

SOC 1401 Social Research 2020 Fall Course Syllabus

Course Information

Credit hours: 3	Instructor: Professor Yumei Li
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	Office: Zone 3, 317B
	Tel (Main Office): TBA
	Office hours: Thursday 10:00 am (or by appointment)
Room: 4-202	Prerequisites: None

Required Texts:

This course employs multiple sources and many of the readings come from the following sources:

- Babbie, E. 2016. *The practice of social research* (14th Edition). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. 2017. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. 2016. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Weiss, Robert, S. 1994. *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies*. New York, NY: Free Press.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

We as humans have always wondered why and how our social world operates in particular ways. You might have asked yourself: How do other students choose their majors and minors? Why do engineering classes attract more men than women? How do students benefit from the college education? Why do people choose to live and work at a specific place?

This class will provide students with useful tools to explore such questions about the social world. In an interactive classroom learning environment, students will be introduced to basic empirical research methods typically used in the social sciences. Students will learn the relationship between research and theory and evaluate a variety of case studies in social sciences. Students will design and implement a research project addressing a challenge currently encountered in the world of practice. Broadly, this class will: (1) introduce students to ideas about what sociology is and the various methods used to study it; (2) guide students to evaluate specific case studies in social sciences and understand the purpose of social research; (3) direct students in using sociological methods to examine real-world social problems; (4) help students develop critical thinking, public presentation, and team-work skills.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

- 1) work as a team to examine the social world;
- 2) understand different research paradigms and social theories;
- 3) evaluate and critique social research;

- 4) develop a research question and plan for development;
- 5) learn about ways to collect and analyze data;
- 6) give a public presentation on a social issue or question;
- 7) compose qualitative research projects following proper style-guides.

CLASS ASSESSMENT and GRADING

There are no exams or quizzes in this course. This course is project-based and will require a significant commitment of your time. Since this is a constructivist classroom, students are responsible for constructing their own learning with facilitation from the instructor. As such, the focus is not on ‘right or wrong’ answers, but rather, the focus is on developing an appreciation of student-centered learning and critical thinking skills. All projects are graded holistically through the use of a rubric.

This course includes a combination of readings, writings, in-class discussions, and hands-on experiences. The following six components are vital to successful completion of this course, and they figure into assessments and grades. Details of the assignments will be uploaded to the Blackboard.

1. Initial Research Proposal/Research Question (10%):

The main purpose of this assignment is for you to start developing a plan to conduct your own original research. Why are you interested in this research? What are your research questions? Why is it important to conduct this study? How will you conduct your study? These are some of the questions you will address in this assignment.

2. Annotated Bibliography (15%):

Choose five articles in your topic area from peer-reviewed academic journals (One can be a book). Read each one and take notes. Your notes can be in narrative/paragraph form or bullet points or any other format that works for you, but must be at least 250 words for each article, including the key points and conclusions, some description of the case/evidence/methods used, and your assessment of the article, including any concerns you have about its methodology, validity, and findings. These articles should be published in 2010 or later, some using qualitative methods and some using quantitative methods.

3. Pilot in-depth/semi-structured interviews **OR** Pilot/Practice Ethnography (20%):
Choose to do interviews or a mini-ethnography.

- Interviews:

Identify **at least two** people whom you can interview for at least 30-45 minutes each and whose responses might shed some light on your research question. Design an interview protocol, a consent form, and record your interviews.

- Ethnographic/observational study

For this assignment, you will need to go to your research site and take at least one hour of field notes. One hour of observations can produce at least 5 single spaced pages of notes. Take extensive, detailed field notes, during (if possible) *and* directly after your observation.

4. Class Presentation (5%)

Class presentations will take place in alphabetical order. The purpose of this in-class presentation is to learn how sociological research is presented. It is also a good opportunity to receive feedback from the professor and your peers before your final paper is due. You will have 15 minutes for your presentation. This is standard time for most sociological conference presentations.

5. Final Research Proposal (40%):

Drawing on what you have learned from your readings and pilot studies over the course of the semester, propose a full-fledged **qualitative research project** that could be a senior thesis or similar.

6. Participation and Attendance (10%)

The final grade will be greatly affected by students' participation and attendance, which includes both online and in-class discussions.

Tentative Schedule Week 2- Week 18
(subject to change according to the instructor's discretion)

Week 2 (9/11)	<p>Introduction to the course; Foundations of social research Discussion of syllabus, reading materials, course requirements and grading policy. What is social research?</p> <p>Babbie text, chapter 1, pp.19, 22 Mills, C. Wright. Chapter 1, "The Promise" in <i>The Sociological Imagination</i>. Oxford Daniel Little. Sociology as a social science discipline A short ten-minute video: Understanding the world from a sociological perspective (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnCJU6PaCio) Forum: personal vs. social</p>
Week 3 (9/18)	<p>Research Paradigms What are the fundamental models or frames of reference we use to organize our observations and reasoning? What is deductive theory construction? What is inductive theory construction? How do we deal with the bias in our study?</p> <p>Babbie text, chapter 2 Forum: objectivity & subjectivity in research</p>
Week 4 (9/25)	<p>Research Ethics How do we behave ethically as researchers? What are the rules that we must observe as ethical researchers? What are the possible ethical dilemmas in social scientific research?</p> <p>Babbie text, chapter 3</p> <p>Forum: Developing your research ideas</p>

- Week 5 (10/2)** **National Day Holiday No Class**
- Week 6 (10/9)** **Asking a Good Research Question**
How do we narrow broad research topics into specific research questions? What elements must be considered when creating research questions?

Individual presentation of research questions
- Week 7 (10/16)** **Selection of a Research Approach**
What are the three research approaches to research? What factors affect a choice of one approach over another for the design of a proposal? Why qualitative research for this course?

Creswell text, chapter 1

DUE: Research Question draft
- Week 8 (10/23)** **Review of the Literature**
Creswell text, chapter 2

DUE: Research Question
- Week 9 (10/30)** **Annotated bibliography**
Write your annotated bibliography and do a roundtable edit
DUE: Annotated Bibliography draft
- Week 10 (11/6)** **How to do interviews?**
Weiss text, Chapter 4.

DUE: Annotated Bibliography
Forum: Accessing research participants / location
- Week 11 (11/13)** **How to do field observations?**
Geertz, Clifford. 1977. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture"

Forum: Designing your interview protocol / observation plan
- Week 12 (11/20)** **Interview or Mini ethnography**
Write your interview or mini ethnography and do a peer edit
DUE: Interviews or a Mini ethnography draft
- Week 13 (11/27)** **Data Analysis and Representation**
Creswell & Poth text, chapter 8
DUE: Interviews or a Mini ethnography
- Week 14 (12/4)** **Data Analysis and Representation, cont'd**
Creswell & Poth text, chapter 8

Forum: writing research proposal

- Week 15 (12/11)** **Research Proposal Draft**
Roundtable edit
- Week 16 (12/18)** **Research Paper Presentation**
Presenting your research
- Week 17 (12/25)** **Research Paper Presentation**
Presenting your research
- Week 18 (1/1)** **New Year's Day, No Class**
- DUE: Final Research Paper

Attendance Policy

After two unexcused absences students will lose 3 points or half a letter grade from their final grade. Students with more than five absences will fail the course.

Student Use of Electronic Technology Policy:

Students must use electronic technology (including cell phones, laptops, tablets, and iPads) in appropriate ways during classes. Out of respect, cell phones should generally be turned off or on silent and stored out of sight. They should not be used during classroom activities unless the instructor has given permission. Electronic devices are forbidden during quizzes, tests or other in-class graded assignments, unless the instructor has given permission. Technology use in this class is meant to improve the learning environment for all students. Please be respectful of your instructor and classmates and use the technology appropriately.

If you have questions about what this means, please talk to your individual instructor.

Recording:

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may NOT record classroom lectures, discussions, and/or activities without the advance permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly recorded in advance can be used solely for the student's own private study.

Make-up Policy for Missed Assignments and Tests:

Students are responsible for the assignments in their classes. Assignments include in-class activities, quizzes, tests, homework, and any other work related to classes.

- If you are absent from class, you should try to contact one of the students in your class to find out what work was missed.
- If you cannot find out from another student about what work you have missed, when you return to class you must talk to your instructors about the missed work and if/when you can make up the work. You are responsible for talking to your teacher; your teacher is not responsible for reminding you about missed work.
- If you are absent from class on the due date of an assignment, you must hand in the assignment and be prepared to make up tests the day that you return to class or on a date decided with your teacher.
- If you know you will be absent, talk to your teacher before you leave or email your teacher to find out about the work that you will miss while you are away.

- If you have not been absent from class and you want to hand in an assignment late, you must first discuss the reason with your teacher before or on the due date. Do not assume that your teacher will accept late assignments. Also, you may lose points for late work based on teacher discretion.
- If you and your teacher arrange to meet so that you can make up an assignment and you miss that meeting, you may receive a “o” for that assignment.

Use of Machine Translation and Other Online Writing and Language Tools

While students are encouraged to use dictionaries and other language resources, they should not rely on machine translators for large sections of text. Papers must be written in English. Any paper that is written in Chinese and then processed through an online translator will be considered unacceptable.

If an instructor believes that a paper was written using machine translation, the instructor reserves the right to ask the student to re-write (potentially with a different topic), or give an alternative assignment, which may include a timed-writing essay assignment. Until the re-write is submitted the student will have an F for the assignment.

Use of non-English sources

[Policy suggestions: the idea here, is to emphasize that non-English sources need to be cited and the translations of source materials have to be treated as quoted material]

All non-English sources must be cited. The translation of non-English sources is equivalent to quoting. When using Chinese sources, use quotation marks to directly quote the sources and include the original source in brackets. For example,

Wang Chao in describing nanocarriers says, “Interaction between nanomaterials and organisms, especially Interaction between the Immunological Effect of Nanomaterials and the Immune System in vivo further clarification is needed to optimize the shape, physicochemical properties, size and surface of nanocarriers” [纳米材料与生物机体内的相互作用，特别是纳米材料本身的免疫学效应与体内免疫系统的相互作用需要进一步阐明，优化纳米载体的形状、大小、表面、理化性质等。] (Wang, 2015).

Policy on Graduating Seniors Course Requirements During the Spring Semester of Their Senior Year

Seniors taking HSS courses during the spring semester will have to complete course assignments by week 14. The instructor will provide an alternative final project/exam for graduating seniors that will be due by week 14. If a senior does not submit all work, fails assignments, or does not attend class regularly, the student may not graduate, and will have to retake the course in its entirety in a later semester in order to graduate.

SCUPI Honor Code:

Students in this course must follow the SCUPI Honor Code. This includes:

- must not get help from anyone to do his/her work without the teacher’s permission.
- must not get help from any outside sources to do his/her work without the teacher’s permission.
- must not copy the words of another and present those words as his/her own work.

Participating in these activities can result in an F. Turning in work that is not your own can result in an F.

Writing Center Policy: first instance will result in failure in assignment with option of re-write; second instance will result in failure of assignment and meeting with Writing Center director; third instance will result in failure in the course and referral to university officials for Honor Code violation.

Participation:

Active participation is crucial for language learning. Participating in class makes you an engaged learner of English. In this class, participation means:

- arriving to class on time
- staying on task (including appropriate use of technology)
- actively listening to your classmates and teacher when they speak in class
- asking questions
- bringing all class materials
- attending class regularly
- completing all homework on time
- actively and constructively participating in class activities
- being prepared to answer questions
- using only English in class

Student Responsibility

This syllabus is a contract between you and the instructor. It is the first place you should look for answers to your questions about course requirements, expectations, and policies. By enrolling in this course, you are agreeing to adhere to the requirements, expectations and policies outlined in this syllabus, including sections on the SCUPI Honor Code. Students who fail to submit their work on time or miss more than 5 classes could receive a failing grade and may not graduate.