# Sociological Research Methods

**Soc 455 01 Grace E. Young, Ph.D.**

**Fall 2019 Office: MCD 380**

**1:00 to 2:15 p.m. Tues, Thurs Phone: 587-7878**

**Room: MCD 181 email: geyoung@adams.edu**

**CRN: 14741 Office Hrs: Mondays 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. and**

**Tues &Thurs 2:30 to 3:30 pm**

Many sociology students across the U.S. look upon the Methods course with disdain, dread, fear and/or loathing. You needn’t! This is a step-by-step course in which you learn about research methods by actually doing a research project. By the end of the class, you will have a clearer understanding of the complexities and joys of doing sociological research.

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. explain the fundamentals of the sociological research process
2. outline the components of ethical research
3. identify the qualities of a sound research instrument
4. find patterns in quantitative data and build and/or test theories.
5. critically assess the theoretical assertions and empirical research of others
6. design and clearly describe in writing a research project for sociology

This course is designed to expose students to a variety of research methods. Students will be instructed in the fundamentals of research design and implementation, including ethical considerations. Students will read and study the research projects of selected sociologists. Then students will engage in projects to practice research methods. Finally students will design and write a research proposal. In the lab component of the course, students will analyze and interpret sociological statistical data.

Prerequisites:

SOC 201 Minimum Grade: C- AND SOC 311 Minimum Grade: C- AND LS 225 Minimum Grade: C-;

OR SOC 201 Minimum Grade: T AND SOC 311 Minimum Grade: T AND LS 225 Minimum Grade: T

**READING**

The required textbook for this class is by Earl Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research*. Details about the book are as follows:

Babbie, Earl. 2014. *The Basics of Social Research*. 6th Edition or a later edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.

# OFFICE HOURS

If you want to talk with me about the class assignments, if you have questions about the material, if you want to talk about teaching, research, or if you want to talk about yourself, I will be available in my office (unless otherwise posted or announced) on Mondays from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. If these times are not convenient, please make arrangements with me before or after class to meet at another time. You can also reach me by phone at 587-7878 or by email: geyoung@adams.edu

# COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for this class involve three components. The first is a set of quizzes that test students’ knowledge of the concepts and principles discussed in lecture. These quizzes follow the Babbie textbook, *The Basics of Social Research* and are multiple-choice in format. There are 6 quizzes, each one covering two chapters, and students’ lowest quiz score will be dropped. Together the 10 quizzes constitute 25% of the grade in the class. If a student suffers an unexcused absence and there is a quiz on that day, that quiz score will be the one dropped.

The second set of requirements is related to the research project itself. Students will create a research project that will involve defining a research question, writing a review of the literature, gathering the data or using secondary data, analyzing the data, and writing a final report. Students may choose to work in groups of two and design a research project, using a survey design, and gather original data on campus with their partner. Or, students may choose to work independently using secondary data from a variety of data sources. From the proposal to the final report, everything will be written in stages. No student may design a project with the intent of gathering data independently; this method requires two students working together. This ensures that students are completing a comparable amount of work. This component represents about 50% of the grade in the class.

Usually co-researchers work well together. However, there have been instances where two people find themselves at odds with one another. Half way through the semester they report that they cannot work together. Most often this occurs when one partner is doing all of the work while the other partner is doing little to no work. If two people find themselves in this situation, I reserve the right to separate a group and make each partner do the project on their own.

Because a whole research project, from conceptualization to collecting data or using secondary data, analyzing it and drawing tentative theoretical conclusions all takes place during one semester, deadlines must be adhered to. Papers that are late will automatically receive one grade lower.

The third component is the lab assignments, which number seven. They are each worth 20 points and constitute 25% of the grade. Students’ two lowest lab assignment scores will be dropped. Students do not receive an independent lab grade. Rather, it is calculated into the total points for the class. The last day to submit late lab assignments is November 14, 2019.

GRADING SCALE

Assignments Points

1. Thinking About a Research Question: Sept 12……………………………. 10
2. Literature Review and Bibliography: Oct 8…………………….……….. 30
3. Consent Form and Letter Requesting Access Due: Oct 17…………………
4. Pretesting the Research Instrument: Oct 15 ………………………………...
5. Research Instrument or Assignment: Oct 17…………………………… … 15
6. Cover Page & Introduction: Nov 7 ……………………………………… 20
7. Methods Section: Nov 12………………………………………………….. 15
8. Preliminary Analysis of Data: Nov 14 …………………………………….. 20
9. Findings and Conclusion: Nov 21………………………………………….. 25
10. Full Project: Dec 5…………………………………………………………… 50
11. Quizzes (6 in total, drop the lowest score)…………………...………… 100
12. Lab Assignments (7 in total, drop 2 lowest scores)……….…….………. 100

TOTAL……………………………………………………………………………...…… 385

# GRADING SCALE

346-385 = A

308-345 = B

269-307 = C

231-268 = D

Below 231 = F

HANDLING EMERGENCIES: Unfortunately, emergencies do arise. First, take care of the emergency, and then call (587-7878) or email (geyoung@adams.edu) to let me know why you were unable to make it to class.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Week 1:**

Aug 20 **Who are we and what is this course about?**

**Chapter 1**; Lecture Chapter 1: Human Inquiry and Science

Hand out worksheet

Aug 22 **Read two examples of research projects on my blog; Original and Secondary Data**

**Week 2:**

Aug 27 Discussion/Worksheet: Idiographic, Nomothetic, Independent, Dependent Variables, Attributes **Read Chapter 2**; Lecture Chapter 2: Paradigms, Theory and Research

Worksheet: Hypotheses, Inductive & Deductive Research

Aug 29 **QUIZ** on Chapter 1 Human Inquiry and Science and Chapter 2 Paradigms, Theory and Research

**Week 3:**

Sept 3 Prepare Assignment #1

Sept 5 Prepare Assignment #1

**Week 4:**

Sept 10 Prepare Assignment #1

Sept 12 Return Quiz Chapters 1 & 2

**DUE Assignment #1: Thinking About a Research Question**

**Read Chapter 3;** Lecture Chapter 3: Ethics of Social Research

Discussion of Ethical Issues & Issues of Gaining Access for Projects

Consent Form & Letters to Professors Discussed

**Week 5:**

Sept 17 Return Assignment #1: Thinking About a Research Question and discuss

**Read Chapter 4**; Lecture Chapter 4: Research Design

Sept 19 All Projects Formulated

Discussion of Designing a Research Project: Components of Research Paper: Literature Review & Bibliography as beginning backbone, Introduction, Methods, Findings, Conclusion

**Week 6:**

Sept 24 **QUIZ** Chapter 3: Ethics and Chapter 4: Research Design

Students work on Literature Review & Bibliography

###### Sept 26 Return Quiz Chapters 3 &4

**Read Chapter 5**; Lecture Chapter 5: Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement

 Students work on Literature Review & Bibliography

**Week 7:**

###### Oct 1 Read Chapter 6; Lecture Chapter 6: Indexes and Scales

Oct 3 **Read Chapter 9;** Lecture Chapter 9: Survey Research

Students work on Research Instrument or Assignment

###### Week 8:

Oct 8 **QUIZ** on Chapter 5 Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement and Chapter 6: Indexes and Scales

**DUE**: Literature Review & Bibliography

 Oct 10 *Fall Recess*

**Week 9:**

Oct 15 Return Quiz Chapter 5 & 6

Students work on Research Instrument or Assignment

Professor Hands back Literature Review & Bibliography

 Students work on professor’s suggested improvements

Students Begin Exploring Classes to Survey

Pre-test the Research Instrument

Oct 17 **Read Chapter 7**; Lecture Chapter 7: Sampling

Consent Form and Letter Requesting Access Due

**DUE**: Research Instrument or Assignment

**Week 10:**

Oct 22 **QUIZ** on Chapter 7 Sampling and Chapter 9 Survey Research

Professor Hands Back Research Instrument

Students Practice Entering Classrooms to Survey

Oct 24 Return Quiz Chapters 7 & 9

**Read Chapter 8**; Lecture Chapter 8: Experiments

Gathering data begins

**Week 11:**

Oct 29 **Read Chapter 10**; Lecture Chapter 10: Qualitative Field Research; Short reading on blog

Oct 31 **QUIZ** on Chapter 8 Experiments and Chapter 10 Qualitative Field Research

**Week 12:**

Nov 5 Return Quiz Chapters 8 & 10

**Read Chapter 11;** Lecture Chapter 11: Unobtrusive Research

Gathering data and entering/analyzing data

Nov 7 **Read Chapter 12**; Lecture Chapter 12: Evaluation Research

**DUE**: Cover Page and Introduction Due (submit Literature Review/Bibliography also)

**Week 13:**

Nov 12 Professor Returns Cover Page & Introduction

Students finish gathering data

**DUE:** Methods Section

Nov 14 **QUIZ** on Chapter 11: Unobtrusive Research and Chapter 12 Evaluation Research

**DUE**: Preliminary Analysis of Data

Professor Returns Methods Section

**Week 14:**

Nov 19 Return Quiz Chapters 11 and 12

Professor Returns Preliminary Analysis of Data

Students work in class on Full Research Project Document

Nov 21 **DUE**: Findings and Conclusion

*Thanksgiving – Whole Week Off*

**Week 15:**

Dec 3 Professor Returns Graded Findings and Conclusion

Students work in class on Full Research Project Document

Dec 5 Completed Full Project Due

FINAL Thursday, December 12th, 2019, 3 to 4:50 p.m.

# Sociological Research Methods Lab

**Soc 455 01 Grace E. Young, Ph.D.**

**Fall 2019 Office: MCD 380**

**8 to 8:50 a.m. Thursdays Phone: 587-7878**

**Room: MCD 181 email: geyoung@adams.edu**

**CRN: 14741 Office Hrs: Mondays 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. and**

**Tues &Thurs 2:30 to 3:30 pm**

This lab accompanies the Research Methods Class. Here we will be learning about the quantitative methods of social research.

**READING**

There is no textbook assigned for this lab class. The assignments can be found on my blog: http://blogs.adams.edu/grace-young/

# OFFICE HOURS

If you want to talk with me about the class assignments, if you have questions about the material, if you want to talk about teaching, research, or if you want to talk about yourself, I will be available in my office (unless otherwise posted or announced) on Mondays from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. If these times are not convenient, please make arrangements with me before or after class to meet at another time. You can also reach me by phone at 587-7878 or by email: geyoung@adams.edu

# COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In this class, you learn how to conduct quantitative research. This class prepares students to analyze the data for their research project. There are seven lab assignments, each of which is worth 20 points. Students may drop the two lowest grades. The total points earned is integrated into the points earned in the Sociological Research Methods class, and one grade for the class is earned. Late assignments earn lower grades, and I will not accept any late lab assignments after November 14th.

HANDLING EMERGENCIES: Unfortunately, emergencies do arise. First, take care of the emergency, and then call me to let me know why you were unable to make it to class. You can always leave a message on my machine (or email) if you cannot reach me.

# CLASS SCHEDULE

Aug 22 Review class components

Databases, codebooks

Explain Lab Assignment #1 Frequency tables

How to copy and paste data from SPSS output onto a Word document

 Aug 29 Work on Lab Assignment #1

 Sept 5 Work on Lab Assignment #1

Sept 12 Lab Assignment #1 Due

 Explain Lab Assignment #2 Cross-tabs tables & chi-square

Sept 19 Lab Assignment #2 Due

 Explain Lab Assignment #3 Recoding

Sept 26 Explain Lab Assignment #4 Multivariate table (control variable) & chi-square

Oct 3 Lab Assignment #3 Due

Explain Lab Assignment #5 Recoding & creating an index

Oct 10 No Class – Fall Recess

Oct 17 Lab Assignment #4 Due

Explain Lab Assignment #6 Independent samples t-test of means

Oct 24 Lab Assignment #5 Due

Explain Lab Assignment #7 Data presentation techniques

Oct 31 Lab Assignment #6 Due

Enter and Analyze Data; Work on projects, assignments

How to create an SPSS database

Nov 7 Enter and Analyze Data; Work on projects

Lab Assignment #7 Due

Nov 14 Enter and Analyze Data

Work on projects

Last day to submit late lab assignments

Nov 21 Enter and Analyze Data

Work on projects

WEEK of THANKSGIVING BREAK

Dec 5 Complete Full Project

**Academic Misconduct**

Students should abide by all student ethical conduct, especially those rules pertaining to cheating and plagiarism. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. Any student engaging in academic dishonesty in this course can expect a failing grade for the course and formal charges to be brought before the Department Chair.

**Student Sexual Misconduct Policy**

Our school is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and our school policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which regards sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We understand that sexual violence can undermine students’ academic success and we encourage students who have experienced some form of sexual misconduct to talk to someone about their experience, so they can get the support they need.

Confidential support can be found at the Adams State University Counseling Center located in Richardson Hall 3100 and may be contacted at 719-587-7746. Students may also fill out an anonymous “concern form” at https://www.adams.edu/students/ccc/. Crisis support can be found in the San Luis Valley community 24/7 at San Luis Valley Comprehensive Mental Health Center: 719-589-3671 or Tu Casa: 719-589-2465. Tu Casa offers services for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Alleged violations can be reported to the Adams State University Title IX Office, Director Ana Guevara, at 719-587-8213 or at anaguevara@adams.edu. The ASU Title IX Office is located in the Student Union Building (SUB) room 327. Reports to law enforcement can be made to Adams State University Police Department at #1 Petteys Hall or contacted at 719-587-7901, 911, or 24 hour dispatch at 24 hour dispatch: 719-589-5807 (State Patrol).

**Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting**

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as a responsible employee as designated under Title IX. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on Adams State University Campus or that may be impacting an ASU student. Students may speak to someone confidentially by contacting Adams State University Counseling Center at the Adams State University Counseling Center located in Richardson Hall 3100 or contacted at 719-587-7746. You may also fill out an anonymous “concern form” at https://www.adams.edu/students/ccc/. Crisis support can be found in the San Luis Valley community 24/7 at San Luis Valley Comprehensive Mental Health Center: 719-589-3671 or Tu Casa: 719-589-2465. Tu Casa offers services for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

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**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**: Adams State University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Adams State University is committed to achieving equal educational opportunities, providing students with documented disabilities access to all university programs, services and activities. In order for this course to be equally accessible to all students, different accommodations or adjustments may need to be implemented. **The Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) is located in Richardson Hall 3-100, or available at** OAS@adams.edu**, and** **719-587-7746****.** They are your primary resource on campus to discuss the qualifying disability, help you develop an accessibility plan, and achieve success in your courses this semester. They may provide you with letters of accommodation, which can be delivered in two ways. You may give them to me in person, or have the Office of Accessibility Services email them. Please make an appointment with their office as early as possible this semester so that we can discuss how potential accommodations can be provided and carried out for this course. If you have already received letters of accommodation for this course from OAS, please provide me with that information privately so that we can review your accommodations together and discuss how best to help you achieve equal access in this course this semester.