

**TECHNIQUES OF SOCIAL RESEARCH**  
**SOCIOLOGY 403/603**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS**

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**Instructor:**  
**Class Meetings:**  
**Classroom:**  
**Lab:**  
**Office Hours:**  
**Office:**  
**Phone:**  
**Email:**

**Graduate Instructor:**  
**Office Hours:**  
**Office:**  
**Email:**

**Course Description:**

This course provides students with an introduction and training in sociological research methods. During the semester we will broadly cover various dimensions of social research: research design, conceptualization and measurement, survey research, secondary data analysis, content analysis, interviewing, ethnographic research, and social experiments. We will also discuss the strengths and weaknesses of various research designs and their application to various types of research questions. The main objectives of this course are twofold:

- (1) To provide students with an opportunity to develop the critical thinking and inquiry skills needed to design and conduct social research.**
- (2) To help students become more informed consumers and communicators of sociological research, research reports, and research presented in the popular media and elsewhere.**

Upon completion of this course, you can become knowledgeable practitioners, consumers, and evaluators of the social scientific research you encounter on a daily basis (e.g. news reports, advertisers, research results, etc.). To help achieve this goal, you will be required and encouraged to be a participant rather than a spectator through a variety of class assignments. In this class, you will have the opportunity to gain hands-on, real world research experience on various sociological topics.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

*Critical Thinking and Inquiry:*

- a. Students should be able to identify the skills necessary to design a research study from its inception to its report.
- b. Students should be familiar with ethical issues in social science research and demonstrate the ability to protect human subjects in research settings.

- c. Students should recognize the primary characteristics of quantitative research and qualitative research.
- d. Students should identify the various types of sampling methods and be able to apply to research questions.
- e. Students should know the types of qualitative data typically collected in a qualitative study and be able to describe why qualitative data analysis is considered to be “interpretive.”
- f. Students will uncover patterns of data and evaluate data trends by reporting on conclusions.
- g. Students will analyze and explain emergent themes from research data.
- h. Students will use peer-to-peer assessment techniques to evaluate their classmates work in class lab settings.

*Communication:*

- a. Students will demonstrate general academic literacy on research methods and be able to verbally articulate the skills necessary to design a research study from its inception to its report.
- b. Students will be familiarized to the writing style of social research and learn to effectively write using sociological research content and common genres.
- c. Students will collaborate with classmates in solving research-based analytic problems.
- d. Students will prepare and deliver an oral presentation to the class – based on their Homework 4 research project.
- e. Students will create and deliver a visual-based presentation of a peer-reviewed published article that uses sociology research methods.
- f. Students will create a research-based Poster, similar to those used at professional conferences, for their final course project.
- g. Students will use peer-to-peer assessment techniques to evaluate their classmates work in class lab settings.

**Milestone Experience Learning Days:**

*Milestone Experience Day 1: Current News on the Profession.* This course day uses the most current publication from the American Sociological Association, the professional organization dedicated to advancing sociology as a scientific discipline and profession serving the public good.

*Milestone Experience Day 2: Careers in Sociology.* This workshop style class period is devoted to careers in sociology. The class will include resume building, interview skills, discussion of current employment ads, and how to sell oneself as sociology major on the job market.

*Milestone Experience Day 3: Sociology Guest Speakers.* This course day is devoted to a series of guest speaker interviews via Skype, or in-person, with Sociology alumni. The goal of this experience is to expose the various career fields where former students are using their sociology education.

### **Required Text:**

- Chambliss, Daniel F. and Russell K. Schutt. 2013. Making Sense of the Social World. Sage Publications. 4th Edition, Thomson Wadsworth.

### **Required Readings:**

In addition to the required texts, this course will utilize other readings from sociological journals, textbooks, and other sources. All of these readings will be placed on **WebCampus** prior to the reading deadline. It is important that you keep up with the readings and come prepared to discuss the daily assigned readings.

### **Course Requirements:**

1. **Attendance and Participation.** Attendance at all class sessions is essential and expected. Most class sessions will involve discussion of the readings and/or course requirement information. Attendance and participation will be graded by group discussion, in-class discussion, and various projects. These will total 5% of your final grade.
2. **Course Homework.** There will be 4 course homework assignments that will involve the analysis and write-up of various methodological issues. These homeworks are worth a combined total of 50% of your final grade.
  1. Homework 1 = 10%
  2. Homework 2 = 10%
  3. Homework 3 = 15%
  4. Homework 4 = 15%
3. **Research Lab.** During the semester, you will work on many projects in the research lab. These projects are aimed to incorporate the course material and real-world research experience. Attendance at lab is essential and imperative for successfully completing this course. Research lab will total 15% of your final grade.
4. **Quizzes.** There will be 2 quizzes in class during the semester. These quizzes are designed to measure your course progress and dedication to the class readings. They will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions. Each quiz is worth 15% of your grade, for a combined total of 30% of your final grade.

### **Grading Scheme:**

Attendance and Participation	5%
Course Homework	50%
Research Lab	15%
<u>Quizzes</u>	<u>30%</u>
Total	100%

### **Course Policies:**

All course assignments will be completed and handed in on the assigned date. There will be no make-up exams and no exceptions to this policy. All course assignments are due on the assigned due date. The following deductions will be taken if your assignment is late:

1 day late (including the same day but after class)	10 point deduction
2 days late	20 point deduction
3 days late	30 point deduction
4 <sup>th</sup> day and beyond	WILL NOT ACCEPT RECEIVE "0" points

**Final Grades:**

Final grades will be based on the total points that you earn on all the course assignments and exams. The following table shows the course grading system and final letter grade.

	Percent		Percent
A	93-100	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	D	63-66
B+	87-89	D-	60-62
B	83-86	F	<60
B-	80-82		
C+	77-79		
C	73-76		
C-	70-72		

**My Grading Philosophy:**

I do not grade on a "curve." This is helpful for those who may be anxious about a particular course (especially a course required for one's major). This way, you will always be able to keep track of how your current performance translates into a certain grade (and what it will take to achieve a certain grade). Thus, your grade is not determined by how well others do in the course. Your performance in this class determines your final grade.

<b>WEEKLY COURSE OUTLINE</b>				
DATE	TOPIC	READING	IN-CLASS	IN-LAB
	Course Introduction			
	Human Inquiry & Science	Chapter 1		
	Dialectics of Social Research	Ch. 2; p. 17-18		Lab 1
	Social Science Paradigms	Ch. 2; p. 19-24		
	Research Designs	Ch. 2; p. 25-32	<b>HW 1</b>	Lab 2

	Ethics of Social Research	Chapter 3		
	Process of Research, Part 1	Class Lecture		Lab 3
	<b>NO CLASS, HOLIDAY</b>			<b>NO CLASS</b>
	<b><i>Milestone Experience Day 1</i></b>		<b>HW 1 Due</b>	Lab 4
	Conceptualization	Ch. 4; p. 60-65		
	Operationalization/Measures/Indexes	Ch. 4; p. 66-81		Lab 5
	<b>QUIZ #1</b>			
	<b>NO CLASS – ACJS CONFERENCE</b>			<b>NO LAB</b>
	Sampling	Chapter 5	<b>HW2</b>	
	Sampling Designs	Chapter 5		Lab 6
	Survey Research	Chapter 7		
	Survey Research Designs	Chapter 7		Lab 7
	<b><i>Milestone Experience Day 2</i></b>		<b>HW2 Due</b>	
	Experimental Designs	Ch. 6; p. 103-110		Lab 8
	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>			
	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>			
	Field Research – Observer/Interview	Ch. 9; p. 178 - 186	<b>HW3</b>	
	Field Research – Observer/Interview	Ch. 9; p. 187-202		Lab 9
	Qualitative Data Analysis	Chapter 10		
	Evaluation Research	Chapter 11		Lab 10
	<b><i>Milestone Experience Day 3</i></b>		<b>HW3 Due</b>	
	Content Analysis	p. 65-66; Class Lecture	<b>HW 4</b>	Lab 11
	Content Analysis, contd.	Class Lecture		
	Introduction to SPSS			Lab 12
	SPSS Continued			

	SPSS Continued		HW4 Due	
	<b>QUIZ #2 10:10am – 12:10 (FINALS WEEK)</b>			

**\*\*The professor reserves the right to make small changes to the course outline and syllabus at any time.**

**\*\*LAB SYLLABUS – Will be provided by your Lab Instructor.**

**Additional Information:**

**Academic Misconduct**—Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV’s function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct>.

**Copyright**—The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

**Disability Resource Center (DRC)**—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

**Religious Holidays Policy**—Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor **within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses**, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do

not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

**Transparency in Learning and Teaching**—The University encourages application of the transparency method of constructing assignments for student success. Please see these two links for further information:

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning>

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency>

**Incomplete Grades**—The grade of I—Incomplete—can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student's control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving "I" grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

**Tutoring and Coaching**—The **Academic Success Center (ASC)** provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of the SSC (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TEB second floor.

**UNLV Writing Center**—One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>.

**Rebelmail**—By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students' Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV's official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students' e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always [@unlv.nevada.edu](mailto:@unlv.nevada.edu). **Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.**

**Final Examinations**—The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: <http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.

### **Library statement:**

Students may consult with a librarian on research needs. For this class, the Subject Librarian is ([https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians\\_by\\_subject](https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians_by_subject)). UNLV Libraries provides resources to

support students' access to information. Discovery, access, and use of information are vital skills for academic work and for successful post-college life. Access library resources and ask questions at <https://www.library.unlv.edu/>.