

Methods of Research
SOCI 3311
Spring 2023

Instructor: Sergio Armendariz

Class Location and Time: Quinn Hall 103, MW 10:30am – 11:50am

Contact: saarmendariz4@utep.edu (please allow up to 48 hours for instructor to respond).

Office Location and Hours: I do not have a physical office space on campus, thus...

- Should you need to meet in person, we can arrange to meet at the Library or Old Main.
- Or you can email me to set up an online meeting, either via Zoom or Blackboard.
- Either way, my office hours will be MW 9:00am – 10:00am.

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 (such as interviews, surveys, focus groups, etc.), and links them to issues of data analysis and dissemination. This course will also assist you with any projects (school or personal) you may be working on and to prepare you for your Master's thesis and PhD dissertation in the near future.

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, my goal is to make 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:

- a) 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.
- b) To familiarize students with different types of methods that are used to conduct research in the social sciences (namely quantitative and qualitative methods).
- c) To expose students to the ethics and logic of data collection and analysis.
- d) To make students aware of the various sources of error and bias that are inherent in research methods.
- e) To give students an opportunity to apply research methods through real world applications.

Required Text and Materials:

- Neuman, W. Lawrence. Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, Third Edition, 2012. Pearson Education Inc. ISBN 0-205-76261-1.
 - Save some money folks. Rent the book on Amazon or find a deal on Chegg.
 - I will post copies of your chapters for the first 3 weeks of class on Blackboard. You must get a copy of the book afterwards.
- Complementary readings will be posted on Blackboard.
- We will make heavy use of Blackboard in this course. Thus, it is imperative that you have access to a computer with internet access.
 - If you need a computer or internet access, you can borrow a laptop and/or a Wi-Fi hotspot from the Equipment Checkout Center, located in the Library room 300. Just be sure to take your Miner ID with you.

What to Expect:

This class will function as a lecture/seminar hybrid. I will prepare PowerPoint presentations that will cover the corresponding topic for the week. We will use the last 20 minutes or so of class to go over discussion questions and activities related to the topic of the day.

Course Discipline:

Attendance: You are expected to attend, and arrive on time to, every class. While a formal attendance grade will not be taken, you will miss valuable opportunities to consolidate the curriculum and ask questions if you miss class. Likewise, if attendance becomes poor, I reserve the right to give unannounced quizzes that will become part of your final grade. Now, if you are feeling ill or have any potential COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, and malaise), please stay home. I have no wish of getting sick, and I am sure your peers will appreciate staying healthy as well.

Electronic Devices: I do not like to waste paper, so I do encourage you to bring a laptop to class for note taking. However, I do expect you to keep class etiquette. This means that you will not surf the web or check your emails while we are in class. Your phones are to be kept away during class time. Unless you use your phone as a note taking device, and you have asked me for permission to use it, you are not allowed to have your phones out unless I instruct otherwise. If you need to take a call or send a text, please step outside of the classroom. If I catch you clowning around on your devices, you will first be given a verbal warning. If you commit a second electronic device violation, you will be asked to leave class for the day and will be subject to a penalty on your final grade.

Blackboard: As a requirement of this class, you must regularly check our Blackboard shell. I will post announcements, complementary readings, and provide feedback to your assignments through here. The syllabus and any supplementary course materials will likewise be posted here, along with your grades after each assignment.

Late Work: I will accept work submitted up to 24 hours late for credit. However, I will reduce your grade by 20% of the assignment's value. This means you are eligible to earn up to 80% on your assignment. I will not accept submissions more than 24 hours late. Late work policy only

applies to your weekly reflections, and your infographic's annotated bibliography and rough draft.

Participation: Participation is critical to your success in this class and in college. Our class will only be as engaging as YOU make it! I will do my part to make the class engaging, but it is your obligation to come to class fully prepared to participate in class activities and discussions. This means that you must keep up with all reading and homework assignments. Also, just so you know now, I will pick students at random to contribute if we get awkward silences and wide-eyed stares. Be ready.

Grading:

Weekly Quizzes: 10 points – Each week, we will read a chapter from the course book, and two complementary readings. You will do a quiz on the assigned reading material of the week. Your quizzes will always be due on Fridays by 11:59pm. At the end of the semester, I will drop your two lowest quiz grades.

Weekly Reflections: 20 points – You will write a 500-word reflection on the book chapter, and any one of the complementary readings. Your reflections will always be due on Wednesday before class, and you will submit them on blackboard. At the end of the semester, I will drop your two lowest weekly reflection grades. Within each reflection, I will be looking for you to do the following:

- Assess the text
 - What is the main point of the text?
 - What stood out to you the most?
- Develop your ideas
 - What do you know about this topic?
 - Did you learn something new?
- Make connections
 - How does the book chapter relate to the complementary reading?
- Give me a discussion question
 - Indeed, I need you to come up with a discussion question about the readings.
 - Check this out for tips on how to draft an effective discussion question
 - [Discussion Question Tips](#)

Midterm: 25 points – Your midterm will most likely include multiple choice questions and a few (2 or 3) short answer questions. We will have a review for your midterm.

Final: 25 points – Whatever your midterm ends up being, you can expect your final to be the same in structure. We will also review for your final.

Infographic: 20 points – This is a group project. As a group, you will choose any one of the research methods we will cover during the semester, and you will work on creating an infographic on it. As we reach the deadlines of each component, I will post instructions on blackboard and discuss them in class. There will be 5 components to your overall infographic grade:

- Annotated bibliography – 5 points
- Rough draft – 5 points

- Final draft – 5 points
- Presentation and feedback – 5 points

University Policies:

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.

Disability: Any student with a disability that may prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should contact me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate educational opportunity. 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, 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. This should be done within the first 2 weeks of classes.

Course calendar (subject to change. You will be informed of any changes in advance).

Week	Dates	Topic	Assignment
Week 1	Jan 18th	Syllabus	Nothing
Week 2	Jan 23 rd & 25 th	Chapter 1 – Doing Social Research M pp. 15-29 W pp. 29-37	<u>WR 1</u> due Wed 25 th at 10:30am <u>Quiz 1</u> due Fri 27 th at 11:59pm
Week 3	Jan 30 th & 1 st	Chapter 2 – Theory and Social Research M pp. 39-52 W pp. 52-64	<u>WR 2</u> due Wed 1 st at 10:30am <u>Quiz 2</u> due Fri 3 rd at 11:59pm
Week 4	Feb 6 th & 8 th	Chapter 3 – Ethics in Social Research M pp. 69-77 W pp. 77-86	<u>WR 3</u> due Wed 8 th at 10:30am <u>Quiz 3</u> due Fri 10 th at 11:59pm
Week 5	Feb 13 th & 15 th	Chapter 4 – Lit Review and Planning a Study M pp. 91-110 W pp. 110-129	<u>WR 4</u> due Wed 15 th at 10:30am <u>Quiz 4</u> due Fri 17 th at 11:59pm
Week 6	Feb 20 th & 22 nd	Chapter 6 – Qual and Quant Sampling M pp. 166-174 W pp. 174-190	<u>WR 5</u> due Wed 22 nd at 10:30am <u>Quiz 5</u> due Fri 24 th at 11:59pm
Week 7	Feb 27 th & Mar 1 st	Chapter 5* – Quantitative Measurement (pp. 133-139, 141-144, 145-163).	<u>WR 6</u> due Wed 1 st at 10:30am <u>Quiz 6</u> due Fri 3 rd at 11:59pm <u>Annotated Bib</u> due Friday 3 rd at 11:59pm.
Week 8	Mar 6 th & 8 th	Review and Midterm	Midterm
Week 9	SPRING BREAK WOO	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
Week 10	Mar 20 th & 22 nd	Chapter 7* - Survey Research Chapter 8 – Experimental Research	<u>WR 7</u> due Wed 22 nd at 10:30am <u>Quiz 7</u> due Fri 24 th at 11:59pm
Week 11	Mar 27 th & 29 th	Chapter 10 – Analysis of Quantitative Data	<u>WR 8</u> due Wed 29 th at 10:30am <u>Quiz 8</u> due Fri 31 st at 11:59pm
Week 12	April 3 rd & 5 th	Chapter 5* - Qualitative Measurement (pp. 139-140, 144-145).	<u>WR 9</u> due Wed 5 th at 10:30am <u>Infographic Rough Draft</u> due Friday 7 th at 11:59pm

Week 13	April 10 th & 12 th	Chapter 7*- Survey Research	<u>WR 10</u> due Wed 12 th at 10:30am
Week 14	April 17 th & 19 th	Chapter 11 – Field Research and Focus Group Research	<u>WR 11</u> due Wed 19 th at 10:30am
Week 15	April 24 th & 26 th	Chapter 12 – Analysis of Qualitative Data	<u>WR 12</u> due Wed 26 th at 10:30am <u>Infographic Final Draft</u> due Friday 28 th at 11:59pm
Week 16	May 1 st & May 3 rd	Infographic presentations and Final Review	Nothing
Week 17	FINALS WEEK WOO!	FINAL	FINAL