**NOTE: THIS IS A SAMPLE SYLLABUS. DETAILS SUCH AS DATES, TIMES, LOCATION, ETC. ARE CHANGED AS NEEDED.**

**SOC 332 Social Research Methods Summer I 2022**

*Instructor*: Joseph Roso ([joseph.roso@duke.edu](mailto:joseph.roso@duke.edu)) (office: Rueben-Cooke 346)

*Office Hours*: by appointment (in-person or on Zoom as is your preference)

*Class Time*: MTuWTh 9:30am – 10:45am

*Location*: Social Sciences 105

**COURSE OVERVIEW AND GOALS**

The social world is massive and incredibly complex. While there are many things we know (or think we know) about society, there is so much more that we do not know. What are the consequences of widespread income inequality? How politically polarized is our society, and will it continue to be polarized? How are racist systems continually maintained, and what are the effects of such systems? How important is religion to politics and daily life in an increasingly secular world?

How do we begin to try and answer these and other giant questions? In this course you will learn how you can start to answer them. Through this course, you will develop an original research proposal in which you outline a hypothetical project that would increase our knowledge about society. You will learn how to create specific research questions that can be addressed in a single research project, how to situate that question in theory and existing scholarly literature, how to select an appropriate research method for that question, and how to report the results of the research project to the public.

**COURSE FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS**

This course is taught in-person. Class periods will include lectures and classroom activities that are designed to reinforce and build on assigned readings. The assignments are structured to both reinforce key concepts and act as milestones towards completion of the final research project, as spelled out in the course requirements section.

You are expected to read the assigned readings before class and come prepared to discuss and engage with the readings. In class, you are expected to be actively engaged in classroom activities and be present in classroom discussions. You are expected to turn in assignments on time. This is especially important because keeping up with the readings and turning in the memos on time will help you produce the best final research proposal, and it means that you will not be crunching at the end of the semester to get it in on time.

You should expect me to clearly communicate to you requirements and expectations of the course and particular assignments. You should expect me to readily respond to emails and communication, and be available to meet (either in person or over Zoom, as is your preference) to address any questions or concerns you have with the course or course assignments. You should expect me to do my best to facilitate a healthy classroom environment that is fully inclusive of all students regardless of race, socioeconomic background, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc.

**GRADING SCALE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | **Average** |
| A | 93 and above |
| A- | 90-92.9 |
| B+ | 87-89.9 |
| B | 83-86.9 |
| B- | 80-82.9 |
| C+ | 77-79.9 |
| C | 73-76.9 |
| C- | 70-72.9 |
| D | 60-69.9 |
| F | 59.9 and below |

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Amy Blackstone's (2012) *Principles of Sociological Inquiry – Qualitative and Quantitative Methods* will be our guide through this semester. This book is available for free on a non-commercial license. I have uploaded the version I will referencing on the Sakai site, but you can also find it online at: <http://solr.bccampus.ca:8001/bcc/items/be255422-6913-4e0e-bfde-f2ebec0de8a3/1/>. **DO NOT SPEND MONEY TO ACCESS THIS BOOK.** The copyright holders have made it available for free legally.

Additional required reading will come from either journal articles, book chapters, or webpages that will be made available or linked to on the course Sakai page. Journal articles are also available through the Duke Library.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

All assignments should be turned in as word processor document (e.g. .doc, docx, etc.), double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins all around. **All written assignments should be posted to your Sakai dropbox by 11:59 PM on the specified due date.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **% of Grade** | **Due Date** |
| **Research Proposal Project** |  |  |
| Final Paper | 25% | June 23 |
| Presentation | 10% | In class June16 |
| Memos |  |  |
| Research Question | 5% | May 19 |
| Literature Review | 10% | June 2 |
| Method Description | 10% | June 9 |
| **Online Open Book Quizzes** | 20% | Every Friday EXCEPT May 13 |
| **Attendance and Participation** | 20% | Throughout |

**Research Proposal**

The main work in this course is the research proposal. The course is structured such that throughout the course students will construct an original research proposal. You will not have to actually conduct the research you propose to do, but you should conceive of a serious project and go through the steps up to the point of actually analyzing or collecting data. There are two parts of the project: the paper and the presentation. To help you with your project and paper, there are also assigned memos throughout the course.

**Final Paper (25% of final grade) – 9-14 pages due June 23**

The main product of academic research is research papers. The final paper will be **9-14 pages** of CONTENT (i.e. not including references). In this paper you will do the following (in order): (1) outline your research question, (2) perform a literature review which situates your question in the scholarly literature, (3) explain the data and methods you intend to use to try to answer your question, and (4) speculate on the implication of different sets of results you could get. It should have proper in-text citations and a reference page following the American Sociological Association style guide:

Guide for in-text citations: <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/asa_style/in_text_citation_references.html>

Guide for reference page:

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/asa_style/references_page_formatting.html>

**Memos**

To help you write the paper, there are three assigned memos. Eagle-eyed readers may notice that these memos have the same the name as some of the sections of the final paper. This is intentional! These memos – in revised form – are intended to be part of the final paper. When you turn in your final memo, you will be 75% of the way towards finishing the final paper!

**Research Question Memo (5% of final grade) – 1-2 pages due May 19**

State your general topic of research, the specific question you want your project to answer, the significance of answering that question, and briefly how you think you might go about answering it.

**Literature Review Memo (10% of final grade) – 3-5 pages due June 2**

Review and synthesize scholarly literature on your topic. This should be more than just a summary of various articles. You should meaningfully synthesize the literature on your topic with the purpose of showing a gap in the literature that your question can address. In total, your literature review should have at least **10** citations from peer-reviewed academic journals or books/book chapters from academic publishers.

**Data and Methods Memo (10% of final grade) – 3-4 pages due June 9**

Explain in detail the data source and methods you (hypothetically) plan to use for your project. If you are collecting your own data state the population you are studying, your sampling strategy, and your instrument – whether that is a survey, an interview guide, a coding sheet for content analysis, or something else. If you are using existing data, state and properly cite that data source. Explain what the target population for the data source is, the sample size of the data, and identify the key variables you want to use in your analysis.

**Presentation (10% of final grade) – 10 minutes presented in-class June 16 and June 20**

When conducting research, you will also often be asked to report your findings as a presentation, and so presentation skills are important to develop. Because of this, you will be expected to present your findings at the end of the semester. The presentation should be no more than 10 minutes long and should briefly summarize your final project for the class: explain your question, situate it in the scholarly literature on your topic, explain your research methods, and speculate on the implications of different sets of findings you should get.

**Attendance and Participation (20% of final grade)**

Regular attendance to every class is expected. Unexpected events do come up, and as such each student is allowed **THREE (3) UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**. For each additional unexcused absence, five points (equivalent to roughly half a letter grade) will be deducted from your attendance grade. If you are sick, have any medical or personal emergency, or need to miss class due to an authorized university activity (e.g. varsity sports) let me know and your absence will not count against your three unexcused absences.

Additionally, active participation in class activities is expected. Students should come prepared to each class period. This means doing the required reading before class, being ready to discuss the reading, and being ready to participate in discussions and class activities during the class period.

**Online Quizzes (20% of final grade)**

There will be 5 online quizzes over the course of the class. These quizzes are untimed and entirely open book. These quizzes are due at 11:59 PM every Sunday except May 15 (the first Sunday of the term). The purpose of these quizzes is to ensure that you have completed the assigned readings for that week. The quizzes will be available online on the Sakai site and will closed at the beginning of the relevant class period. **Late quizzes will not be accepted and there will be no make-up quizzes.**

**IMPORTANT RESOURCES**

**Accommodations:** It is my goal to create a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you have a disability or think you have a disability that in any way makes it difficult to engage with the course and complete assignments, please let me know of any accommodations you require. I also strongly encourage you to reach out to the Student Accessibility Services Offices (<https://access.duke.edu/>), which offers support and services for students with disabilities. The website shows how you can request accommodations you need to ensure that you have the tools you need to fully access all aspects of student life both inside and outside the classroom.

**Academic Support:** The Academic Resource Center (ARC) offers free services to all students during their undergraduate careers at Duke. Services include Learning Consultations, Peer Tutoring, Learning Communities, ADHD/LD Coaching, Workshops and Outreach, GRE/MCAT Prep, Study Connect, and more. To get more information you can visit their website at <arc.duke.edu> or email them at [theARC@duke.edu](mailto:theARC@duke.edu).

**Counseling and Psychological Services:** Duke's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers a wide range of services for students to help support your needs. Services such as individual counseling, group counseling, and referrals to off-campus resources are available. The CAPS office is located on the 3rd floor of the Student Wellness Center and during the Summer their walk-in hours are **M-F 10am-3pm**, and you can also call to schedule an appointment if those times do not work for you. Find more information at: <studentaffairs.duke.edu/caps>. You can also get 24/7 telehealth care from Blue Devils Care; more information at: [bluedevilscare.duke.edu](https://timely.md/schools/index.html?school=bluedevils&).

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

You are expected to act in accordance with Duke's Community Standard. Violations of this policy include, but are not limited to, cheating (intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise) and plagiarism (knowingly copying the work of others and representing it as your own). Violations of the Community Standard will not be tolerated. Any incidents of plagiarism, cheating, or other violations of the Duke Community Standard will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Part 1: The Fundamentals of Research Design**

*In this section of the course, we will overview the fundamentals of research design. Important topics that will be covered are: theory, ethics, asking research questions, engaging with the scholarly literature, measurement, and sampling.*

**Wednesday, May 11: Introduction and Overview**

Readings:

* Familiarize yourself with the syllabus and Sakai site

**Thursday, May 12: Theory and Social Science Research I: Purpose of Research and Levels of Theory**

Readings:

* Blackstone, Chapter 1.1.2 ("Science, Social Science, and Sociology")
* Blackstone, Chapter 2.1.1 – 2.1.2 ("Micro, Meso, and Macro Approaches" and "Paradigms, Theories, and How they Shape a Researcher's Approach")

**Monday, May 16: Theory and Social Science Research II: Inductive vs. Deductive**

Readings:

* Blackstone 2.1.3-2.1.4 ("Inductive or Deductive? Two Different Approaches" and "Revisiting an Earlier Question")
* Streefkerk, Raimo. 2021. "Inductive vs. Deductive Research Approach." Available online at: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/inductive-deductive-reasoning/>
* Bhandari, Pritha. 2022. "Inductive Reasoning | Types, Examples, Explanation." Available online at: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/inductive-reasoning/>
* Bhandari, Pritha. 2022. "What is Deductive Reasoning? | Explanation & Examples." Available online at: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/deductive-reasoning/>

**Tuesday, May 17: Formulating Research Questions**

Readings:

* pg. 35-50 in Booth et al. 2008. *The Craft of Research*, third edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Available on Sakai)
* Blackstone, Chapter 4

**Wednesday, May 18: Brainstorming and Library Resources**

*For this class period we will have a library workshop with Linda Daniel. Please come having given some thought to your research topic and what your question might be.*

Readings: None

**Thursday, May 19: Ethics in Research**

Readings:

* Blackstone, Chapter 3
* US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Nazi Medical Experiments (<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/nazi-medical-experiments>)
* US Holocaust Memorial Museum, The Nuremberg Code (<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-nuremberg-code>)
* Belmont Report, Parts B and C (Available on Sakai)

**\* \* \* Research Question Memo due by 11:59 PM on May 19 \* \* \***

**\* \* \* Quiz 1 due on Sakai by 11:59 PM on Sunday, May 22 \* \* \***

**Monday, May 23: Engaging with Scientific Literature**

Readings:

* Purdue Owl, "Writing a Literature Review" (<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/conducting_research/writing_a_literature_review.html>)
* Purdue Owl, "Synthesizing Sources" (<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/conducting_research/research_overview/synthesizing_sources.html>)
* Harrison, Monique H., Philip A. Hernandez, and Mitchell L. Stevens. 2022. "Should I Start at MATH 101? Content Repetition as an Academic Strategy in Elective Curriculums." *Sociology of Education* 95(2):133-152.
* Adler, Gary J., Selena E. Ortiz, Eric Plutzer, Damon Mayrl, Jonathan S. Coley, Rebecca Sager. 2021. "Religion at the Frontline: How Religion Influenced the Response of Local Government Officials to the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Sociology of Religion* 82(4):397-425.

**Tuesday, May 24: Units of Analysis and Causality**

Readings:

* Blackstone, Chapter 5.1.1 – 5.1.3 ("Goals of the Research Project", "Qualitative or Quantitative? Some Specific Considerations", and "Triangulation")
* Video: Khan Academy, "Mediation, Moderation, and the Third Variable Problem" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHWuu-7Mrc0>)
* Bhandari, Pritha. 2021. "Correlation vs. Causation | Differences & Designs." Available online at: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/correlation-vs-causation/>
* Bhandari, Pritha. 2021. "Mediator vs Moderator Variables | Differences & Examples." Available online at: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/mediator-vs-moderator/>
* Thomas, Lauren. 2021. "Confounding Variables | Definition, Examples and Controls." Available online at: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/confounding-variables/>

**Wednesday, May 25: Measurement**

Readings:

* Blackstone, Chapter 6
* Leonhardt. 2018. "We're Measuring the Economy all Wrong." *New York Times*, Sept. 14, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/14/opinion/columnists/great-recession-economy-gdp.html> (Also available on Sakai)

**Thursday, May 26: Sampling**

Readings:

* Blackstone, Chapter 7

**\* \* \* Quiz 2 due on Sakai by 11:59 PM on Sunday, May 29 \* \* \***

**Monday, May 30: NO CLASS – MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY**

**Part 2: Common Research Designs and Data Collection Strategies**

*In this section of the course, we will survey many of the most common research designs in the social sciences. As a guidepost for this section, consult the "Overview of Research Methods" document in the resources folder on the Sakai site.*

**Tuesday, May 31: Surveys**

Readings:

* Blackstone, Chapter 8

**Wednesday, June 1: Secondary Data**

Readings:

* Blackstone, Chapter 11.1.4 ("Analyzing Others' Data")
* Look at the GSS codebook. DO NOT READ IT ALL. Just get a sense of what a codebook looks like. (Available on Sakai)
* Familiarize yourself with the GSS Data Explorer, available online at: <https://gssdataexplorer.norc.org/>

**Thursday, June 2: Content Analysis**

Readings:

* Blackstone, Chapter 11.1.3 ("Unobtrusive Data Collected by You")
* Crabb, Peter B. and Dawn Bielawski. 1994. "The Social Representation of Material Culture and gender in Children's Books." *Sex Roles* 30(1): 69-79.

**\* \* \* Literature Review Memo due by 11:59 PM on Thursday, June 2 \* \* \***

**\* \* \* Quiz 3 due on Sakai by 11:59 PM on Sunday, June 5 \* \* \***

**Monday, June 6: Experiments**

Readings:

* Blackstone, Chapter 12.1.2 ("Experiments")
* Harrell, Ashley. 2012. "Do Religious Cognitions Promote Prosociality?". *Rationality and Society* 24(4):463-482.
* Zelditch, Morris. 1969. "Can you Really Study an Army in the Laboratory?" Pp. 528-39 in *A Sociological Reader on Complex Organizations*, second edition. Edited by A. Etzioni. (Available on Sakai)

**Tuesday, June 7: Field Experiments and Natural Experiments**

Readings:

* Pager, Devah. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108(5):937-975.
* Kirk, David S. 2009. "A Natural Experiment on Residential Change and Recidivism: Lessons from Hurricane Katrina." *American Sociological Review* 74(3):484-505.

**Wednesday, June 8: Qualitative Interviews**

Readings:

* Blackstone, Chapter 9.1.1 – 9.1.1 ("Interview Research: What Is It and When Should It Be Used" and "Qualitative Interview Techniques and Considerations")
* Weiss, Robert S. 2004. "In Their Own Words: Making the Most of Qualitative Interviews." *Contexts* 3(4):44-51.
* Refresh your memory of the Harrison et al. (2022) article.

**Thursday, June 9: Ethnography**

Readings:

* Blackstone, Chapter 10
* Streib, Jessi. 2011. "Class Reproduction by Four Year Olds." *Qualitative Sociology* 34(2):337-352.

**\* \* \* Methods Memo due by 11:59 PM on Thursday, June 9 \* \* \***

**\* \* \* Quiz 4 due on Sakai by 11:59 PM on Sunday, June 12 \* \* \***

**Part 3: Presenting Results and Evaluating Research in the Media**

*In this final section of the course we will discuss how best to present both quantitative and qualitative findings as well as how to evaluate research reported in the media. There will also be timed for a workshop and review of your final projects.*

**Monday, June 13: Presenting Qualitative Results**

Readings:

* Chenail, Ronald J. 1995. "Presenting Qualitative Data." *The Qualitative Report* 2(3): 1-9.
* Review the results sections of Streib (2011) and Harrison et al. (2022)

**Tuesday, June 14: Presenting Quantitative Results**

Readings:

* Healy, Kieran. 2019. "Look at Data." ch.1 in *Data Visualization: A Practical Introduction*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Available on Sakai)
* Review the results sections of Adler et al. (2021) and Pager (2003)

**Wednesday, June 15: Evaluating Media Reports of Research**

*Note: for this week make sure to read the readings in the order written below.*

Readings:

* Schnabel, Landon and Sean Bock. 2017. "The Persistent and Exceptional Intensity of American Religion: A Response to Recent Research." *Sociological Science* 4:686-700.
* The Federalist: "New Harvard Research Says U.S. Christianity is not Shrinking, bur Growing Stronger." (<https://thefederalist.com/2018/01/22/new-harvard-research-says-u-s-christianity-not-shrinking-growing-stronger/>)
* Politifact: "Is Mike Pence right that religion is gaining new life in the US?" (<https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2018/may/16/mike-pence/mike-pence-right-religion-gaining-new-life-us/>)

**Thursday, June 16: Final Presentations I**

*In this class period you will present your final project proposal. Presentations should last no longer than 10 minutes. Come prepared with slides.*

Readings: none

**\* \* \* Quiz 5 due on Sakai by 11:59PM on Sunday, June 19 \* \* \***

**Monday, June 20: NO CLASS – JUNETEENTH HOLIDAY**

**\* \* \* Final Paper due by 11:59 PM on Thursday, June 23 \* \* \***