**SOCI 205: Introduction to Social Research**

Department of Sociology  
Fall 2021 (Online)  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

**Graduate Teaching Instructor:**  
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Office Hours: BigBlueButton  
Wednesdays 1:00-2:00pm  
Thursdays 1:00-2:00pm  
Or By Appointment

**Prerequisites**  
Sociology major/minor or sophomore/junior/senior standing; this course and CRIM 251 cannot both be applied toward the degree in arts and sciences. This course is a prerequisite for SOCI 489.

**Course Description**  
This course will introduce you to the purpose and techniques employed within social research. The basic goal of all social research is to gather evidence in order to answer questions about the nature of relationships between individuals (micro), groups and institutions (meso), and societies (macro). Throughout the semester, you will be provided with a broad overview of the logic of social research, of the process of research design, and of the major types of data collection techniques and methods of data analysis. You will learn to find, read, assess, and write sociological research. By the end of the semester, you will have a basic understanding of social research methods and have mastered a number of research skills applicable for a wide range of undertakings, including future research and coursework.

**University Description**  
Introduction to the techniques of collecting and analyzing data and techniques of research reporting. Emphasis on interpretation and evaluation of sociological research.

**Required Materials**  
- Additional readings are posted on Canvas as PDF or HTML files

**Course Objectives**  
- Describe the role of methods in building sociological knowledge
- Demonstrate knowledge of methods and specific techniques used by social scientists to conduct social research by identifying appropriate methods for different research questions
- Evaluate the quality and limitations of published research
- Construct a sociologically-relevant research question and develop an hypothesis
- Use the library resources for research then clearly and competently write a review of a research literature
- Analyze and interpret data that answer the research question and tests hypothesis
- Evaluate the appropriateness of different research designs for particular research goals
- Compare and contrast basic methodologies and their advantages/disadvantages
- Interpret research findings to assess the merit of sociologically-based hypotheses
- Understand the ethics of social research
Communication
How can you reach your instructor? (I want to help you!)
The best way to contact me is via email, with SOC 205 in the subject line. I will check my email generally between 8am-5pm and do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours. If you have an emergency or need a quick reply, you can call the Sociology Department (402-742-3631) and ask them to call me.

How will I contact you? (I will be in touch often)
To reach you, I will use Canvas email and the Announcements tab (please check it daily). Please take a few minutes to review your contact information in both Canvas and MyRed. It is your responsibility to make sure your contact information is current.

Class Format
The class is an independent study course (online, asynchronous). This means that much of your work will involve you reading, writing, and following course guidelines without in-class reminders and discussions. Some of you are proficient with a more independent approach to learning and for some of you this might be your first time. I am here to guide you and help you, and you have a lot of responsibility. I will hold you accountable as much as possible. You will need to be proactive. This class requires students to be responsible for knowing all course guidelines, expectations, and assuming responsibility to stay on top of the demands. I recommend that you look over the deadlines and put reminders in your calendars, plus that you check the Canvas website and email announcements daily. Keep reading so that you become familiar with all due dates and course requirements. We may have the good fortune of students joining us from around the world as well as nearby. Pay attention to time zones: ALL DUE DATE TIMES ARE CENTRAL TIME ZONE. The course is designed in Canvas with “Modules” that loosely align with the weeks of the semester. I’ve organized the workload to match the expectation of a 3 credit 200 level course - thus expect to spend between 4-6 hours a week on reading, taking notes, posting, and watching. Students that plan their work with this expectation and complete assignments on schedule tend to gain the most from online classes. Each module contains the appropriate assignments (exercises and discussions), PowerPoints, lectures, and various other materials needed for each week and all assignment deadlines are noted within Canvas.

Achievement Centered Education (ACE) Designation
As an Ace certified class, this course will facilitate ACE Learning Outcome #6: “Use knowledge, theories and research perspectives, such as statistical methods or observational accounts, appropriate to the social sciences to understand and evaluate social systems and human behaviors.” ACE learning outcomes will be assessed by writing assignments, quizzes, and activities. The ACE web page provides a rubric by which student work in this class will be evaluated.

Course Requirements
This class will focus more on going deep into ideas and exploring how to use theories, research methods, and findings to understand and possibly change social inequality. You can demonstrate what you learn in a variety of ways:

- **Class Participation via Discussion Board Posts (20%)**: The purpose of the discussion is to engage with course readings, consider how they connect to one another and to the week’s theme, and act as class participation by creating dialogue with each other. I will provide prompts throughout the semester for you to engage with that is related to sociological methods and contemporary examples from the social world. You will not have to respond every week. I will distribute the prompts to equitably distribute the workload during the semester. Detailed requirements will be posted in the weekly Modules in Canvas.

- **Quizzes (20%)**: There will be fourteen reading quizzes for each assigned chapter. The reading quizzes are open book/open notebook/closed-friend. The goal will be to review main ideas, concepts and theories learned within certain sections of the course. The quizzes will be timed and taken on Canvas. Your highest scoring ten quizzes will count towards your final grade.
• **Application Assignments (Total 30%):** There will be a diverse array of application assignments throughout the course of the semester. These assignments are designed to help you put your skills and knowledge into action, engaging with sociological research in diverse ways. *Detailed requirements will be posted in the weekly Modules in Canvas.*

• **Final Paper Project (Total 30%):** As a final paper project for the semester, you will construct a paper that proposes a research topic you are interested in. Throughout the semester, there will be a number of different check points to help you compose the final project successfully. The paper will include a literature review, hypothesis, identification of methods, and expected results. Each of you will propose a topic of your sociological interest but must be pre-approved by me. *Detailed requirements will be posted in a dedicated Module on Canvas.*

**Grading System/Format**
Final grades are calculated as specified below. If an extra credit opportunity is provided, it will be the same for all students. No individual extra credit opportunities will be offered. I will do my best to grade materials in a timely manner. Please keep in mind that grading takes time. Also, you may only receive feedback on your assignments if there are specific points or issues I feel need to be addressed with you. Letter grades will be assigned based on percentage of points earned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100%</td>
<td>(970-1000 pts)</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>93-96%</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
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**Please note:** For majors and minors, passing this course requires getting a C (73%) or higher.

**Taking the Class Pass/Fail:** Students may take this class pass/fail; but, students must complete all course requirements in order to receive a passing grade. Furthermore, those taking the course Pass-No Pass will need a C (73%) or better to obtain a Pass (a C minus is a “No Pass”).

**Points Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Late Work**
Life happens to all of us. I know that you will do the best that you can to stay on top of the assignments in this class. To help you do this, there will be penalties for late work (about 1 of the points per day). I have built in “extra” learning opportunities that also give you chances to earn extra points. So do as much of the “extra credit” as possible to have reserves in case you run into challenges getting work done on time and handed in successfully.
Course Policies and Expectations

- **Grade Dispute Policy:** Occasionally I may make mistakes in my evaluation or grade entry for assignments. If you think you see an error, let me know the following way: write a one paragraph memo explaining the error that you perceive and include documentation (e.g. if you have evidence from the textbook, include the evidence and the proper citation for the reference). I will re-grade the assignment/check the grade. The final grade could be higher or lower than the original grade earned. Students who do not agree with the final decision can use the Sociology grade appeal process (find the most up to date information by emailing sociology@unl.edu), and subsequently the college process at https://cas.unl.edu/grading-appeals.

- **Inclusive Course Environment (i.e., Non-Threatening Environment):** Many people will find the topics and research in this class uncomfortable or controversial. I expect respectful disagreement with each other. Students need to demonstrate that they understand the course content. They are not required to “agree with” or “believe” course material, topical not methodological. Most of you will demonstrate active listening and respectful interactions that you have learned as a student and through Husker Dialogues (for a reminder, look here https://diversity.unl.edu/first-year-student-information). Sometimes it might be difficult to be respectful when we disagree and the topic is really important to us. This is when we need to work even harder at focusing on our assumptions, our values, the content of the readings, and bringing in evidence to support claims (without worrying about others agreeing or disagreeing). I expect you to state positions, provide evidence for claims, be clear about assumptions and values, and to express your ideas without putting down others. Thoughtful debate is welcomed and encouraged. Use these times to learn about a new topic and broaden your understanding. I expect that all of us this semester will say something or do something that could be perceived by others as disrespectful. We will learn more about the dynamics that can lead to these feelings this semester. I hope that we will have enough sense of safety and trust that we can tell each other when we perceive disrespect, that we can listen without being defensive, and work to do a better job in the future. The university has formal rules regarding harassment. Similar to in-person classes, online environments require following guidelines when we communicate with each other (e.g. writing and responding to each other in discussion board posts). All faculty, staff and students are responsible for understanding and complying with harassment policies. For more information, visit http://www.unl.edu/equity. If students post comments or material in the class that is not consistent with productive dialogue, they may be removed.

- **Academic Dishonesty Statement/Student Code of Conduct:** I expect all students will be focused on learning and will have integrity in this class. Sometimes students are tempted to take “short cuts” or unintentionally commit academic dishonesty. We want you to have a great learning experience and get the most that you can from this class. Take time to read The Student Code of Conduct; you are responsible for knowing it (I do). The Student Code of Conduct applies in its entirety. It addresses various aspects of student conduct in- and outside the classroom. Academic honesty is essential to the existence and integrity of an academic institution. The responsibility for maintaining that integrity is shared by all members of the academic community. The University's Student Code of Conduct addresses academic dishonesty. Students who commit acts of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action and are granted due process and the right to appeal any decision. Please visit http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code/three.shtml, paying close attention to section 4.2. For additional information about plagiarism as a form of academic dishonesty subject to university regulations and the UNL Student Code of Conduct, please visit http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/integrity#plagiarism.

- **Accommodation:** The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on a disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options privately. To establish reasonable accommodations, register with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). If you are unsure if you need an accommodation, ask SSD! If you are eligible for services and register with their office, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so they can be implemented in a timely manner. SSD contact information: 232 Canfield Admin. Bldg.; 402-472-3787.
• **Writing:** There are multiple written assignments in this course. On all written assignments for this course you should use a scholarly writing style: coherent and well-reasoned, integrative, and with a minimum of spelling and grammatical errors. All work submitted for grade evaluation should be a polished demonstration of your writing ability, not an unedited “rough draft.” Please format all written assignments double-space with 1” margins on all sides; do not include extra spaces between paragraphs (go to paragraph settings and click on the box “Don’t add space between paragraphs of the same style”); use 12 point Times New Roman font; use indent-style paragraphs; number the bottom right-handed corner of each page; no title page is necessary (list name, assignment, and due date on separate single-spaced lines left-justified in the header of the first page only). Please use in-text citations to reference the source for everything that is not an original idea, and include a reference list at the end of the paper. See the considerable support for writing success on Canvas. Use ASA or APA format.

• **The Writing Center:** The UNL Writing Center provides meaningful support for all students and courses that you enroll in at UNL. You have already paid for the writing center services with your student fees; use this service. Trained peer consultants are available to talk with you as you plan, draft, and revise your writing. Most of us find that expert feedback improves our writing and communication skills. Learn more by going to [https://www.unl.edu/writing/home](https://www.unl.edu/writing/home). Once you have finished reading the syllabus in its entirety, submit a picture of a Viking cartoon, Viking meme, and/or superhero.

• **Technology Issues:** I know that students sometimes encounter technology problems in Canvas that can prevent an on-time submission of an assignment. If this happens, make sure that you document that you tried to submit the assignment on time. First, document that you had the assignment done and were prevented from submitting on time from a technical issue by taking a “screen shot” with a time stamp. Second, contact technical support and get a time stamped “ticket” in advance of the assignment due date. Third, be proactive - do all assignments outside of Canvas (e.g. in Word, Google Docs, or some other word-processing software), then copy and paste or upload into Canvas. You are responsible for ensuring that your online assignments are successfully submitted on time and that you document (with time stamps) issues with software (this should be rare).

• **Wellbeing and Basic Needs/Security Support:** Most of us go through times when we need extra help (e.g. safe and stable housing, sufficient food, and health care). Academic Affairs has resources to help students who face challenges or lack of wellbeing that interferes with academic progress. Please visit [https://studentaffairs.unl.edu/](https://studentaffairs.unl.edu/). There are resources for food and toiletries - learn more at [https://pantry.unl.edu/welcome#visit](https://pantry.unl.edu/welcome#visit). We all experience times when we feel overwhelmed and/or stressed and could use help and coping skills, even without a global pandemic, economic crises, and racial reckoning. Many students value the support from Counseling and Psychological Services [https://caps.unl.edu/](https://caps.unl.edu/). Sometimes students experience consequences from substance abuse (e.g. over use of alcohol) and decide to explore recovery - this is easy to do at UNL: [https://resilience.unl.edu/recovery](https://resilience.unl.edu/recovery). All of us are living through a pandemic and some of us experience more consequences than others. If you need help related to COVID19, see numerous resources and supports at [https://covid19.unl.edu/](https://covid19.unl.edu/).

**Final Pointers for Success**

- Online courses can be difficult if not taken seriously from the start. In order to maximize your success in this course, keep up with the readings each week. Keeping up with the work at the beginning of the class will help you in not being overwhelmed with the work later on.
- Take notes by answering questions such as: What is the big idea? What is the supporting evidence? What questions are not answered? What would be stronger evidence supporting the big idea?
- Be honest in your work. Don’t cheat. Don’t plagiarize. Plagiarism will be taken seriously and your grade will be affected in a serious fashion.
- Respect your classmates’ contributions on the discussion board. This is especially important in this class where information is about people’s personal experiences. You can disagree with a perspective that we or another student may present, but you should treat the material, idea, and person with respect.
• Take responsibility for your own learning. If you have a question regarding an assignment or any course material, ask it! Students that alert me to any questions or issues tend to improve their work in the class. Keeping on top of your work and communicating with me when questions or issues arise will be to your benefit.

Schedule of Readings, Exams, and Due Dates

The dates listed are the dates assignments are DUE. It is your responsibility to keep up with the reading material for each unit, both textbook and posted PDFs, at your own pace and on your own schedule. I reserve the right to change the course syllabus to meet the demands of the course. I will provide you adequate notice of any changes.

SECTION 1: CONCEPTUAL ISSUES IN RESEARCH

WEEK 1: August 23 – August 29

What to Read:
(1) Ch. 1 The Art and Science of Social Research: An Introduction
(2) Ch. 1 Slides and Lecture Notes

What to Do/Due:
(1) Introduction Discussion Board Post due Wednesday, August 25, by 11:59pm
(2) Proof of Reading the Syllabus due Sunday, August 29, by 11:59pm
(3) Watch "Sociology Crash Course" and post to Assignment (click "Submit Assignment" red tab upper right corner) due Sunday, August 29, by 11:59pm
(4) Academic Freedom exercise due Sunday, August 29, by 11:59pm
(5) Chapter 1 QUIZ, due Sunday, August 29, by 11:59pm

WEEK 2: August 30 – September 5

What to Read:
(1) Ch. 2 Research Foundations: Linking Sociological Theory to Research
(2) Ch. 2 Slides and Lecture Notes

What to Do:
(1) Writing for Sociology Tutorials, due Sunday, September 5, by 11:59pm
   a. Organizing Your Ideas
   b. Evaluating Sources
   c. Choosing A Research Method
   d. Developing Research Questions
   e. Writing a Literature Review
   f. Writing An Effective Introductory Paragraph
   g. Concluding Your Paper
(2) Chapter 2 QUIZ, due Sunday, September 5, by 11:59pm

WEEK 3: September 6 – September 12

What to Read:
(1) Ch. 3 Ethical Issues in Social Science Research
(2) Ch. 3 Slides and Lecture Notes

What to Do:
(1) CITI IRB Ethics Training due Sunday, September 12, by 11:59pm
(2) InQuizitive Assignment: How to Use InQuizitive, due Sunday, September 12, by 11:59pm
(3) InQuizitive Assignment: How to Read Charts and Graphs, due Sunday, September 12, by 11:59pm
(4) Chapter 3 QUIZ, due Sunday, September 12, by 11:59pm
(5) Part (1) Identify the Topic, due Sunday, September 12, by 11:59pm
WEEK 4: September 13 – September 19
What to Read:
(1) Ch. 4 From Concepts to Models: Hypotheses, Operationalization, and Measurement
(2) Ch. 4 Slides and Lecture Notes
What to Do:
(1) Social Science in the News due Sunday, September 19, by 11:59pm
(2) InQuizitive: Chapter 4 due Sunday, September 19, by 11:59pm
(3) Chapter 4 QUIZ, due Sunday, September 19, by 11:59pm

WEEK 5: September 20 – September 26
What to Read:
(1) Ch. 5 Evaluating Research: Reliability and Validity
(2) Ch. 5 Slides and Lecture Notes
What to Do:
(1) Chapter 5 QUIZ, due Sunday, September 26, by 11:59pm
(2) InQuizitive Chapter 5, due Sunday, September 26, by 11:59pm
(3) Part (2) Literature Review Proposal, due Sunday, September 26, by 11:59pm

WEEK 6: September 27 – October 3
What to Read:
(1) Ch. 6 Sampling Strategies
(2) Ch. 6 Slides and Lecture Notes
What to Do:
(1) Chapter 6 QUIZ, due Sunday, October 3, by 11:59pm
(2) InQuizitive Chapter 6, due Sunday, October 3, by 11:59pm
(3) Participation: Hard to Reach and Hidden Populations, due Sunday, October 3, by 11:59pm

WEEK 7: October 4 – October 10
What to Read:
(1) Ch. 7 Survey Research
(2) Ch. 7 Slides and Lecture Notes
What to Do:
(1) Chapter 7 QUIZ, due Sunday, October 10, by 11:59pm
(2) Part (3) Annotated Bibliography, due Sunday, October 10, by 11:59pm
(3) Application: Reporting Survey Results, due Sunday, October 10, by 11:59pm

WEEK 8: October 11 – October 17
What to Read:
(1) Ch. 8 Experimental Research
(2) Ch. 8 Slides and Lecture Notes
What to Do:
(1) Chapter 8 QUIZ, due Sunday, October 17, by 11:59pm
(2) Participation Discussion Board, due Sunday, October 3, by 11:59pm
(3) Participation Discussion Board, due Sunday, October 3, by 11:59pm

WEEK 9: October 18 – October 24
What to Read:
(1) Ch. 9 Evaluation Research
(2) Ch. 9 Slides and Lecture Notes
What to Do:
(1) Chapter 9 QUIZ, due Sunday, October 24, by 11:59pm
(2) Part (4) Literature Review, due Sunday, October 24, by 11:59pm
(3) Application: Evaluating a Commonly Used Measure, due Sunday, October 24, by 11:59pm
WEEK 10: October 25 – October 31
What to Read:
  (1) Ch. 10 Ethnography
  (2) Ch. 10 Slides and Lecture Notes
What to Do:
  (1) Chapter 10 QUIZ, due **Sunday, October 31, by 11:59pm**
  (2) Participation Discussion Board, due **Sunday, October 31, by 11:59pm**
  (3) Application: Ethnography, due **Sunday, October 31, by 11:59pm**

WEEK 11: November 1 – November 7
What to Read:
  (1) Ch. 11 In-Depth Interviewing
  (2) Ch. 11 Slides and Lecture Notes
What to Do:
  (1) Chapter 11 QUIZ, due **Sunday, November 7, by 11:59pm**
  (2) Part (5) Concepts and Measures for gathering data (e.g., Survey or Interview) due **Sunday, November 7, by 11:59pm**
  (3) Participation Discussion Board, due **Sunday, November 7, by 11:59pm**

WEEK 12: November 8 – November 14
What to Read:
  (1) Ch. 12 Materials-Based Methods
  (2) Ch. 12 Slides and Lecture Notes
What to Do:
  (1) Chapter 12 QUIZ, due **Sunday, November 14, by 11:59pm**
  (2) Participation Discussion Board, due **Sunday, November 14, by 11:59pm**
  (3) Application: Concepts and Coding

WEEK 13: November 15 – November 21
What to Read:
  (1) Ch. 14 Communicating Social Science Research Findings
  (2) Ch. 14 Slides and Lecture Notes
What to Do:
  (1) Chapter 14 QUIZ, due **Sunday, November 21, by 11:59pm**
  (2) Part (6) Ethical Considerations, due **Sunday, November 21, by 11:59pm**
  (3) Participation Discussion Board, due **Sunday, November 21, by 11:59pm**

WEEK 14: November 22 – November 28: HAPPY THANKSGIVING
What to Read:
  (1) NOTHING
What to Do:
  (1) NOTHING

WEEK 15: November 29 – December 5
What to Read:
  (1) Ch. 15 Social Network Analysis
  (2) Ch. 15 Slides and Lecture Notes
What to Do:
  (1) Chapter 15 QUIZ, due **Sunday, December 5, by 11:59pm**
  (2) Part (7) Future Research and Limitations in Current Research, due **Sunday, December 5, by 11:59pm**
WEEK 16: December 6 – December 12
What to Read:
   (1) NOTHING
What to Do:
   (1) WORK ON FINAL ASSIGNMENT

WEEK 17: FINALS WEEK: December 13 – December 17
What to Read:
   (1) NOTHING
What to Do:
   (1) Part (8) Bringing Everything Together Final Draft Assignment is due by Friday, December 17, by 11:59pm

CONTENT IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE: THIS SYLLABUS IS A CONSTANT WORK IN PROGRESS, FLUID AND DYNAMIC. ADDITIONAL READINGS WILL BE POSTED ON CANVAS AND YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED OF THE ADDITIONS AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE ADDITIONAL READINGS BEING DUE. ADDITIONAL READINGS MAY BE AVAILABLE FOR EXTRA CREDIT POINTS.