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RESEARCH METHODS
SOC 352, SECTION 1

Fall 2023
M/W 2:00-3:15pm
SCI D223

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## A COURSE DESCRIPTION IN PICTURES

Consider the following two images on the next page. The first, an installation by Surinamese artist Stanley Brouwn, commenting on the human fascination to quantify all aspects of our world. The second, graphs created by nineteenth century American sociologist, W.E.B. Du Bois. Reflect on the style and color used to create these visualizations and how they compare to 'typical' data representations today. What do each of these images say about data (i.e., information we collect to say something about our world)? What is your experience with data in your own, everyday life? How do you access it? How do you use it? How do you trust it?

This course fulfills a number of expectations for most students. On the one hand it is introductory in the sense that it provides an overview and foundation of social science research methods (and related considerations). However, it is also a capstone course, bringing together skills and knowledge from entire programs in our department. It is an applied course in the sense that the content discussed is intended to be applicable in your professional lives.

Consider again the images by Brouwn and Du Bois. Each of you will walk away with your own individual reflection for their meaning just as you will walk away from this course with individual applications of the content.

1 step on 1 kilometer, *Stanley Brouwn (1935-2017).* The filing drawers contain 1000 index cards, each with 10 lines that are 100 millimeters long, amounting to 1 kilometer. The length of one of the artist's steps is noted on the first card. Humanity's relationship with the endlessness of space, which we attempt to comprehend through measurement and precise data collection and analysis, is the principle of Brouwn's conceptual work.
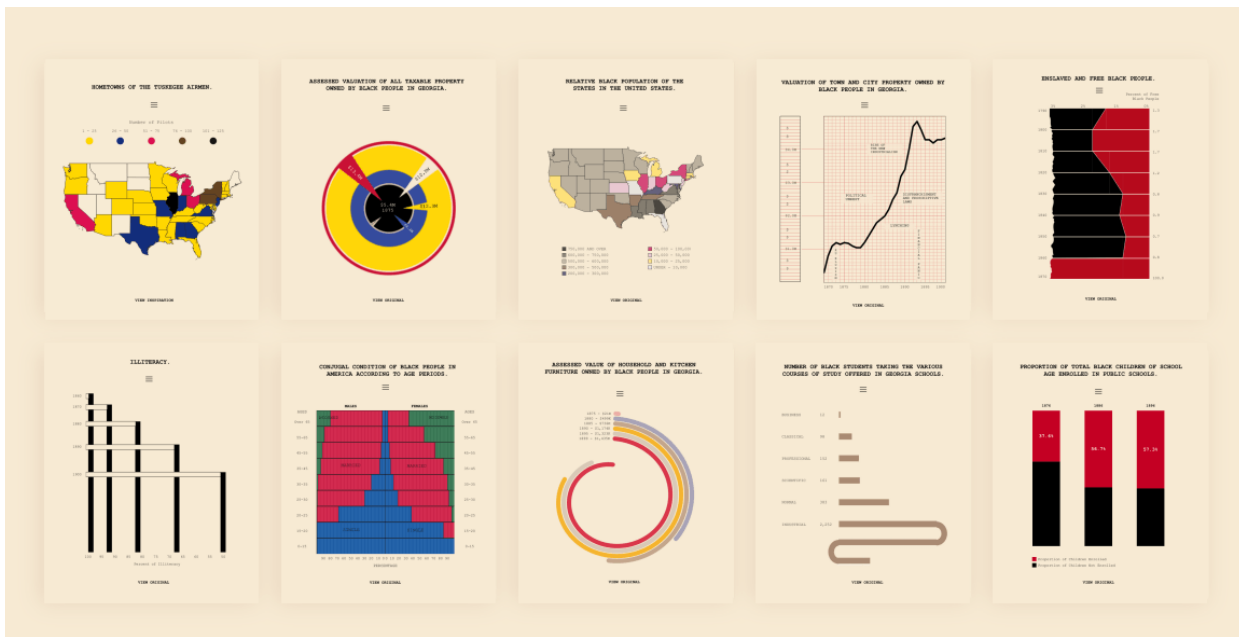
Data Portraits, *W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963)* is best known for his sharp, sociological imagination and groundbreaking book of racial philosophy, *The Souls of Black Folk.* Among his many talents, Du Bois was a designer and curator of Black culture, the most explicit example being his data portraits, which vibrantly visualized the complexities of racial segregation, which Du Bois iconically dubbed "the color line."

(1) *The Art and Science of Social Research*, 2020 (2nd edition), Ed. Deborah Carr, Elizabeth Heger Boyle, Benjamin Cornwell, Shelley Correll, Robert Crosnoe, Jeremy Freese, and Mary C Waters. Norton Publishing.
(2) Supplementary material will be provided throughout the semester

COURSE FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS

Format

The format of each class will vary throughout the semester. Since we all learn differently, I will utilize a variety of teaching methods to present the material. These methods will include lectures, in-class activities, video presentations, and class discussions. It is vital that you come to class prepared (i.e., read what you are asked to have read!) and ask questions and make comments when you have them. Not only will the material make more sense, but you will get a lot more out of the class as well.

Note on Online/Asynchronous learning: Due to the unique nature of this instructional modality, this course will have a semi-structured feel. New content will be posted each week, leaving the consumption of that material up to the student. It is vital that you do not get behind from week to week for obvious reasons. Assignments will continue to have hard deadlines, just like a 'normal' semester.

Academic Integrity

To ensure that the highest level of academic and personal integrity is upheld, it is important that you understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UWSP (see Academic Integrity: A Guide for Students). For a complete overview of UWSP academic standards and disciplinary procedures, please visit: the following website: http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Academic-Misconduct.aspx

Disability Services

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies. Any student who feels that an accommodation may be needed based on the impact of a disability should contact Disability Services and Assistive Technology at 715-346-3365 in Room 609 Learning Resource Center at 900 Reserve Street. Staff will work to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Technology Policy

My expectations regarding technology are simple and, hopefully, not unrealistic. I do not expect students to be without their phones, tablets, and/or computers. I completely understand that the schedule for most students may even necessitate this. In fact, our class will even utilize this as a resource at times during the semester; for instance, in-class activities that prompt students to do a quick search online. I also understand that some students prefer to take notes electronically, on a tablet or laptop. (Be warned: research shows that students retain more information when notes are hand-written.) But, *unless*

specified otherwise or a circumstantial agreement with me is made, phones should be silent (e.g., airplane mode), and out of sight. As soon as a device becomes a distraction to the class, I will revoke technology privileges all together.

Attendance Policy

Your attendance and participation will be recorded and calculated as part of your final evaluation. However, I understand 'participation' inclusively. This can include the conventional (i.e., asking questions via discussion posts) as well as other forms of interaction in and outside of class (e.g., office hour visits, email discussions, in-class activities). In short, I am looking for students to be engaged in the material, however or wherever that might be.

Assignment Submission and Late Policy

All assignments (unless specified otherwise) should be submitted by the respective deadline electronically via Dropbox on CANVAS. Turnitin (originality checking software) is activated with results viewable to you and me. Please use this as a tool for writing. Late work is accepted up to one week after the specified deadline (5-point reduction), also via the appropriate CANVAS dropbox. I will not accept assignments after this.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

Content Assignments

Content Assignments are thematically organized assignments that approach a specific topic or problem from class. The requirements and expectations for these papers will be discussed in class. In general, these are assignments that allow you to apply the concepts and ideas we have discussed in class to a specific setting/problem. These papers will require some research and activity outside of class to complete.
10 Content Assignments (20 points each) = 200 points

Final Project

The final project will serve as a conventional closing assignment, bringing together concepts and themes from the entire course. Specific details about the project will be discussed in class.
Final Paper = 100 points
Presentation = 50 points

Attendance/Participation

Attendance is crucial to succeed in this class. Keeping up on your reading in order to actively participate in class will ensure that you are adequately prepared for the assignments. My teaching philosophy is based on a cultivation of *active learning*. This means that I aim to provide an environment whereby students are able to 'experience' the material. However, this is a dual relationship. Students must also be willing to learn in order to make this happen. By *being* in class regularly (not just present), an active and invigorating culture of learning can be developed. *Attendance and Participation will be recorded via Canvas activities and discussions throughout the semester.* This being said,

life is always full of unexpected events and emergencies. If you think you will miss a class, please let me know as soon as possible so we can make other arrangements.
Attendance/Participation = 50 points

Evaluation

Evaluation of this course is based on the standard UWSP grading scale.

Course Evaluation:
Content Activities =   200 (10 activities, 20 points each)
Final Project =   100
Final Presentation =   50
Participation =   50
Total =   400

Grading Scale		
Letter Grade	Percent	Points
A	92-100	366<
A-	90-91	358-365
B+	87-89	346-357
B	83-86	330-345
B-	80-82	318-329
C+	77-79	306-317
C	73-76	290-305
C-	70-72	278-289
D+	67-69	266-277
D	60-66	238-265
F	<60	<238

Date	Topic/Activity	Reading	Assignment
5-Sep	Introductions		
	What is Social Science Research?		
11-Sep	The art and science of research	Ch1	Topic
18-Sep	Ethical research and the IRB	Ch3	CITI
	Building Blocks of Research		
25-Sep	Conceptualizing	Ch4	Lit Review
2-Oct	Operationalizing	Ch5	Data Map
	Approaches in Research		
9-Oct	Survey	Ch7	Inst.1
16-Oct	Qualtiative interview	Ch11	Inst.2
23-Oct	Program evaluation	Ch9	Inst.3
30-Oct	Content analysis	Ch12	Inst.4
	Data Analysis		
6-Nov	Quantitative analyses	Ch13	Survey table
13-Nov	Qualitative analyses	Supp.	Interview table
	Data Visualization and Dissemination		
20-Nov	Data visualization techniques	Ch14	
27-Nov	Presentation techniques	Supp.	
	Final Project		
4-Dec	Preparation		
11-Dec	Presentation		Final Presentation
12/20 2:45-4:45pm	Final Exam		Final Paper