

Sociology 352 (1), Spring Semester 2019

Research Methods

Monday, 2:00-3:15, CPS 233

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Course Overview

Research is a systematic process based on the *scientific method* that facilitates the identification of relationships and determination of differences in order to answer a question. Social research, in particular, focuses on relationships and differences in the social sciences (sociology, psychology, political science, economics, anthropology, etc.). In this course, we will cover different study designs, research ethics, and the components of a research presentation in the form of homework assignments. On-line exercises will also be used to apply course material.

Course Objectives

- Evaluate the design and results of social science research studies.
- Appreciate the ethical issues involved in studying human subjects.
- Formulate empirical research questions.
- Search for and select appropriate studies for literature reviews.
- Choose appropriate, valid, and reliable measures, sampling designs, and analyses.

Social Work Competency

All aspects of this course help students work toward the Council on Social Work Education competency of “**practice-informed research and research-informed practice**” for accredited social work programs. The competency is:

- **Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.**
Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice.

Social workers:

- use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;

- apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

Capstone Course

This course also satisfies the GEP Capstone requirement for sociology and social work. The goal of the capstone project is to integrate learning objectives across both majors. The capstone project is a poster presenting research results on a topic of interest to sociology and/or social work.

Upon completing this requirement you will be able to:

- Complete a project that integrates knowledge, skills, and experience related to those General Education Program Outcomes appropriate to the discipline.
- Demonstrate skills, process, and resources needed to make a successful transition from college to the world beyond.

General Education Program Outcomes for the Social Sciences:

- Explain or apply major concepts, methods, or theories used in the social sciences to investigate, analyze, or predict human behavior.
- Examine and explain how social, cultural, or political institutions influence individuals or groups.

Text

Schutt, Russell K. (2019). *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*, Sage Publications, Inc., 9th edition.

The required textbook is available at the campus bookstore. Please note that we will also be using the book's **student website** at www.edge.sagepub.com/schutt9e for on-line exercises.

Hybrid Course

This is a hybrid course. We will meet in the classroom on Mondays (3:30-4:45) and the other sessions will be on-line exercises, mostly accessed through www.edge.sagepub.com/schutt9e. **We will not meet on Wednesdays.** Monday's sessions will be lectures and time for questions. Of course, you can always ask me questions via e-mail and during office hours as well. **PLEASE CHECK D2L DAILY FOR SCHEDULING AND MESSAGES.**

On-Line Exercises and Quizzes

These will be posted on D2L. We will have approximately **13 on-line exercises and quizzes**. This is roughly 1 per week. Exercises will be posted on Mondays and will be **due the following Sundays at midnight**. Some of these exercises will be graded and some will be given point(s) for completion. Collectively, these exercises are worth **40%** of your final grade.

There will be absolutely no make-ups of missed exercises *without documentation* for legitimate reasons.

Exams

There are **two exams** in this class. Neither of these will be cumulative. They will be a mix of short answer and multiple choice exams with approximately 30 questions each and will cover material from your text, from lectures, and from on-line exercises. Both exams will be administered on-line (in the **Quizzes tab on the course page in D2L**) and will be timed for 75 minutes. (If you have accommodations for additional time or type of administration, please bring/send me your form and **remind me one week before the exam.**) Each exam is worth **15%** of your final grade, for a total of **30%**.

Please look carefully at the course schedule for the dates of each exam.

There will be no make-up exams *without documentation of legitimate emergency reasons for missing exam dates.*

Homework Assignments

These will be posted on D2L. There will be about **5 assignments** for which you will apply the material to a “pretend” research project. I ask you submit the assignments in the appropriate drop boxes in D2L. You will receive the full 10 points if your homework is **complete** (you have addressed fully all the components of the assignment), **thoughtful** (you have given more than minimal effort and proofread your work) and **submitted on time**. Depending on these 3 components, you can receive between 0 and 10 points. Collectively the assignments are worth **30%** of your final grade. These assignments will represent components of a research project, **so I ask that you choose a researchable topic of interest in the beginning of the course and use this throughout the course for each homework assignment.**

There will be absolutely no make-ups of missed assignments *without documentation for legitimate reasons.*

Grading Scale

93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-79	D+
60-66	D
0-59	F

The weighted formula I will use for grading is:

Final Grade = (On-line exercise average X 0.4) + (Midterm X 0.15) + (Final X 0.15) + (Homework average X 0.3)

You will likely be successful in this course if you come to class prepared, participate in discussions, follow the rules for academic integrity (see below), and put thought and effort into your assignments and exams.

Important University and Course Policies and Procedures

Students with Special Need: Students with special needs as documented by the Office of Disability Services should identify themselves at the beginning of the term. The Department of Sociology and Social Work is dedicated to providing these students with the necessary academic adjustments and auxiliary aids to facilitate their participation and performance in the classroom.

Classroom Etiquette: I ask that you arrive on time to class and turn off your cell phones (not silenced but OFF please). I reserve the right to ask anyone texting to LEAVE the classroom. I would prefer that you do not use laptops or tablets in the classroom unless it is a necessary learning tool. If you are talking while I'm talking and it is distracting to me or to your fellow students, I will stop talking until you are done talking. If you have a question, **ask me**.

I strive to maintain a climate of **respect in the classroom and on-line**—respect from me to you, from you to me, and all students to each other. If necessary, I will institute the following policy: the first time a student shows disrespect (my discretion), I will give a *verbal warning* in front of the class; the second time the same student shows disrespect, I will ask the student to *leave the classroom* for the remainder of the class period. If the student refuses to leave, I will call campus police to have the student removed from the class. If there are three disrespectful events, I will refer the student to the *Dean of Students* for potential disciplinary action.

Contacting Me: Please contact me using the following methods in this order of preference: 1) email; 2) cell phone; 3) office phone. I will make every effort to respond to questions that are NOT time-sensitive (e.g., about the course schedule, material, assignments, and similar) within 24 hours. Please only use my cell phone for time-sensitive issues such as last minute emergencies that interfere with your class attendance or submissions of assignments or exams.

Academic Misconduct: Academic integrity is central to the mission of this institution. UWS 14 defines academic misconduct as any “action which a student:

1. seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
2. uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
3. forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
4. intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
5. engages in conduct aimed at making false representations of a student's academic performance;
and
6. assists other students in any of these acts.”

USW 14 allows for disciplinary sanctions that range from an oral reprimand to suspension or expulsion from the University. You can obtain a copy of the full academic misconduct policy through the Student Services office.

The rules regarding academic misconduct can sometimes be confusing for students, so I encourage you to come talk to me about questionable issues regarding assignments and exams. If you have questions

about a particular assignment, you should come talk to me before the assignment is due. Ignorance or misunderstanding of the UW System policy for academic misconduct is not an acceptable excuse for academic misconduct.

If I observe or suspect academic misconduct, I will request a meeting with the responsible student or students, and I will follow the procedures set out in the UWS 14 document.

Course Schedule

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Week/Date	Topic/Activity	Assigned Readings
1 (1/23)	Introduction	Syllabus and D2L Stuff
1/27	On-Line Exercise 1 due	
2 (1/28-30)	Social Research Defined	Chapter 1
2/3	On-Line Exercise 2	
3 (2/4-6)	Social Research Theory and Questions	Chapter 2
2/10	On-Line Exercise 3 AND Homework Assignment 1	
4 (2/11-13)	Research Ethics	Chapter 3
2/17	On-Line Exercise 4	
5 (2/18-20)	Literature Review	Chapter 2
2/24	On-Line Exercise 5 AND Homework Assignment 2	
6 (2/25-27)	Conceptualization and Measurement	Chapter 4
3/3	On-Line Exercise 6 AND Homework Assignment 3	
7 (3/4-6)	Sampling	Chapter 5
3/10	On-Line Exercise 7	
8 (3/11-13)	Research and Causation	Chapter 6
(3/18-20)	Spring Break	
9 (3/25-27)	Experimental Research	Chapter 7
3/31	On-Line Exercise 9	
10 (4/1-3)	Material Review	
4/7	<u>On-Line Midterm (see Quizzes Tab in D2L)</u>	

11 (4/8-10)	Survey Research	Chapter 8
4/14	On-Line Exercise 10 AND Homework Assignment 4	
12 (4/15-17)	Qualitative Methods	Chapter 10 & 15
4/21	Thanksgiving Break	
13 (4/22-24)	Evaluation Research	Chapter 13
4/28	On-Line Exercise 11	
14 (4/29-5/1)	Secondary and “Big” Data	Chapter 14
5/5	On-Line Exercise 12 AND Homework Assignment 5	
15 (5/6-8)	Reporting Results	Chapter 16
5/12	On-Line Exercise 13	
5/14 (midnight)	<u>On-Line Final Exam (see Quizzes Tab in D2L)</u>	

I reserve the right to change the syllabus due to unforeseen scheduling issues and the pedagogical needs of the class.