

The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP)  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
Spring 2024

Soci 3311-21033: Methods of Research  
Location: Old Main 214  
T/R 12:00-1:20 pm

**Professor:** Aurelia Lorena Murga, Ph.D.  
Office: Old Main 305  
Office hours: T/R 10:30-11:50am & by appointment  
Email: almurga@utep.edu

**Teaching Assistant (TA):** Valerie Hernandez  
Office hours: Via Zoom M/F 8:00-10:00am & by appointment  
Email: vmhernandez8@miners.utep.edu

**Course Description:** This course is an introduction to the use of scientific methods in social science research. The course explains the logic of research design, explores some common forms of data collection, and links them to issues of data analysis and dissemination.

**Course Objectives:** This course provides an overview of the theory and practice of social science research. No matter what your preferred method of research or substantive area of study, the objectives of this course are to have you think critically about the different approaches to social science research, so you may become a better consumer and producer of research. Specific learning objectives include:

- To define what is meant by the “scientific method” and to critically evaluate its strengths and weaknesses as a means of obtaining knowledge about human beings and their patterns of interaction.
- To familiarize students with different types of methods that are used to conduct research in the social sciences (namely quantitative and qualitative methods).
- To expose students to the ethics and logic of data collection and analysis.
- To make students aware of the various sources of error and bias that are inherent in research methods.
- To give students an opportunity to apply research methods through real world applications.

#### Course Materials

1. Pdfs for the assigned readings are available via Blackboard (Bb) or through the UTEP library (use search engines).
2. 5x8 notecards (approximately 25 cards)

#### Assessments

##### In-class participation & tickets to class 20%

Full credit for participation will be earned by coming to class prepared to discuss the readings and by fully engaging in-class conversations. You will need to come to class prepared. You should come to class with the reading assignment for the day already completed and any notes on the readings written on your “ticket-to-class” and ready to submit on your 5x8 notecard.

### **Exams 30%**

You will have two essay exams in-class this semester. Each exam is worth up to 15% of your final grade for the semester. The exams will require you to have read the course materials since you will have to support your responses with references from the class readings.

### **Articles 20%**

Find ten (10) well-cited articles that are related to the topic you will be writing your essay on for this class and address the following for each article (submit typed):

- 1) Make an outline of the author(s) key points in the introduction.
- 2) How do they structure their argument in the paper?
- 3) Explain why you believe this article has been influential.
- 4) Explain what you think it is about the paper (including its question, methods, and/or overall contribution that resulted in its publication)?
- 5) Explain why you think this paper has been well-cited?

### **Visual sociology project 20%**

A visual sociology essay is due at the end of the semester during “Finals Week”. More information will be provided about the requirements of your final paper in week 3 and an example of a visual essay paper is on Bb.

### **CITI training 5%**

Visit UTEP’s IRB/CITI site, complete registration, and certificate for Social & Behavioral Researchers (University of Texas at El Paso):

<https://www.utep.edu/orsp/human-subjects-research/training/>

### **3MT presentation 5%**

We will be adopting the “The Three Minute Thesis” (3MT) presentation for your visual sociology project. Developed by The University of Queensland (UQ), 3MT cultivates students’ academic, presentation, and research communication skills. The competition supports their capacity to explain their research effectively in three minutes and in a language appropriate for a non-specialist audience. Participants have three minutes to present a compelling oration on their dissertation or thesis and its significance. 3MT is not an exercise in trivializing or “dumbing-down” research; it challenges students to consolidate their ideas and research discoveries and present them concisely to a non-specialist audience. Go to:

<https://www.utep.edu/graduate/pd/expo-3mt.html> for more information.

### **Grading Scale**

A	90-100%
B	89-80%
C	79-70%
D	69-60%
F	59% and below

### **Course Expectations**

Workload: Generally, in any 3-credit hour course, students are expected to spend 3 hours per week in the classroom and 6-9 additional hours per week doing coursework outside the classroom. The time commitment may vary from week to week, depending on the amount of reading and other assigned work. Some weeks may require significantly fewer hours, some may require more.

Active Participation: As a friendly reminder, you should log on to Bb on a regular basis (I suggest at least once a day) to check for any announcements or emails. If you encounter any problems with Bb, contact the UTEP Helpdesk (747-4357) for assistance.

You are highly encouraged to attend every class if you expect to do well in this course. I will NOT drop students from the course. If you choose to drop the course, it is your responsibility to do so. Keep in mind that failure to withdraw from the course will result in a grade of "F" for the course.

Friendly reminder: Problems with your computer are NOT an acceptable reason for deadline extensions. If you encounter computer problems that cannot be resolved in time, you should use another computer to complete the work prior to the deadlines. It's a good idea to have an alternative computer identified BEFORE you run into problems.

### **Email Policy**

Please feel free to reach out to me via email with any questions you may have regarding the class or assignments. During the week (Monday-Friday) you can expect a reply from me within 24-48 hours. If you email me over the weekend, I will respond on the next weekday. Before emailing make sure the answer(s) to your question(s) cannot be answered from reading this syllabus. I will not respond to questions that could be answered in this syllabus. Finally, please include **Soci 3311** in the subject line of all your correspondence.

### **Classroom Conduct**

You must demonstrate the highest level of respect for your peers and for the instructor. All points of view will be welcomed and respected; however, statements or behaviors that are disrespectful towards individuals or groups will not be tolerated. Behaviors that are distracting to your peers and to the instructor are not acceptable (e.g. coming in late, packing up or leaving early, using cell phones, and having side conversations).

### **Academic Integrity**

This course is based on the principle of academic integrity. Students are responsible for their own academic behavior, and for making themselves fully aware of UTEP's policies. Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

- Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student and possessing unauthorized materials during a test.
- Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as one's own.
- Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act.

Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students' Office for disciplinary action. In addition to receiving a failing grade in the class, the student may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Further information can be gained from the UTEP Dean of Students' web page. Go to <http://www.utep.edu/dos>, then click the "Student Conduct" tab on the top.

### **ADA Policy**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or visit their office

located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at [www.sa.utep.edu/cass](http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass). CASS' Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

### **Texas Senate Bill 17**

[Texas Senate Bill 17](#), the recent law that outlaws diversity, equity, and inclusion programs at public colleges and universities in Texas, does not in any way affect content, instruction or discussion in a course at public colleges and universities in Texas. Expectations and academic freedom for teaching and class discussion have not been altered post-SB 17, and students should not feel the need to censor their speech pertaining to topics including race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Please note: Instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus and/or schedule at any time during the semester. Any modifications to the syllabus and/or schedule will be announced during class and/or through Bb (check "announcements").**

DONE	Date	TOPIC: Readings & assignments
<input type="checkbox"/>	W1: T, 1/16	<b>First day of spring classes: INTRODUCTIONS.</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W1: R, 1/18  Due: Syllabus notecard & notecard on reading	<b>Doing Social Research</b>  Neuman, W. Lawrence. "Chapter 1: Doing Social Research." Pp. 15-29.
<input type="checkbox"/>	W2: T, 1/23  Due: notecard on reading	<b>Doing Social Research</b>  Neuman, W. Lawrence. "Chapter 1: Doing Social Research." Pp. 29-37.
<input type="checkbox"/>	W2: R, 1/25  Due: notecard on readings	<b>Before we get started: Ethics of Research</b>  1. Neuman, W. Lawrence. "Chapter 3: Ethics in Social Research." Pp. 69-86. 2. Leahy, Carla Pascoe. 2022. "The afterlife of interviews: explicit ethics and subtle ethics in sensitive or distressing qualitative research." <i>Qualitative Research</i> 22(5): 777-794.
<input type="checkbox"/>	W3, T, 1/30  Due: notecard on reading	<b>Before we get started: Issues of positionality, reflexivity, reciprocity, and decolonizing social science research</b>  1. Ward, Jane. 2018. "The methods gatekeepers and exiled queers." In <i>Other, please specify: Queer methods in sociology</i> . pgs. 51-66. 2. Rios, Victor M. 2015. "Decolonizing the White Space in Urban Ethnography." <i>City &amp; Community</i> 14(3): 258-261.
<input type="checkbox"/>	W3, R, 2/1  <b>Due: CITI training certificate of completion</b>  Due: notecard on reading	<b>Naming the problem: How do you formulate a research question?</b>  1. Creswell, John. 2014. "Chapter 7: Research questions." 2. Early introduction to your visual sociology project: Vox's "These Photos Ended Child Labor in the US": <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddiOJLuu2mo&amp;t=8s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddiOJLuu2mo&amp;t=8s</a> (we will watch this in class)
<input type="checkbox"/>	W4, T, 2/6  Due: notecard on reading	<b>Naming the problem: How do you formulate a research question?</b>  1. Foss and Waters "Destination Dissertation" Pp. 36-48.
<input type="checkbox"/>	W4, R, 2/8	<b>Literature review</b>

	Due: notecard on reading	1. Neuman, W. Lawrence. "Chapter 4: Lit Review and Planning a Study." Pp. 91-129
<input type="checkbox"/>	W5, T, 2/13  <b>Note: no in-person meeting today</b>	<b>10 references</b>  Find 8 well-cited academic journal articles (and 2 non-academic) that are related to the topic you will be writing your essay on for this class. See "Articles 20%" under the "Assessments" section of your syllabus for more information.
<input type="checkbox"/>	W5, R, 2/15  Due: notecard on readings	<b>The Use of Theory</b>  1. Neuman, W. Lawrence. "Chapter 2: Theory and Social Research." Pp. 39-52. 2. Brown, Leslie Allison, and Susan Strega, eds. <i>Research as resistance: Critical, indigenous and anti-oppressive approaches</i> . Canadian Scholars' Press, 2012. (Chapter 2)
<input type="checkbox"/>	W6, T, 2/20  Due: notecard on readings	<b>The Use of Theory</b>  1. Neuman, W. Lawrence. "Chapter 2: Theory and Social Research." Pp. 52-64. 2. Gunderson, Ryan. 2011. "The metabolic rifts of livestock agribusiness." <i>Organization and Environment</i> 24(4):404-422.
<input type="checkbox"/>	W6, R, 2/22  <b>Due: 10 references assignment from 2/13 on Bb</b>  Due: notecard on readings	<b>Your project this semester: Visual Sociology*</b>  1. Harper, Douglas. 1988. "Visual Sociology: Expanding Sociological Vision." <i>The American Sociologist</i> 19 (1): 54-70. 2. Twine, France Winddance. "Visual sociology in a discipline of words: Racial literacy, visual literacy and qualitative research methods." <i>Sociology</i> 50, no. 5 (2016): 967-974.
<input type="checkbox"/>	W7, T, 2/27  Due: notecard on readings	<b>Qualitative Methods</b>  1. Creswell, John. 2014. "Chapter 9: Qualitative Methods" 2. Small, Mario L. 2009. "How Many Cases do I Need?" On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field Based Research." <i>Ethnography</i> 10:5-38.
<input type="checkbox"/>	W7, R, 2/29	<b>Qualitative Methods</b>

	Due: notecard on readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack. 1991. "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analysis." In <i>Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History</i>, Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds. (p. 11-26).</li> <li>2. Warren, Carol A. B. and Tracy X. Karner. 2005. "Analyzing Qualitative Data: Fieldnotes, Interview Transcripts, Images and Documents." Chapter 9 in <i>Discovering Qualitative Methods</i>. Roxbury Publishing.</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W8, T, 3/5	<b>Essay Exam 1</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W8, R, 3/7 Due: notecard on reading	<b>Quantitative Methods</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creswell, John. 2014. "Chapter 8: Quantitative Methods"</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W9, T, 3/12	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W9, R, 3/14	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W10, T, 3/19 Due: notecard on reading	<b>Quantitative Methods</b>  Guest speaker: Roger Renteria, Ph.D. candidate, Sociology at University of Utah <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Best, Joel. 2012. "Introduction." <i>Damned lies and statistics: Untangling numbers from the media, politicians, and activists</i>.</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W10, R, 3/21 Due: notecard on readings	<b>Quantitative Methods</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Best, Joel. 2012. "Chapter 1." <i>Damned lies and statistics: Untangling numbers from the media, politicians, and activists</i>.</li> <li>2. Zuberi, Tukufu. 2008. "Deracializing Social Statistics." Pp. 115-121 in <i>White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology</i>, edited by T. Zuberi &amp; E. Bonilla-Silva. Rowman &amp; Littlefield Publishers.</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W11, T, 3/26 Due: notecard on reading	<b>Mixed-Methods Research Design</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Creswell, John. 2014. "Chapter 10: Mixed Methods Procedures"</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W11, R, 3/28 Due: notecard on readings	<b>Mixed-Methods Research Design</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Small, Mario. 2011. "How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study: Recent Trends in a Rapidly Growing Literature." <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> 1-19.</li> <li>2. Bowleg, Lisa. 2008. "When Black+ lesbian+ woman ≠ Black lesbian woman: The Methodological Challenges of Qualitative and Quantitative Intersectionality Research." <i>Sex Roles</i> 59(5-6): 312-325.</li> </ol>

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>W12, T, 4/2</p> <p>Due: notecard on readings</p>	<p><b>Continued: Issues of positionality, reflexivity, reciprocity, and decolonizing social science research</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Blauner, Bob and David Wellman. 2001. Chapter 11: Toward the Decolonization of Social Research. In <i>Still the Big News: Racial Oppression in America</i>. pgs. 173-185.</li> <li>2. Brown, Leslie Allison, and Susan Strega, eds. <i>Research as resistance: Critical, indigenous and anti-oppressive approaches</i>. Canadian Scholars' Press 2012 (Chapter 1)</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>W12, R, 4/4</p> <p>Due: notecard on readings</p>	<p><b>Continued: Issues of positionality, reflexivity, reciprocity, and decolonizing social science research</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo and Tukufu Zuberi. 2008. "Toward a Definition of White Logic and White Methods." Pp. 1-23 in <i>White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology</i>, edited by T. Zuberi &amp; E. Bonilla-Silva. Rowman &amp; Littlefield Publishers.</li> <li>2. Paris, Django and Maisha T. Winn. 2014. <i>Humanizing Research: Decolonizing Qualitative Inquiry with Youth and Communities</i>. Chapter 12: R-Words: Refusing Research.</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>W13, T, 4/9</p> <p>Due: notecard on readings</p>	<p><b>Other topics that are often not discussed</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rossner, Mike and Kenneth M. Yamada. 2004. "What's in a picture? The temptation of image manipulation." <i>The Journal of Cell Biology</i> 166(1): 11-15.</li> <li>2. Else, Holly. 20 June 2019. "What universities can learn from epic case of research fraud." <i>Nature</i> 570:287-288.</li> <li>3. Helgesson, Gert and Stefan Eriksson. 2015. "Plagiarism in research." <i>Med Health Care and Philosophy</i> 18:91-101.</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>W13, R, 4/11</p> <p>Due: notecard on readings</p>	<p><b>Societal Relevance</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gates, Gary J. and Jody L. Herman. 2018. "Beyond Academia: Strategies for using LGBT research to influence public policy." In <i>Other, please specify. Queer methods in sociology</i>. pgs. 80-94.</li> <li>2. Diana Graizbord, Diana. 2019. "Toward an organic policy sociology." <i>Sociology Compass</i>. DOI: 10.1111/soc4.12735</li> </ol>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>W14, T, 4/16</p> <p><b>Note: no in-person meeting</b></p>	<p><b>Visual sociology project: work on your essay and on your 3MT presentation.</b></p>

	<b>today</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	W14, R, 4/18  <b>Note: no in-person meeting today</b>	<b>Visual sociology project: work on your essay and on your 3MT presentation.</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W15, T, 4/23	<b>3MT presentations of your visual sociology project</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W15, R, 4/25	<b>3MT presentations of your visual sociology project</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W16, T, 4/30	<b>Recap day</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	W16, R, 5/2	<b>Essay Exam 2</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Finals Week	<b>Visual sociology essay</b>

**\*Students should plan to make time for this project outside of the scheduled class time.**