COURSE SYLLABUS
METHODS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH (SO 310-01)
THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
SPRING 2012

Instructor: Craig T. Robertson, Ph.D.
Office: 558 Stevens Hall
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Office Hours: M. W. F. 9:00am. – 10:00am., T. R. 9:30am. – 11:00am. or by appointment

E-mail: Always use the Angel e-mail system for this class on the course home page. Address your e-mails to the "course faculty" if you are e-mailing me. Look carefully each time you enter the course to see if you have unread e-mail (see "What's new" on the bottom left of your screen).

Dept. of Sociology Website: http://www.una.edu/sociology. Check out the website to learn more about the department, the major, the faculty, our courses, careers, etc.

Course Description and Goals

This course exposes students to the processes and techniques necessary to conduct social scientific research. Students will learn how to frame a research question, assess methods best suited to research questions, measure concepts, apply sampling procedures, understand data collection strategies, and analyze data. I hope you will leave this class with a level of understanding allowing you to conduct quality research and assessments. Specifically, I hope you will meet the following learning objectives:

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students will demonstrate

- an understanding of the ways of knowing and the role of science in building knowledge
- an understanding of the dialectical nature of scientific inquiry
• an understanding of the role of theory in deductive scientific inquiry
• an understanding of the processes involved in development of a research design
• an understanding of sampling procedures, techniques and their implementation
• an understanding of survey methodology
• an understanding of experimental methodology
• an understanding of qualitative methodology

Course Text


Student Responsibilities

Course Preparation: To reach our class goals, everyone is expected to keep up with class readings, assignments and due dates that will be created as we move through the semester. Tests and assignments must be submitted on the designated dates. If your work is not submitted on time you will earn a zero on that assignment. I regret the harsh nature of this policy but when work is due it is your responsibility to submit it on time.

To encourage your attendance and participation, I take a class roll and for each day you fail to attend I deduct 2 points from your overall attendance grade of 50 points.

Assignments: Written assignments must be formatted using the APA style. A link has been provided for you in Angel under "Resources" and "Course Resources" to the UNA Center for Writing Excellence (located in the basement of Collier Library). A guide to the APA format can be found on the Center's website. Work that is inconsistent with the APA format and other expectations concerning content, basic instructions and professionalism of presentation will be graded accordingly. A 5% grade deduction will be applied to your work.

For each writing assignment, students will earn an extra five points if the work is submitted with documentation confirming that helped was received from the UNA Center for Writing Excellence. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that I receive proper documentation.
Your assignments (found under "Lessons") this semester will be accessed and submitted through the Angel assignment dropbox. In sum, you will access an assignment, complete it using your word processor or other software such as PowerPoint, upload it to the assignment dropbox, submit the work and then I take things from there. I realize this is a traditional in-class course but I want students to submit their assignments as files through the Angel assignment dropboxes.

Written Assignments:

1) **Process Assignments.** These assignments count 20 points each and I anticipate students will have four such assignments this semester.

2) **Term Assignment.** Students will write a 150 point research proposal on topics of their choosing. All topics must be formally approved by me. This 15 page minimum proposal (prescribed length excludes mandatory cover sheet, abstract, table of contents, summary, reference page/s, and assumes 1" margins, standard 12 character font, and double-spacing) will be due in its finalized form at the end of the semester. Students are encouraged to view this assignment as an opportunity to produce creative work. There are multiple due dates for parts of this assignment so you will be earning credit as we move through the semester.

I will be happy to help students with the various stages of this work throughout the semester. **Students who fail to submit a final proposal cannot pass this course.**

Exams: Examination dates are noted on the tentative course itinerary. If we deviate from that schedule I will always give you at least one week notice before rescheduling an exam. Examination 1 will count 100 points. Examination 2 will count 100 points. Examination 3 (comprehensive) will count 150 points. Examinations will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and essay questions. I will provide you with examination essay questions one week in advance of the exam. Beyond this, there are no study guides.

Make-up Policy: Make-up quizzes and exams are given at the discretion of the instructor under extenuating circumstances, and requests for make-up quizzes and exams must be made by the student within three days of the scheduled quiz or exam date. Illnesses and death of an immediate family member are the only non-university approved reasons that will justify make-up quizzes or exams. All make-up requests must be accompanied by official written notice and make-up work must be completed on the date defined by the instructor. Instructors are not responsible for informing students of missed work.

Learning Disabilities Policy: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the University offers reasonable accommodations to students with eligible documented learning, physical
and/or psychological disabilities. Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act of 2008, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities as compared to an average person in the population. It is the responsibility of the student to contact Disability Support Services to initiate the process to develop an accommodation plan. This accommodation plan will not be applied retroactively. Appropriate, reasonable accommodations will be made to allow each student to meet course requirements, but no fundamental or substantial alteration of academic standards will be made. Students needing assistance should contact Disability Support Services (256-765-4214).

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**Ethical Writing**

Any information drawn from works published by others must be appropriately cited within the written work and on the reference page/s (prepared in the format specified for this class).

Follow the APA style for directly quoting both short and lengthy quoted materials. You must never string together one direct quote after another and you must never begin a quote and finish it one/two paragraph(s) or pages later. It is also unethical to block and move text from websites to your own work. Students who engage in the above mentioned activities are merely typing a paper rather than writing a paper. Such activities will not be tolerated in this course and students will receive a zero on assignments where such activities are present.

To prepare ethical work you must neither copy work produced by other students or plagiarize (review this link: [http://www.una.edu/library/orientation/plagiarism_copyrigh/plagiarism-students.html](http://www.una.edu/library/orientation/plagiarism_copyrigh/plagiarism-students.html)). Any information drawn from works published by others must be appropriately cited within the body of your work and then referenced as part of a bibliography page using the APA style.

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**Grading**

The following grade point scale (A=89.5-100%, B=79.5-89.4%, C=69.5-79.4%, D=59.5-69.4%, and below 59.5%=F) is employed. No grades are dropped and there is no extra-credit work. Your average may be calculated at any point in the semester by summating the total number of points you earned divided by the total number of points that could possibly have been earned. For example, if a student made 8 out of 10 on a quiz and 45
out of 50 on an exam, the student's grade would be 53 out of 60 or 88.3%. You, or any other person you authorize interested in your grades, may check your grades through Angel under "Reports".

Where do my course points come from?

1st. Examination = 100 pts.
2nd. Examination = 100 pts.
3rd. Examination (comprehensive) = 150 pts.
Research Proposal = 150 pts.
Process Assignments = 15 pts. each
Library Assignments = 3 Mandatory Assignments at 20 pts. each

Course Itinerary

**Date and Event/Subject** (Dates for examinations and due dates for proposal elements are tentative)

1/11 - Classes begin
1/16 - Holiday
1/27 - Topic approval for research proposal
2/3 - Formal topic submission with five-source literature review (all from academic journals)
2/13 - EXAM 1
2/17 - Winter break
3/9 - Last day of "W" period
3/9 - Expanded literature review and theory section due (lit review must contain a minimum of 10 articles from academic journals)
3/19 - EXAM 2
3/26-30 - Spring Break
4/4 - Revised theory and methods section
4/6 - University closed
4/18 - End of "WP/WF" Period. Last day to completely withdraw
5/2 - Finalized proposals are due
5/4 - FINAL EXAM (this exam will be comprehensive 1:00-2:45pm.)
Final Comments

It is my goal to make this course worth your time and effort. Therefore, I will do all within my power to ensure that you learn and succeed. If you are concerned with any aspect of this course please contact me. You owe it to yourself to talk with me since I can only help you if I know there is a problem.