**SOCY 3201: Sociological Research Methods, Fall 2019**

Tuesday & Thursday 9:30-10:45 a.m. in Hellems 201

**Instructor:** Dr. Laura Patterson

**Office:** 163 Ketchum Hall

**Office Hours:** Thursday 12:30-3:30

**Email:**  [laura.patterson@colorado.edu](mailto:laura.patterson@colorado.edu) (“SOCY 3201” in subject line, PLEASE)

**TA:** Danni Lopez-Rogina

**Office:** 481 Ketchum Hall

**Office Hours:** Friday 9-10:50 and by appointment

**Email:** Danni.LopezRogina@colorado.edu (“SOCY 3201” in subject line, PLEASE)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Sociological research relies on collecting and analyzing different types of data to investigate social phenomena. These methodological tools vary widely depending on the research questions a sociologist seeks to answer. This course will teach you to investigate the world through a sociological lens and give you experience designing studies and using many of the fundamental tools of sociological research. The purpose of this course is to build an understanding of sociological research methods and data analysis and to apply this understanding to real-world research questions. You will build a strong set of skills that may serve you well in your future workplace, including research design, critical thinking about data, construction and administration of qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments, data management, and applied statistical and textual analysis.

In this course, you will sharpen your research design and analytical skills by combining lectures with hands-on sociological research and data analysis. The course is divided into two main units. In the first unit, you will learn about social science research methods and research design considerations. Then in the largest unit of the course, you will narrow your focus from research in general to four methodological tools in particular, learning how to design studies to give you the best possible data and analyze that data. You will collect original sociological data and write a short paper for each of these methods.

This class is intense and involves a lot of active learning. You will join a group to design studies and collect and analyze data. You will also do some work independently, while being part of a group that will provide constructive feedback.

Please note that it is essential that you have taken a basic statistics course before enrolling in this class. We will teach you some basic statistical analysis, and we will assume that you have studied these statistics (though we will briefly refresh your memory).

**Course Contacts**

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Email/phone\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**COURSE MATERIALS**

*Readings*: There are two primary textbooks, both available at the bookstore.

1. *Making Sense of the Social World,* 6th edition, by Daniel F. Chambliss and Russell K. Schutt.

2. *The Practice of Research: How Social Scientists Answer Their Questions*, by Shamus Khan and Dana Fisher.

3. Additional readings will be posted online.

4. *USB flash drive or online storage*: Each student will need their own USB flash drive, external hard drive, or an online storage option like Dropbox or Google Drive, to store their data and analysis files. Students are responsible for maintaining the integrity and safety of their own data, and should therefore bring their flash drive to each class meeting or have online data storage available. Students will also be using their Google Drive account through CU. This account can be accessed using your CU email and Identikey password.

*5. Software*: In the survey unit, we will be using Qualtrics, an online survey design and administration package. This is free to CU affiliates at <http://qualtrics.colorado.edu>.

**Grading**

Your final grade will be based on the following course requirements. There are 275 points total.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignments** | **Points Per Assignment** | **Total Points** | **% of Grade** |
| 2 Exams | 50 points each | 100 | 36% |
| Lit review article summaries | 20 points | 20 | 7% |
| Lit review rough draft | 20 points | 20 | 7% |
| Lit review final draft | 25 points | 25 | 9% |
| CITI tutorial | 10 points | 10 | 4% |
| 4 research projects | 15 points each | 60 | 22% |
| Analysis presentation | 15 points | 15 | 6% |
| Attendance | N/A | 25 | 9% |

**Course Requirements:**

Two Exams

Exam One covers our initial unit on sociological research methods. The exam will be mixed format, including multiple choice and short answer.

The final exam covers all course material and will focus both on what you have learned about specific research methods and how that links to the broader material from the first unit. It will also be mixed format, including multiple choice and short answer.

CITI tutorial

Because you will be conducting sociological research, you will need to pass a short online tutorial on conducting research with human subjects that is required by the university. Students who have completed this tutorial in the past three years do not need to retake it and can simply submit a printout of their certificate of completion. You can find the link to this page on the class Canvas site.

Attendance

On most days throughout the class (including all days involving group work), attendance will be taken, either through the grading of a short in-class assignment, or directly, to assess participation in group components of the course. Your attendance will be calculated as a percentage, and you will be allowed 3 missed classes without penalty. The TA will be in charge of handling all attendance and tracking it if you have any questions.

Four Research Projects

You will collect a small amount of sociological data using a different method for each of the four research projects included in this course: surveys, in-depth interviews, field observations, and content analysis. You and your group will work on study design, data collection, data analysis, and a write-up of findings. You will have some time in class to work on the group aspects of the projects, and you may also use tools such as Google Drive and Google Hangouts to collaborate. Each research project will be worth 15 points; research projects will contain both group and individual components.

Literature Review

As part of your group, you will write a four- to five-page (maximum) literature review about your topic.  A review of the literature provides a conceptual framework for your project and discusses what questions are currently being debated in the field with regard to your topic.  Your group will need to include at least 10 scholarly (peer-reviewed) sources in your literature review.

Analysis Presentation

Your group will select one research project and present your findings. This will include summarizing your findings and detailing what your findings contribute to the discipline of sociology.

Please be aware that some course requirements or assigned readings may change during the semester. However, we do not expect the overall workload to increase if changes are made.

**Grading Philosophy:** Below is the standard for the level of assessment of written assignments and overall evaluation for course grades. These standards may be higher than those you may have encountered previously. The distribution of final grades will meet the standards for fair and rigorous evaluation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | **Percentage Grade** | **Description** |
| **A** | **90-100** | *Exceptional*: Exceeds all required elements of the assignment, and the quality of the work is considerably higher than what was required. The quality of the work is considerably above the class average and impressive to the evaluator. |
| **B** | **80-89** | *Good*: Meets all required elements of the assignment, and the quality of the work is better than what is required. |
| **C** | **70-79** | *Average*: Meets all required elements of an assignment, not more, not less. Quality of assignment is satisfactory for college level work. |
| **D** | **60-69** | *Below average*: Does not meet all the required elements of the assignment, and/or the quality of the assignment is considerably lower than satisfactory. |
| **F** | **59 and below** | *Failing*: Few of the requirements of the assignment are met and/or the quality of the assignment is well below basic standards of writing, comprehension, and/or ability to follow instructions. |

# COURSE POLICIES AND ENVIRONMENT

# When you email us please put “SOCY 3201” in the subject header. We may delete and thus not respond to emails that do not have this as the subject heading. We check emails once a day during weekdays before 5pm.

* Important announcements will be sent out over email to the addresses listed on the class roster. You are required to check this email account regularly over the course of the semester.

# You are responsible for material and announcements presented during classroom time. We will not repeat material during office hours if you miss a class. It is your responsibility to get missed notes and updates from fellow students, not the instructor or TA. If a due date or other administrative changes are announced, that will supersede the “tentative schedule” found in this syllabus. You are responsible for all information communicated in class, whether or not you are in attendance.

* Please do not arrive late or leave early or begin to pack up prior to the end of lecture or discussion. This inhibits other students’ ability to hear and understand the material. If, however, you need to use the restroom during class, of course feel free to quietly leave the classroom and return.
* We expect that you will attend regularly and participate in in-class activities. This course is very experiential. If you miss class, you will be hampered in completing the assignments, and it is very likely that your grade will suffer.
* Please turn off cell phone ringers, and avoid engaging in side-talking, reading, sleeping, texting, or surfing while in class.This is disrespectful of other students and the instructors and disruptive to the learning community. If we notice you doing any of these things, you will be asked to leave the room.
* Studies generally show that students who take notes by hand receive higher grades than those who use electronic devices – and from personal experience, I can tell you laptop use during class is very distracting both to you and to those around you. Please refrain from using computers for notetaking during class unless you have a documented accommodation from disability services.
* Please do the assigned readings for the class before the first class meeting for which they’re assigned. This makes class more enjoyable for everyone and more useful for you.
* If you know you will be unable to take an exam on the day scheduled for any reason (religious, university event, or any other reason), please let us know as soon as possible to arrange for the essay makeup or other alternative. If you miss an exam, you have 24 hours to inform your instructor. If you do not inform your instructor within 24 hours of missing an exam you will be given a zero for that score. It is in your best interest to be at scheduled exams. Please check the syllabus now to determine if there are any conflicts you need to discuss with us.
* Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the due date. Each assignment will state in which format it is to be submitted. Late assignments are only accepted up to four “business” days after the due date, after which the assignment will not be accepted. A late penalty of one-half letter grade is assessed for each day past the deadline the assignment is turned in, up to four days late.
* Please keep all returned work in the event that you have a grade dispute at the end of the semester. If your calculation of your grade does not match our records, it is your responsibility to provide proof of graded work. You should keep track of your online grade book to catch any errors as early as possible. If you need to check your attendance rate, go to the TA’s office hours or make an appointment. It cannot be discussed via email due to university guidelines.
* Web Page: The syllabus, some readings, assignments, grades, and other information will be posted on the Canvas website. The most recent course information will be available there, as information in this syllabus may be changed over the course of the semester. Email updates will be sent out when important material is posted on the website.
* Accommodation for Disabilities: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the Disability Services website. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Medical Conditions under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.
* Classroom Behavior: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on classroom behavior and the Student Code of Conduct.
* Honor Code: All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the Honor Code Office website.
* Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment, and/or Related Retaliation: The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct intimate partner abuse (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, anonymous reporting, and the campus resources can be found on the OIEC website. Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.
* Religious Holidays: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. If you have a religious conflict with a course due date, please notify us at least one week prior to the due date so we can make reasonable accommodations. See the campus policy regarding religious observances for full details