

SOC 3111 - Intro to Social Research Methods

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Course Description

Course Overview

Throughout this course, students will be introduced to the basic principles of scientific research, as well as different ways to conduct research in social sciences. Students will become acquainted with the logic of research design, learn more about common forms of data collection, and develop basic research skills that can be used to conduct research, and critically evaluate research presented by others.

The purpose of this course is to facilitate student progress as both a critical *consumer* and *producer* of research, allowing learning to transcend beyond our class, to be applied to lives and careers where we are constantly confronted with the need to evaluate the validity and source(s) of information presented to us.

Because research methodologies can be applied to most any topic, students are encouraged to integrate their knowledge and learning from other courses to the development and critique of the research methods learned within this class.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Name the basic principles of and describe the history of research ethics.
- Identify, summarize, and critically evaluate existing research.
- Define key features of common research designs and methods, and compare their respective strengths and weaknesses.
- Develop a research project by applying principles learned in this course.
- Demonstrate communication skills for different audiences and purposes.

Required Materials

All students should have access to two types of textbooks – one is a social research method textbook, and one is focused on the craft of writing and formulating research.

These books are available for purchase at the University of Utah bookstore, on reserve at the Marriott Library, or students should be able to find copies online of these commonly used texts. I will also post links to sites with free digital copies. The books are:

- Booth et al., *Craft of Research* (4th edition). University of Chicago Press.
- Schutt, *Investigating the Social World* (9th edition). Sage Publications.

When needed, additional materials will be made available on the course Canvas page.

Teaching and Learning Methods

This course involves a variety of teaching and learning methods, including traditional lectures (video recordings by an array of accomplished staff in the Sociology Department), group work, and experiential activities that *teach* research methods by *doing* research methods. Students are expected to be active participants in their own learning.

General Education

Successful completion of SOC 3111 with grade of C- or better satisfies the Upper Division Writing Intensive general education requirement (**CW**) for a Bachelor's degree at the University of Utah. As an approved **CW** general education course at the University of Utah, SOC 3111 will provide instruction on how to write a research report/proposal, how to read and critique existing research, and how to present research findings to different audiences (i.e., poster or oral presentation).

Frequent written assignments, building to a larger written research project and presentation at the end of the term, will facilitate student development, receive feedback, and revise/refine their research ideas throughout the semester.

The specific learning outcomes associated with general education requirements include:

Specific Learning Outcomes & Assessments for *Intellectual and Practical Skills*

1. **Inquiry & Analysis** – Inherent in “research methods” is learning how to ask research questions (inquiry) and how to answer that question with data or evidence (analysis). The course schedule has dedicated learning units focused on both question formulation and data analysis. **Assessment:** developing research topics/questions, data analysis (quantitative or qualitative), and a final research project. ^{[[1]]}_{[[SEP]]}
2. **Information Literacy** – A major objective of the course is to teach students to become both a critical consumer and producer of research. To do so, students will learn how to ask questions about how data/evidence was collected, whether it is representative of a larger phenomenon or population, how it was analyzed, and whether it is presented in an unbiased way. These are all examples of information literacy. To achieve this outcome, the course schedule includes dedicated learning units on how to evaluate the validity (i.e., accuracy and truthfulness) of material and information presented to us, as well as units on how to do both quantitative and qualitative analysis. **Assessment:** literature review assignment where students identify and evaluate others’ published research, assignment related to presenting/analyzing data, final research project. ^{[[1]]}_{[[SEP]]}

Specific Learning Outcomes & Outcome Assessments for *Personal & Social Responsibility*

1. ***Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning*** – A course in “research methods” emphasizes the need to match data/evidence with our theories/ideas. While this course provides a solid foundation for those who want to pursue a career in research, it also teaches students to be more critically aware of the sources and validity of information that we see everyday (i.e., in the media) – an important skill for lifelong learning and success for everyone. The course’s focus on developing and refining one’s communication skills (orally and in writing) is another important outcome of this course. **Assessment:** quality of writing, presentation, and discussion, especially those assignments where students critique their own or other’s research. ^{[[1]]}_{[[SEP]]}
2. ***Ethical Reasoning*** – Researchers are obligated to conduct ethical research, especially when dealing with human subjects. This course has a dedicated learning module related to the basic principles and practice of ethical research. **Assessment:** Students will complete a standardized and rigorous training course related to “research ethics” where they will receive a certificate allowing them to work on research projects at the University or other research entities (CITI training). ^{[[1]]}_{[[SEP]]}

Course Timing & Pacing

This is an *asynchronous fully-online* course, meaning students can access course materials and lectures via Canvas at any time that is convenient (24/7). It is not a self-paced course, meaning that students will NOT be able to work through the whole course in a compressed time-period. The course schedule outlines which weeks each module is open; assignments within each module will require you to discuss and work with classmates during those specified time intervals.

Except in the rare cases of sudden illness or emergency (excused with documentation), students are expected to arrange with the instructors to *submit assignments in advance* of a planned absence.

Engagement and Participation

Class participation is an essential part of the learning process. Students are responsible for their learning and are required to actively participate in all components of the course. Students are expected to complete the readings, viewings, and assignments for each module.

Some of the readings, lectures, films, or presentations in this course may include material that conflicts with the core beliefs of some students. ***Please review the syllabus carefully to see if the course is one that you are committed to taking.***

Though this online course includes pre-recorded lectures, it is not a class that is run “automatically” by technology. The instructor and teaching assistant will regularly interact with the class (as a whole and with individual students) via announcements, virtual office hours, emails/the Canvas Inbox feature, feedback on assignments, and comments on discussion boards.

Netiquette & General Expectations for Civilized Behavior

Participation in the University of Utah community obligates us to follow a code of civilized behavior in and out of the classroom. In order to maintain a positive, civil environment for learning, students and instructors are expected to meet the goals described in the University of Utah’s Student Code, which states:

“the mission of the University of Utah is to educate the individual and to discover, refine and disseminate knowledge. The University supports the intellectual, personal, social and ethical development of members of the University community. These goals can best be achieved in an open and supportive environment that encourages reasoned discourse, honesty, and respect for the rights of all individuals. Students at the University of Utah are encouraged to exercise personal responsibility and self-discipline and engage in the rigors of discovery and scholarship.”

Students and instructors are expected to follow the core rules of netiquette at all times while participating in the class and interacting with one another.

Canvas & UMail

All course resources and announcements will be posted on the course Canvas page or through automated messages sent to your university-assigned email address. All students have access to these resources through their unid.

Students are responsible for regularly checking Canvas and Umail (at least 3 times per week). All students are responsible for submitted assignments on time, with correct naming convention and file extensions, and using the software type and version required – i.e., .doc, .docx, or .pdf files.

Need technical support? Contact 24/7 Canvas Support by clicking the Help button located on the left-side global navigation. Technical support is also provided via classhelp@utah.edu or 801-581-6112.

Evaluation & Grading

Fair & Transparent Grading Expectations

The instructor is committed to be as fair and transparent as possible when assessing students and determining grades. To this end:

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- Instructor will grade assignments with feedback within 10 days of submission. [L]
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- Please report any grade discrepancies, with justification, to the instructor.
- Instructor will entertain grade change requests, but discussions should occur at least 24 hours after a grade is assigned (i.e., take a day to reflect on the comments provided and review the material prior to requesting grade change).
- No late assignments will be accepted without approved documentation.
- No extra credit is available.

Assessment

Learning and participation will be assessed through four assignment types.

1. **Quizzes:** Most modules have at least one non-cumulative quiz associated with a chapter in the texts. Each quiz contains approximately 20-25 multiple choice, T/F, and short answer questions. Each quiz is weighted equally—none worth more than any others. **25% of final grade.**
2. **Participation in Discussions:** Each module has at least one “discussion and participation” activity. These are opportunities to discuss, practice, reflect upon, and apply the material learned in the texts/lectures in developing students’ own research ideas, and the class research project, as well as giving students the opportunity to virtually meet with their respective teams throughout the semester. **15% of final grade.**
3. **Research Project:** Over the course of the semester, students will develop, execute, and present portions of an actual research project. The final product is a class written research report and presentation. Each student will create various

drafts and portions of the project, which will act as building blocks toward an overarching research project. Students will receive feedback and make revisions to form a foundation for the final paper and presentation.

Final Paper (group)	25% of final grade
Presentation (group)	12.5% of final grade
Intro/Lit. Review Draft	5% of final grade
Human Subjects Certification	2.5% of final grade
Annotated Bibliography	2.5% of final grade
Methods Draft (group)	2.5% of final grade

4. **Teamwork and Collaboration:** Teamwork is a major component of this course. At the end of the semester, each student will provide a peer-evaluation/grade for each member of their team, including a self-assessment. These evaluations will remain anonymous. I.e., a freeloader will receive a substantially lower score than a self-starting student who led the team and ensured success. **10% of final grade.**

Final Course Grades

Final grades for the course will be calculated based on the percentage-weights noted above and then assigned using the following distribution:

A 100-94%	A- 93.9-90%	B+ 89.9-87%
B 86.9-84%	B- 83.9-80%	C+ 79.9-77%
C 76.9-74%	C- 73.9-70%	D+ 69.9-67%
D 66.9-64%	D- 63.9-60%	F 59.9-0%



Course Schedule

There are 9 *content modules* that will open and close at scheduled intervals throughout the semester.

- New modules will open on or before the starting date listed below (Mondays at 12am). ^[L]_[SEP]
- Old modules will close before a new module opens (Sundays at 11:59pm). ^[L]_[SEP]
- Assignments are typically due at the end of each module (Sundays at 11:59pm). ^[L]_[SEP]

Within each module, students can engage with materials (readings & lectures) and submit assignments at their own pace. Still, at the beginning of each module, students should carefully review the assignments on Canvas, as some assignments, such as the discussion activities, should be completed over the course of a couple of days. In the case of multiple assignments in a multi-week module, due dates may be staggered across the module interval. Many assignments, including discussions, require collaboration, which requires attention well before the last few hours before a deadline. *Don't procrastinate!!!*

Week	Date	Topic(s)	Readings	Assignments
1	May 17	Module 1: Welcome to the course Module 2: Social Science Research	Schutt, Ch 1 Booth et al, Chs 1, 2	Quizzes 1,2 Discussions 1A, 1B, 2
2	May 24	Module 3: Research Ethics Module 4: Research Topics	Schutt, Chs 2, 3 Booth et al, Chs 3,4	Quizzes 3,4 CITI Certification Discussions 3,4
3,4	May 31	Module 5: Researching the Topic	Schutt, pp. 36-49, Appendices A and B Booth et al Chs 5-14, 16	Annotated Bib Intro Draft
5	June 14	Module 6: Designing a Study - measurement sampling, generalizability, causality, (non)experiments	Schutt Chs 4-7	Quizzes 6A, 6B, 6C, 6D Discussions 6A, 6B, 6C, 6D
6,7	June 21	Module 7: Collecting Data – Survey research, qualitative methods, mixed methods, etc.	Schutt, Chs 8, 10; skim Chs 12-15	Quizzes 7A, 7B Discussions 7A, 7B, 7C Methods Draft
8	July 5	Module 8: Analyzing Data – qualitative and quantitative	Schutt Chs 9, 11 Booth et al Ch 15	Quizzes 8A, 8B Discussion 8
9,10	July 12	*Team work week: data and analysis, writing/revision, presentation prep*		
11	July 26	Module 9: Presenting Research	Schutt Ch 16 Booth et all, Ch 17	Team Presentation
12	August 2	***Final Project Papers***		Team Papers Due Teamwork Evaluation

Institutional Policies & Procedures

The University of Utah is committed to providing students with resources and supports they need to succeed. If there are any additional supports or resources you may need in this course, please do not hesitate to speak with the instructor.

U Heads Up App: Download the app on your smartphone at <http://alert.utah.edu/headsup> to access the following resources:

- **Emergency Response Guide:** Provides instructions on how to handle any type of emergency, such as earthquake, utility failure, fire, active shooter, etc. Flip charts with this information are also available around campus. [SEP]
- **See Something, Say Something:** Report unsafe or hazardous conditions on campus if you see a life threatening or emergency situation, please call 911! [SEP]
- **Safety Escorts:** For students who are on campus at night or past business hours and would like an escort to your care, please call 801- 585-2677. You can call 24/7 and a security officer will be sent to walk with you or give you a ride to your desired on-campus location. [SEP]

The Americans with Disabilities Act. The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will

need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services. **Accommodation Policy (see Section Q):** <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php>

Sexual Misconduct. Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

Drop/Withdrawal. Students may drop a course within the first two weeks of a given semester without any penalties. Students may officially withdraw (W) from a class or all classes after the drop deadline through the midpoint of a course. A "W" grade is recorded on the transcript and appropriate tuition/fees are assessed. The grade "W" is not used in calculating the student's GPA. See the [Academic Calendar](#) for the last day to withdraw from term, first and second session classes. **Deadlines for courses with irregular start and end dates policy.** <https://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/miscellaneous.php>

Plagiarism/Cheating. It is assumed that all work submitted to your instructor is your own work. When you have used ideas of others, you must properly indicate that you have done so. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on an individual assignment, and/or failure in the course. Academic misconduct, according to the University of Utah Student Code, "includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information...It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct." For detailed definitions and possible sanctions please see the **Student Code** at this link. <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>

Wellness Statement. Your personal health and wellness are essential to your success as a student. Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive in this course and at the University of Utah. Please speak with the instructor or TA before issues become problems. And, for helpful resources, contact the Center for Student wellness at www.wellness.utah.edu or 801-581-7776.

Veterans Support Center. The Veterans Support Center is a "one stop shop" for student veterans to find services, support, advocacy, and camaraderie. They are located in the

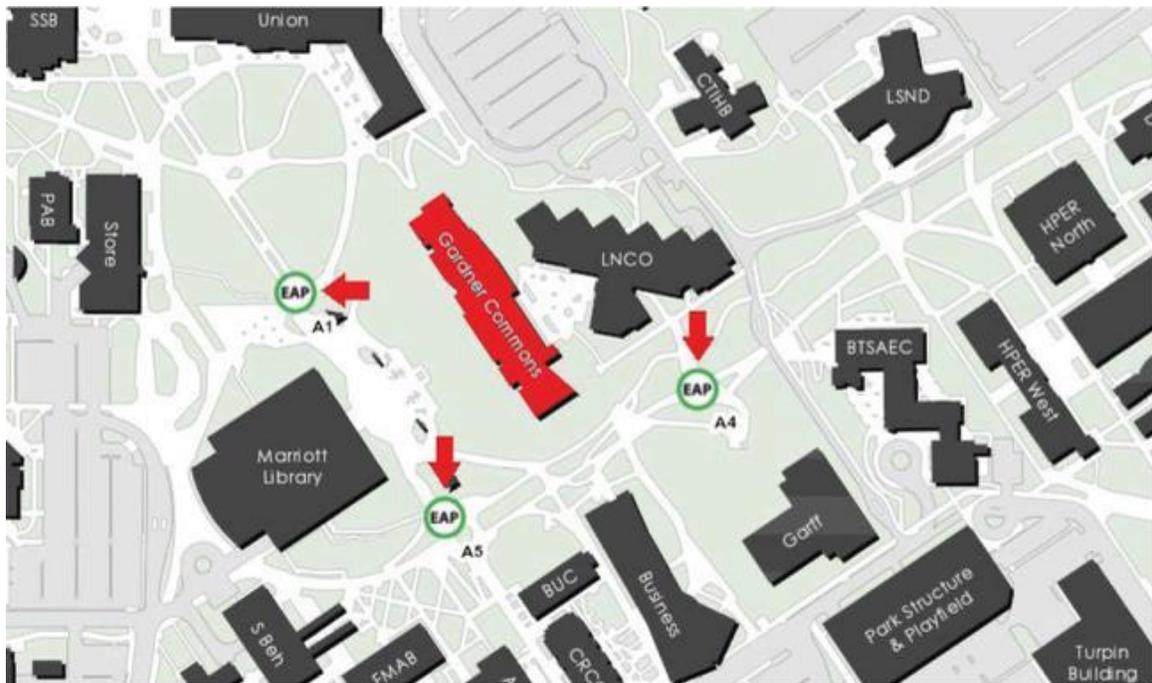
Park Building Room 201. You can visit their website for more information about their services and support at <http://veteranscenter.utah.edu>.

LGBT Resource Center. The University of Utah has an LGBT Resource Center on campus. They are located in Room 409 of the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. You can visit their website to find more information about the support they can offer, a list of events through the center and links to additional resources: <http://lgbt.utah.edu>.

Learners of English as an Additional/Second Language. If you are an English language learner, please be aware of several resources on campus that will support you with your language and writing development. These resources include: the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.utah.edu>); the Writing Program (<http://writing-program.utah.edu>); the English Language Institute (<http://continue.utah.edu/eli>).

As the only institution in the state classified in the highest research category (R1), at the University of Utah you will have access to state-of-the-art research facilities and be able to be part of the knowledge creation process. You will have the opportunity to do research of your own with faculty who are leading experts in their field, engaging in programs that match your research interests. Further, you will interact with and often take classes with graduate students that provide an advanced understanding of the knowledge in your field.

CSBS Emergency Action Plan



BUILDING EVACUATION

EAP (Emergency Assembly Point) – When you receive a notification to evacuate the building either by campus text alert system or by building fire alarm, please follow your instructor in an orderly fashion to the EAP marked on the map below. Once everyone is

at the EAP, you will receive further instructions from Emergency Management personnel. You can also look up the EAP for any building you may be in on campus at <http://emergencymanagement.utah.edu/eap>