i>Survey Assignment (CA)</i>	5%
- <i>SPSS Application</i>	5%
- <i>Attendance and General Participation</i>	2%
Research Proposal (CA)	25%

Please do not negotiate for higher grades on exams or at the end of the semester, unless you detect a legitimate error that cannot be subject to interpretation. Arguments such as the “question was confusing” or “I worked hard and I really need to make an X grade on Y test” are not considered legitimate. Grades must be earned and cannot be adjusted for a variety of reasons, including financial aid eligibility, graduation requirements or any other reason.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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. There will not be time to look up answers. Many questions will involve applications so the answer cannot be directly identified in the textbook. You must be prepared in advance to do well on the tests.

Both the Midterm and the Final will have 40 questions to be completed in 1 hour and 15 minutes (regular class time). The questions asked in exams will cover the major concepts covered in the textbook and on the Discussion Boards.

Class Discussion Leader Assignment

Every student will be assigned to a group of Class Discussion Leaders (CDL-s) once in class (per schedule). Some students may be the only CDL during a given week. For this assignment, the CDL-s will be in charge of solving and presenting to the class a set of

questions/applied activities that we will explore on the second class of every week, usually on Thursdays. The CDL-s must complete this assignment before Thursday's class. These activities can be found in D2L under "Discussions" where a Discussion Board was set up for each chapter. If there are two students in the group, they will split the questions/activities on the board.

While the entire class will be expected to work on those activities, the CDL-s will be responsible for presenting their work to the class, explaining how they reached those conclusions, and discussing anything else that the activities may require. Writing on the whiteboard might be necessary.

The CDL will also be responsible for engaging classmates by answering their questions.

After class, the CDL must post the solutions to the questions under the corresponding Activity Board in D2L.

Class Participation Activities

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 CDL activity for that week (details on each 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 design a survey and administer it to several subjects.

SPSS Application: (Ch 9 Boards) 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 at a later date during the semester.

Research Proposal

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:

The 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 section (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.

University Policies

Academic Honesty/Integrity Statement: <http://scai.kennesaw.edu/codes.php>

Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Section 5c of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University's policy on academic integrity, including provisions regarding cheating, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, unauthorized access to University materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities/services, and malicious removal, retention, or destruction of University resource materials. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an "informal" resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct's minimum one semester suspension requirement.

Student Disability Services: <http://sss.kennesaw.edu/sds/institutional-policies.php>

Students with a documented disability should meet with the instructor during the first week of class to discuss any special classroom or testing accommodations needed. Also, a number of services are available to help students with disabilities with their academic work. In order to make arrangements for special services, students must visit the Student Disability Services office and make an appointment to arrange an individual assistance plan. In most cases, certification of disability is required.

Please contact instructor privately for any personal hardships.

Disruption of Campus Life: <http://scai.kennesaw.edu/codes.php>

It is the purpose of the institution to provide a campus environment, which encourages academic accomplishment, personal growth, and a spirit of understanding and cooperation. An important part of maintaining such an environment is the commitment to protect the health and safety of every member of the campus community. Belligerent, abusive, profane, threatening and/ or inappropriate behavior on the part of students is a violation of the Kennesaw State University Student Conduct Regulations. Students who are found guilty of such misconduct may be subject to immediate dismissal from the institution. In addition, these violations of state law may also be subject to criminal action beyond the University disciplinary process.

Additional University Policies

Confidentiality and Privacy Statement (FERPA):

<http://enrollmentservices.kennesaw.edu/training/ferpa.php>

University – Student Rights Statement

<http://catalog.kennesaw.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=2263>

Ethics Statement

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

Sexual Harassment Statement

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

University Resources

The Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.kennesaw.edu/>,

Academic Support Services: http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu_dev/msrs/academic.html

Student Disability Services: http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu_dev/dsss/welcome.html

ESL Study and Tutorial Center:

http://uc.kennesaw.edu/academicinitiatives/docs/Guide_to_the_ESL_Center.pdf

Counseling and Psychological Services

<http://www.kennesaw.edu/studentssuccessservices/cps/services.php>

Center for Health Promotion and Wellness

<http://wellstarcollege.kennesaw.edu/wellness/>

Student Health Services

<http://studenthealth.kennesawstateauxiliary.com/>

General Education Assessment Study:

Kennesaw State University is currently engaged in a campus-wide assessment of its general education program. The purpose is to measure student achievement with respect to faculty defined student learning outcomes. This course has been selected to participate in the process. No individually-identifiable student information will be collected as part of the assessment. Data will be reported only in aggregated form. Students should know that the data may be used for scholarly work by members of KSU faculty (but only in anonymous and aggregated form). If you are opposed to having your anonymous data used for scholarly work, you can “opt out” of this specific aspect of the process.

For more information on the general education assessment process and for access to an “opt out” form, please click <http://curriculum.kennesaw.edu/gened/learning-assessment.php>

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	1/10	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	1/17	Ch.1: Why Do Research?
3	1/24	Ch 2: Planning A Study <i>DCL 1: (TBD during the first two weeks of class. Syllabus will be updated with names for each DCL group).</i>
4	1/31	Ch 3: Becoming an Ethical Researcher
	<i>Deadline 2/3</i>	<i>Human Subjects Research Certification Due</i>
5	2/7	Ch 4: Sampling
	<i>Deadline 2/10</i>	<i>DCL 2: Sampling Assignment due in Drop Box</i>
6	2/ 14 wk	Ch 5: Measuring Social Life
	<i>Deadline 2/17</i>	<i>DCL 3: Research Proposal Topic Due (Post on Discussion Forum)</i>
7	2/21	Preparation for EXAM 1 (Midterm)
	<i>2/23</i>	EXAM 1 (MIDTERM)
8	Feb 28 wk	Ch 6: Quantitative Research: The Survey (I)
		<i>DCL 4:</i>

9	3/7 Deadline 3/9	Ch 6: Quantitative Research: The Survey (II) Survey Assignment Due in Drop Box
10	3/14	Ch 9: Making Sense of Numbers (I), SPSS Applications: <i>Data Entry, Frequencies, Measures of Central Tendency</i> DCL5:
11	3/21	Ch 9: Making Sense of Numbers (II) SPSS Applications: <i>Correlations, ANOVA, Cross Tabulations</i>
12	3/28 3/31	Ch 9: Quantitative Research: Making Sense of Numbers (III) SPSS Applications: <i>Independent and Dependent Variables, Hypothesis Testing.</i> DCL 6: SPSS Assignment Due in Drop Box
	Apr 3-Apr 9	SPRING BREAK
13	4/11	Ch 10: Qualitative Research: Observing People in Natural Settings and Interview Guides. DCL 7:
14	4/18	Ch 11: Looking at the Past and Across Cultures (Historical and Cross- Cultural Research) DCL 8:
15	4/25 4/28	Finalizing Research Proposals Catching up on DL assignments Preparation for Final Research Proposals Due in Dropbox!
16	5/2	EXAM 2 (FINAL) No make-ups for Final Exams will be approved after May 2!