

**SOC 4111: Methods of Sociological Research I**  
**Fall 2017**  
**Monday/Wednesday 4:00PM – 5:50PM**  
**MI 3060**

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**Instructor:** Dr. Natalie Ingraham

**Office:** MI 4025

**Office Hours:** Monday 12p-1p, Wednesday by appointment

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**Course Description:** This course is the first in a two-part (Soc 4112) sequence. In Soc 4111 you will be introduced to basic social research skills. This course is designed to help further your ability to critically evaluate the adequacy of information presented in academic (e.g., journal articles, books) and non-academic (e.g., media) venues. To this end, we will focus on acquiring skills needed to: (a) identify and evaluate research designs; (b) identify and evaluate sampling designs; (c) distinguish between quantitative and qualitative research and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each approach; (d) develop hypotheses & research questions; (e) develop valid and reliable measures of variables.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Learn to evaluate the adequacy of information presented in academic and non-academic (e.g., media) claims.
2. Gain an understanding of the difference between qualitative and quantitative research.
3. Learn to write a hypothesis and identify independent and dependent variables.
4. Able to construct valid survey questions (measurement; validity & reliability).
5. Recognize the difference between probability and non-probability sampling, and recognize different types of sampling methods.
6. Effectively communicate what you have learned about sociological research methods in both written and oral form.
7. Use your sociological education outside of the classroom and into your everyday life.

**Links to Program Learning Outcomes and Institutional Learning Outcomes:**

- SLO – Knowledge Integration and Synthesis – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- SLO – Professional Demeanor and Ethical Behavior – 4, 5
- ILO – Thinking and Reasoning – 2, 4

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Required Text:**

Babbie, Earl. 2016. *The Practice of Social Research*. 14<sup>th</sup> Edition. Cengage Learning. Boston, MA.

**Required Supplemental Materials:**

12 month subscription to MindTap (via Cengage) – includes digital copy of the textbook

**Optional materials:**

SPSS student rent or buy (<http://www.onthehub.com/spss/>) – not required to purchase.

- SPSS can be accessed in computer labs, the library or via BayCloud (<https://www.csueastbay.edu/its/cls/baycloud/index.html>)

*American Sociological Association Publication Manual* (I will place an abbreviated copy on BB. You can also download this on your own from the American Sociological Association (ASA) Web page.

**Attendance and Participation:** Students are responsible for all material covered in lecture, including announcements. You will be expected to integrate materials from lecture and readings on assignments. Please do not enroll in this class if you will not be able to attend the lectures regularly. If you must miss, please make arrangements with another student for notes.

**Students with Disabilities:** I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit Accessibility Services. All accommodations **MUST** be approved through Disability Services 510-885-3868 (Hayward Campus) or email us at [as@csueastbay.edu](mailto:as@csueastbay.edu). You can also request more information here: [https://csueastbay-accommodate.symphlicity.com/public\\_accommodation/](https://csueastbay-accommodate.symphlicity.com/public_accommodation/)

**Email Etiquette:** The best way to contact me is through email: [natalie.ingraham@csueastbay.edu](mailto:natalie.ingraham@csueastbay.edu). ***Make sure to write “Sociology 4111” in the subject line.*** Please do not email me to let me know that you will be absent, unless, of course there is some sort of emergency or illness. Email questions should be short and to the point. If you miss class, please contact a classmate for notes rather than e-mailing me directly.

**Academic Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:**

- cheating, which includes possessing unauthorized sources of information during examinations, copying the work of others, permitting others to copy your work, submitting work done by others, completing assignments for others, altering work after grading and subsequently submitting it for re-grading, submitting the same work for two or more classes without the permission of all instructors involved, or retaining materials that you have been instructed to return to your instructor;
- plagiarism, which includes taking the words, ideas, or substance of another and either copying or paraphrasing the work without giving credit to the source through appropriate use of footnotes, quotation marks, or reference citations;

Any plagiarized assignments or cheating will result in zero points (an “F”). You can read the full university policy [here](#).

**Laptops:** Laptops will be provisionally allowed; I prefer that you take written notes.

**Phones:** Please put away all phones and refrain from checking them during class. Participation points will be lost for continued cell phone use during class.

**Readings:** You are expected to read all assigned readings *before* class. This is critical as class is predominately based on activities and discussion *around the readings*. Not reading beforehand will lead to a failure to participate and an inability to understand the material. I also recommend preparing questions about the readings for class as a method to review the reading.

Policy on Late Assignments and Incompletes:

Assignments are to be turned in **at the beginning of the hour** on the date that they are due. Late assignments will be penalized at least one point per each calendar day they are late. Papers received on the day they are due, but after class begins, will also be considered one day late. Note that I do not accept assignments turned in by e-mail attachment. Assignments submitted after the due date will be considered “turned in” on the day that I actually physically receive them.

If you experience an **emergency** that interferes with a deadline, speak to me directly before the assignment is due, and provide sufficient documentation of the reason for your absence. (Note that printer or computer problems do not constitute an emergency!)

Grading:

Keep track of your grade throughout the quarter. See me early in the quarter if you are having difficulty with the course material. I will do my best to answer your questions, clarify readings, and provide you with tips that could help you improve your study habits. If you have any difficulty with clear, concise writing then I suggest that you take advantage of the free tutoring on campus.

**Assignments (300 points):**

Assignment due dates are also listed in the course outline below.

1. Research Project Proposal (5 homework assignments = 70 points, Final proposal = 60 points)  
You will have completed a research proposal by the end of the quarter. The data for the research proposal will be collected in Soc 4112. You will complete a set of 5 assignments that are geared toward helping you develop different stages of your proposal. This will allow me to give you feedback on each section of the proposal and you will incorporate my feedback on your final draft. Detailed instructions for each assignment are at the end of the syllabus.

- Homework Assignment 1 (10 points). Select a topic and write a research question. Include a short paragraph that justifies your choice of topic. Your topic must be sociological. You will hand in two pages: a) a cover page; b) your topic/research question and justification.
- Homework Assignment 2 (20 points). Collect at least **six referred journal articles** (studies conducted by academics and published in a referred journal) and write a literature review that incorporates these articles.
- Homework Assignment 3 (15 points). Develop your methods section. You will conduct a **qualitative** study. Thus, your methods section should identify which qualitative method you have selected and the sampling method you will use to get participants (recruit participants) for the study. You will also need to identify the characteristics of the participants you plan to study.

- Homework Assignment 4 (15 points). Draft an in-depth, semi-structured interview guide with 5-10 main questions, plus follow up prompts. Include an introduction to yourself and rapport-building questions.
- Homework Assignment 5 (10 points). Create a draft of an informed consent document you will give to your participants. This should follow the guidelines reviewed in Babbie Ch. 3 and address the questions in the ethical considerations prompt provided on BB.

2. Weekly Chapter Quizzes (9 quizzes at 10 points each, 1 dropped = 80 points)

This quizzes will review chapter content from the assigned readings each week. You will access and complete these quizzes using MindTap (required subscription). You will have 1-2 **quizzes due each Friday by midnight** – 1 quiz for each assigned chapter that week. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped.

3. Quantitative Methods Homework (2 assignments at 10 points each)

- Homework Assignment 6: Write two hypotheses related to student success and identify the independent and dependent variable in each hypothesis.
- Homework Assignment 7: Develop 4-6 survey questions that measure the IV & DV in each hypothesis.

4. Attendance and Participation (30 points)

Sign in sheets to track attendance and participation in class discussion will be considered for the participation grade.

5. In-Class Activities (40 points)

Occasional in-class activities to practices course content will be given throughout the quarter. These will be worth 5 points each for a total of 40 points. Make-up in-class activities will only be allowed with a documented medical or family emergency.

**TOTAL POINTS FOR THE COURSE:**

Homework assignments (1-7) =	90
Weekly quizzes =	80
Final research proposal =	60
In-class activities =	40
Participation=	30

300 Points

Final grades will be assigned on a percentile basis as follows:

A = 90-100%      B = 80-89%    C = 70-79%    D = 60-69%    F = 59% or less

Plusses and minuses will be assigned as follows: 0,1,2 = minus; 7,8,9 = plus

## **Homework Assignment Instructions**

Note: All assignments should be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins and 12-point font. These will be submitted via BB as a **Word document or PDF** so that I can leave feedback on BB. It will be very important to check this feedback after the assignments are graded and incorporate it for the next assignment.

### **Research Proposal Assignments:**

#### **Assignment #1: Research Questions**

Select a topic and write a research question about the topic. Write a one-paragraph justification (why did you select this topic) for the topic.

#### **Assignment #2: Literature Review**

Write a literature review of six peer reviewed journal articles. In short, a literature review tells the reader what other empirical research has found on the topic under study. The review is a summary that synthesizes key findings in existing research. Use examples of articles that we will read in class as a model for your literature review, and draw on the guidelines for writing literature reviews that I will include on a Power Point lecture. Don't forget to re-state your research goal and question in the last paragraph of the literature review (we will go over this in class).

#### **Assignment #3: Methods Section**

The methods section tells the reader exactly how you conducted the research. You will write a two-to-three-page (minimum), typed, double spaced paper that identifies and describes: 1.) the qualitative research method you will use; 2.) the sampling method you will use; 3.) the number of participants and characteristics of participants you will include in the study; and 4.) limitations of the study.

#### **Assignment #4 Interview Guide Draft**

Draft an in-depth, semi-structured interview guide with 5-10 main questions, plus follow up prompts. Include an introduction to yourself and rapport-building questions. Include a one-page cover sheet with your name, your targeted research questions, and 1-2 single-spaced paragraphs explaining why the topic areas you identified and questions that you ask will help answer your research question. Convince me that your questions will elicit data useful in answering your research questions

#### **Assignment #5 Ethical Considerations & Informed Consent**

Create a draft of an informed consent document you will give to your participants. This should follow the guidelines reviewed in Babbie Ch. 3 and address the questions in the ethical considerations prompt provided on BB.

**Assignments not related to your final research proposal:**

**Assignment #6: Hypothesis Statements**

Write two hypotheses on student success; that is, think of factors that contribute to academic success and write two different hypotheses that capture a causal relationship. Identify the IV & DV in each hypothesis

**Assignment #7: Survey Questions**

Develop 4-6 valid survey questions that measures the IV & DV in each of the two hypotheses developed in Assignment #6. Use guidelines for writing good survey questions discussed in class and in your course readings.

## Course Schedule (tentative)

Assigned readings should be read in advance of the class date next to which they are listed. Bullet point readings are on BB.

	Class Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
<i>Unit 1: Introduction to Sociological Research</i>				
Wk 1	9/20 Wed	Intro to Class	Course Syllabus Review	
Wk 2	9/25 Mon	Intro to Research	Babbie Ch. 1 Human Inquiry & Science Optional: Ragin, Charles C. 1994. "The Seven Main Goals of Research" Excerpt from Ragin, Charles C. 1994. <i>Constructing social research: the unity and diversity of method</i> . Thousand Oaks, Calif: Pine Forge Press.	
	9/27 Wed	Structure of Inquiry	Babbie Ch. 2 Paradigms, Theory & Social Research (pp. 44-59 only) Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May, Tim. 2001. "Perspectives on Social Scientific Research." Pp. 7–45 in <i>Social Research: Issues, methods and process</i>. Philadelphia: Open University Press.</li> <li>Watch: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFSI7rrI0HE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFSI7rrI0HE</a> (3.5 minutes)</li> </ul>	**Bring research idea to class In-Class Activity 1: Research Project Brainstorming
	9/29 Fri			Ch. 1 & 2 Quizzes Due
Wk 3	10/2 Mon	Literature Reviews	Babbie Ch. 17 Reading & Writing Social Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read from intro to methods on Pfeffer, Carla A. 2010. "'Women's Work'? Women Partners of Transgender Men Doing Housework and Emotion Work." <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> 72(1):165–83.</li> </ul> Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lester, James and James Lester Jr. 2006. "Writing the Literature Review." In <i>Writing Research Papers in the Social Sciences</i>. New York: Pearson.</li> </ul>	In-Class Activity 2: Lit Review Outline
	10/4 Wed	Research Ethics	Babbie Ch. 3 Ethics & Politics of Social Research	Homework #1 Due (Research Question)
	10/6 Fri			Ch. 17 & 3 Quizzes Due
<i>Unit 2: Qualitative Research Design</i>				
Wk 4	10/9 Mon	Research Design	Babbie Ch. 4 Research Design (pp. 89-92, 97-117) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Devers, Kelly J. and Richard M. Frankel. 2000. "Study Design in Qualitative Research--2: Sampling and Data Collection Strategies." <i>Education for Health</i> 13(2):263–71.</li> </ul>	
	10/11 Wed	Research Design cont.	Babbie Ch. 4 Research Design (pp. 118-119)	Homework #2 Due (Lit Review)
	10/13 Fri			Ch. 4 Quiz Due
Wk 5	10/16 Mon	Qual Methods	Babbie Ch. 10 Qualitative Field Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read methods of Pfeffer, Carla A. 2010. "'Women's Work'? Women Partners of Transgender Men Doing Housework and Emotion Work." <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> 72(1):165–83.</li> </ul>	In-Class Activity 3: Field note practice
	10/18	Qualitative	Babbie Ch. 7 Logic of Sampling (pp. 182-189)	In-Class Activity 4:

<i>Unit 3: Quantitative Research Design</i>				
Wk 6	10/23 Mon	Interview Guides & Quant Introduction	Babbie Ch. 5 Conceptualization, Operationalization & Measurement (pp. 123-144)	In-Class Activity 5: IV/DV practice
	10/25 Wed	Intro to Quant continued	No assigned reading	Homework #3 Due (Methods Section)
Wk 7	10/30 Mon	Reliability & Validity	Babbie Ch. 5 Conceptualization, Operationalization & Measurement (pp. 145-154)	In-Class Activity 6: R&V & Measurement
	11/1 Wed	Sampling	Babbie Ch. 7 Logic of Sampling (190-218)	Homework #4 Due (Interview Guide)
	11/3 Fri			Ch. 5 & 7 Quizzes Due
Wk 8	11/6 Mon	LAB DAY - Sampling	SPSS Intro & Sampling Practice w/ GSS • Review SPSS Ch.1 & 2 Guides on BB	
	11/8 Wed	Survey Research	Babbie Ch. 9 Survey Research	Homework #5 Due (Ethics)
	11/10 Fri			Ch. 9 Quiz Due
Wk 9	11/13 Mon	LAB DAY - Indexes & Scales	Babbie Ch. 6 Indexes, Scales & Typologies (pp. 156-159, 174-175 on Likert scaling & 178-180 on Typologies)	In-Class Activity 7: Select peer review partner & trade drafts
	11/15 Wed	Challenges in Survey Research	• Smith, Felicia D., Meghan Woo, and S. Bryn Austin. 2010. "I Didn't Feel Like Any of Those Things Were Me': Results of a Qualitative Pilot Study of Race/ethnicity Survey Items with Minority Ethnic Adolescents in the USA." <i>Ethnicity &amp; Health</i> 15(6):621-38.	Homework #6 Due (Hypothesis)
<i>Unit 4: Data Collection Preparation &amp; Proposal Finalization</i>				
Wk 10	11/20 Mon	Proposal Peer Review	No assigned reading Work with your peer review partner during class time to edit your papers. Be sure to check my comments on HW 1-5 to incorporate those edits.	In-Class Activity 8: Turn in peer review worksheet
	11/22 Wed	No In-Class Session (Thanksgiving)	No assigned reading • Work on final research proposals.	Homework #7 Due (Survey items)
Wk 11	11/27 Mon	Preparing for Data Collection	• Review interview strategies PDF (on BB).	
	11/29 Wed	Wrap Up	No assigned reading	Final Research Proposal Due
Finals Week	12/4-12/10	No final exam – start your interviews once feedback is given on your proposal!		