Instructor: Lauren Schudde  
Office: 3407 Sewell Social Science  
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 1-2pm, and by appointment  
Email: lschudd@ssc.wisc.edu

Course Description:

Sociology 357 is a basic course on how to do social science research and how to evaluate the research of others. This is a course where you will learn by doing. After an introduction to the elements of research, we will spend most of the class time this semester applying the concepts in our readings. Coming prepared and being willing to participate are key prerequisites for joining the class.

My goals in teaching this course are to have you learn firsthand about the successes and challenges of research by trying out data collection methods on a small scale. This course also encourages you to think critically about your research and the research of others. The assignments require you to develop clear and succinct explanations for your methodological choices and to evaluate the research choices made by yourself and others using your critical thinking skills.

Soc 357 is not a statistics course and assumes no background in methods. You will do a small amount of statistics in your projects, which will be easier if you have already had elementary statistics, but you can learn what you need to know for these projects in this course without much difficulty.

Required Text:

The following text is available for purchase at the University Bookstore and it is on reserve at College Library. You can also purchase the book online (the 11th edition is most likely fine as well).


Attendance and Participation:

You are expected to attend class regularly (attendance will be taken), to participate in class activities and discussions, and to complete the reading assignments prior to class. If you must miss class, please contact a classmate to find out what you missed.

Record contact information from two classmates here:
Name ________________________________  
Email ________________________________  
Phone ________________________________

Name ________________________________  
Email ________________________________  
Phone ________________________________
Assignments:

You are expected to write one social science research paper for this class and to critically assess the methodology utilized by another student in their research paper. The combination of these activities will enable you to experience the research process and teach you to evaluate methodological choices made by yourself and others.

In order to make your job easier, and to provide you with feedback every step of the way, your research project will be submitted in a series of small assignments, including an oral presentation. The written assignments include: 1) a human subjects protection tutorial, 2) a research proposal, 3) a method plan, 4) a final research report implementing the previous components, 5) a response to a classmates’ evaluation of your methodological choices. The oral presentation includes a brief presentation of your research findings and a critical assessment of your choice of methods. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be handed out in class.

Pop Quizzes:

There will be pop quizzes to ensure that you have done your reading. These quizzes will be straightforward and simple. They are not intended to cause you stress, but to encourage preparation. It is very important that you come to class prepared: I prefer not to spend all of our class time reviewing the reading material. Instead, we will be applying the material covered in the readings during in-class activities.

The format of the pop quizzes will vary: short-answer, multiple choice, and fill-in-the-blank. If you do the reading, these quizzes will not be difficult.

At the end of the semester, your lowest pop quiz score will be dropped.

Grading Policies:

Your final course grade will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Subjects Protection Tutorial</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Topic Proposal</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Method Plan</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Research Report</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Classmates’ Methods</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-evaluation and Response to Peer Evaluation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Pop Quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because conducting “real” research is a long and arduous task, I am more concerned with your ability to think critically about methodological choices than with the content of your brief research project. For this reason, 35% of your grade depends on your evaluation of the research conducted by yourself and others. Learning to critically assess research choices will be an ongoing part of this course and I will discuss my expectations for your self- and peer-evaluations later in the course.
Grading for assignments: Assignments will be assigned letter grades unless explicitly stated on the assignment instructions.

Penalty for late assignments: All assignments must be deposited in the dropbox on learn@uw by their 12pm deadline. Assignments received after 12pm will be docked one grade for anything received up to one day late, two letter grades for anything received between one to two days late, and so on. Please turn your assignment in on time!!

*If you have a personal or family emergency that impacts your ability to turn an assignment in on time, you must notify me BEFORE the assignment deadline. Grades will be changed only in cases of computational error, and there is no extra credit in this course.*

Due Dates:
Human Subjects Protection Tutorial - Due Wednesday Jan 26
Research Proposal – Due Monday Feb 21
Method Plan – Due Wednesday March 9
Final Research Report - Due Wednesday April 13
Evaluation of Classmates’ Methods – Due Friday April 22
Self-evaluation and Response to Peer Evaluation – Due Wednesday May 4th

Oral presentations will occur on Wednesday April 27th, Monday May 2nd, and Wednesday May 4th.

Academic Misconduct (Cheating):

Students who cheat or attempt to cheat will automatically receive an F for that assignment. In addition, the incident will be reported in writing to the Dean of your school or college as well as the Dean of Students so that he/she may decide whether further disciplinary action is needed. A clear definition of plagiarism as well as information about disciplinary sanctions for academic misconduct may be found at the Dean of Students web site: http://www.wisc.edu/students/UWS14.htm. Knowledge of these rules is your responsibility, and lack of familiarity with the rules does not excuse misconduct.
Course Schedule

NOTE: The schedule below is flexible and subject to changes throughout the semester. If the syllabus changes, I will notify you and provide an electric copy of the changes.

--Readings should be completed before class--

**Part I: The Logic and Ethics of Research**

W Jan 19 – Introduction to class: review syllabus and assignments

M Jan 24 – Scientific inquiry and the importance of critical thinking

*Read:* Chapter 1 p. 10-27 (starting at section entitled “The Foundations of Social Science”)
Chapter 2 p. 44-59 (starting with section entitled “Elements of Social Theory”)

W Jan 26 – Research Ethics: Making Difficult Choices exercise

*Assignment Due:* Human Subjects Tutorial

M Jan 31 – Research Ethics: watch movie in class

*Read:* Chapter 3

W Feb 2 – Research Design: The Elements of Research

*Read:* Chapter 4

**Part II: Conducting Research- Gathering Data**

M Feb 7 – Library session: using online databases to find academic research on your topic

W Feb 9 – The Logic of Research: Conceptualization, Operationalization, Measurement

*Read:* Chapter 5

M Feb 14 – Workshop day: evaluate sample topic statements / work on forming your research question!

Bring ideas for potential research project topic to class

W Feb 16 – Scales and Indexes

*Read:* Chapter 6

M Feb 21 – Sampling: Sampling Theory

*Assignment Due:* Research Proposal

W Feb 23 – Sampling: Probability Sampling exercise

*Read:* Chapter 7

M Feb 28 – Survey and Interview Research

*Read:* Chapter 9

W Mar 2 – Survey Questions: Coding Questionnaire Data / Creating a Codebook for the NSSE survey

*Read:* Schaeffer and Presser, “The Science of Asking Questions” (posted on learn@uw)

M Mar 7 – Field Research

*Read:* Chapter 10

W Mar 9 – Field Research: Ethnography movie

*Assignment Due:* Methods Plan
M Mar 14 – NO CLASS, Spring Break
W Mar 16 – NO CLASS, Spring Break

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**Part III Conducting Research-Analysis**

M Mar 21 – Unobtrusive Research Methods: Content Analysis of Children’s Books exercise
  *Read:* Chapter 11
W Mar 23 - Analyzing Qualitative Research: Coding Qualitative Data
  *Read:* Chapter 13

M Mar 28 – Quantitative Data Analysis: Summary Statistics
  *Read:* Chapter 14
W Mar 30 – Quantitative Data Analysis: Regression Analysis

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**Part IV: Experiments and Applied Research**

M April 4 – Introduction to statistical software
  *meet in computer lab rm 2470 Soc Sci*
W April 6 – Introduction to statistical software
  *meet in computer lab rm 2470 Soc Sci*

M April 11 – NO CLASS, work on research report
W April 13 – Critical Assessment of Methodological Choices: small groups evaluate sample research paper
  *Assignment Due:* Research Reports

M April 18 – Experiments in Social Science
  *Read:* Chapter 8
W April 20 – Experiments in Social Science: exercise
F April 22 – *Assignment Due:* Peer Evaluation Due

M April 25 – Evaluation/Applied Research
  *Read:* Chapter 12
W April 27 – Presentations

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M May 2 – Presentations
W May 4 – Presentations
  *Assignment Due:* Self-evaluation/Response to Peer Evaluation