SOC 400-900 Senior Seminar (Online)
University of Northern Colorado
Fall 2015

Instructor: Sandra Harmon
Phone: 970-351-2307
Email: Sandra.harmon@unco.edu

Office: 2285 Candalaria
Office Hours: M & W 12:30 to 2pm
or by appointment

COURSE PURPOSE: In this course, students will complete a research project to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of sociology. The senior seminar includes completing an original research project with data collected from an organization approved by the instructor, a poster presentation, and a 15 page research report. This research project will include a title page, abstract, introduction, literature review, methods, results, discussion, reference page, and appendix. Students will develop their scholarly voice throughout the research process.

REQUIRED TEXT:
Sociology Student Writer's Manual
AUTHOR: Johnson
EDITION: 6th
COPYRIGHT YEAR: 2010
PUBLISHER: PEARSON EDUCATION
ISBN: 9780205723454

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
At the End of the Semester, students will be able to:

- Define and apply core sociological concepts to a research question.
- Examine, discuss, and critique human behavior and social structure from a sociological perspective.
- Apply sociological theoretical perspectives to a research question.
- Collect and analyze scholarly literature relevant to a research question.
- Apply sociological theoretical perspectives to scholarly literature and research methods pertinent to a research project
- Apply rigorous research techniques in a project with real world implications
- Use the appropriate analytic and statistical tools to test hypotheses
- Demonstrate effective communications of sociology through both critical thinking and writing skills

SETTING UP YOUR PROJECT
Before students begin the course work for their Senior Project Fall 2015, they must be prepared to start their projects. Review previous projects online in the SOC 400 Blackboard course. This process begins before the start of the fall semester.

Option One: Students can call/visit several organizations (workplace, social services, and volunteer agencies) to set up a research project. We have a list of agencies we have worked with recently available for you. Most agencies are familiar with sociology practicums and projects and
will be happy to meet with you to talk about possible projects. Start making those calls/visits NOW so you can choose a project that you really want to do. Some local agencies are very familiar with the senior project (used to be called SOC 492, the practicum) and are likely to have projects in mind for you, but you are welcome to develop your own ideas or seek out other agencies. After you have found an organization/agency to work for, then you must enter into an agreement to be signed by your organization/agency supervisor and the SOC 400 instructor (me).

**Option Two:** Use secondary data to test a strong sociological research question. This choice is good for those who plan to go to grad school that focuses on quantitative methods, enjoy quantitative data analysis, or who do not feel comfortable with collecting their own data. After you have found a research project question, then you must enter into an agreement to be signed by you the SOC 400 instructor (me).

**Option Three:** Collect your own data. If you have a research question that has a strong sociological foundation and approval from me, you can collect data through quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, content analysis, etc. This option needs careful and early planning since you have to write the instrument, survey questions, and find a sample. After you have found a research project question, then you must enter into an agreement to be signed by you the SOC 400 instructor (me).

**COURSE EXPECTATIONS**
The expectations and requirements specified in the SOC 400 Contract are included below. By the end of the semester, students should:

- Students must complete weekly updates of your hours completed that week, and a short description of your activities. At the end of the semester, this should be submitted online.
- Receive a satisfactory final evaluation by your field supervisor if appropriate.
- Students are expected to adhere to, and exemplify, the five components of the UNC Honor Code: Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility.
- Students sign-up for 3 credits for SOC 400. For example: For 3 credits, students are expected to work at least 9 hours per week on this project and complete a 15 page research paper.
- Receive a satisfactory final evaluation by your field supervisor.

**Meetings with Instructor**
You meet with me individually at least once a month by phone or face-to-face—at these meetings, I will help with research design or analysis, approval of your research materials, reviewing drafts of your paper for help thinking through problems with agency politics or any difficulties you might have working with study respondents or interviewing subjects. I am here for YOU! Some students come often or regularly, and others come only when necessary (for approval of research materials and design). It is up to you. It does not directly affect your grade either way. You are essentially moving out of the role of student and into the role of a professional with this practicum experience. So again, how frequently you use me is up to YOU, but I'll say it again-- I am here for you. The requirements are minimum-- you can make this just a course you maneuver through or you can create a professional experience beyond compare-- by creating a meaningful project of much practical benefit to your agency, establishing relationships with people in your field, acquiring an important "real world" experience for yourself, preparing for graduate school, and adding a professional in your
field of choice who can speak directly about your employability to your list of references offered in your job search.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Rough Drafts (worth 100 points total): Every 2 to 3 weeks, students will turn in a rough draft of their paper, which will be worth a varying amount of points. Each time you turn in a draft, you are to turn in the last draft with suggested changes and the additional sections at the end. See Course Schedule for the list of due dates. The following is the breakdown of points for each draft:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two-page Research Proposal:</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction:</td>
<td>5 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro, Literature Review, &amp; Research questions:</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro, Lit review, Res ?, and Methods:</td>
<td>10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro, Lit review, Res ?, Methods, and Results:</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro, Lit review, Res ?, Methods, Results, Discussion, and Conclusion:</td>
<td>25 points</td>
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100 points

Final Research Paper and Poster Presentation (260 points)
Part 1: Research Paper (150 points): Each graduating Sociology major will design a research project on a topic of interest to the student and the organization they working with. At the end of the project, student will have produced a research report (discussed in more detail below). Students will be responsible for creating a survey questionnaire (if necessary), gathering data, summarizing and analyzing the data, and producing a 15 page report of their findings. Remember, fine-tuning a questionnaire or interview usually takes many rewrites and creating a poster for presentation. Be prepared for this by allowing extra time in your research schedule. This means the capstone students need to get organized early. Senior seminar students are required to turn in an electronic copy of their final paper to be cataloged in the sociology office. Copies of your paper: If appropriate, please present your final research paper as a spiral bound copy to the agency supervisor and organization. You also may want to bind a copy for yourself to use in your job search.

Part 2: Final Poster and Poster Presentation (100 points): Each SOC 400 student will present the findings of their research project to their classmates and instructor through an online poster presentation. Presentations will be given during the final week of class. Students will be provided with the expectations for the poster and examples for the Poster (follow the instructions). The poster presentations will be delivered on Blackboard during the last week of class.

A rubric is available for the final draft- this rubric is used in every SOC 400 class. Please use it to address any questions or concerns on what the expectations are of this paper. You should also look at previous projects to get an idea on what you signed up for.

Discussions (40 points): Students will complete 4 discussions throughout the semester, each worth 10 points for a total of 40 points. Each discussion will include question prompts that are relevant to the research process.

GRADING POLICY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rough Draft Assignments (6 total)</td>
<td>100 points</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Draft</td>
<td>160 points</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster Presentation</td>
<td>100 points</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussions (4 total)</td>
<td>40 points</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 points</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Grading Scale
90-100%=A
80-89% =B
70-79% =C
60-69% =D
59% and lower=F

ACADEMIC RESOURCES
Disability Support Services: Students who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services (970) 351-2289 as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Honor Code: All members of the University of Northern Colorado community are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and promote five fundamental values: Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility. These core elements foster an atmosphere, inside and outside of the classroom, which serves as a foundation and guides the UNC community's academic, professional, and personal growth. Endorsement of these core elements by students, faculty, staff, administration, and trustees strengthens the integrity and value of our academic climate.

UNC Policies: UNC's policies and recommendations for academic misconduct will be followed. For additional information, please see the Dean of Student's website, Student Handbook link http://www.unco.edu/dos/handbook/index.html

Student Satisfaction Evaluation: Participants will be asked to evaluate the class, please participate in this process.

Senior Exit Survey: At the end of the course, students will complete the Senior Exit Survey before final grades are posted. On Week 15, the instructor will provide the link to a confidential senior exit survey. The Survey results will be used for future cohorts of students.

SENIOR PROJECT PAPER ORGANIZATION
Review previous senior projects before preparing your project. Divide your paper into these sections and label them with the following titles in ASA style:

TITLE PAGE: Please include a title page with the title of the paper, School, Name, & number of words

ABSTRACT: This section includes an overall summary of the project in less than 250 words. This section generally includes the research question, the importance of the research, methods, results, and implications of your project.

INTRODUCTION: Here you introduce your agency (if appropriate), provide the historical, social, and cultural context of your project, population of interest (sample) , and research question and explain to readers why this project is worthwhile. Please do not call this the introduction. It is understood.

LITERATURE REVIEW: Review and Synthesize the literature relevant to your project, including discussion about the literature that applies to your project
RESEARCH QUESTION/HYPOTHESES: List at least 2 hypotheses relevant to your research question. What are your expectations for this research? In other words, after writing the literature review and analyzing your data, what do you expect to find?

METHOD: Describe the techniques you use to gather the data. What measures, data sources, sample questionnaires, etc. did you elect to use and why? Divide this section into subsections if needed to reflect the variables of interest (i.e. demographics, social support measures, financial stability papers,). Include actual copies of the instruments you used in the Appendix at the end of the paper. Provide a discussion of possible sources of bias in your research.

FINDINGS (RESULTS): This section provides the results of your study, and includes statistics, tables, charts, graphs, etc. to show what you found. You should efficiently present the key findings. Do not simply cut out statistical output in this section or discuss every analysis you did. Carefully create tables from scratch in ASA format so that it represents your data as effectively and professionally as possible, and edit your write-up of findings section so that the reader can follow the results. You must label all tables and figures but when discussing the analysis, you need to refer to where the reader can find the table or figure. For example, you can say, “Table 1, contains the information on the descriptive statistics of the demographics for the sample”

DISCUSSION/SOCIAL POLICY APPLICATIONS: This section should include the practical applications of your research for specific agencies and for general social policy issues. Please also provide in laymen’s terms, how this project is related to previous literature (is it a replication of a previous study or are you adding something new or interesting to this field of research)? In this section, you are also answering the question: how can this research be used? Develop subcategories of application possibilities if appropriate e.g. your agency, other agencies that deliver similar services, state or national policies. Be specific with your suggestions.

FUTURE RESEARCH: Provide at least one new research question or hypothesis for future research. What should the research community or your organization study next? What is still unknown? How can your study be improved on?

REFERENCES: you will need at least 10-12 recent peer-reviewed research articles for your reference section (no older than a decade). While I suggest that students practice American Sociological Association (ASA) format throughout the references and citations, let me know if another format would be more appropriate for your audience. For more on the ASA format, I have provided students many resources to help. USE THEM.

APPENDIX: This section is at the end of the paper. Include copies of any codebook, questionnaires, interviews, cover letters, or other written materials relevant to your project. A cover sheet labeled APPENDIX goes first and subsequent pages are numbered with small Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.). In the text of your paper, you then say: (refer to appendix iii).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignments [All Due Sundays unless otherwise noted]</th>
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</table>
| Week 1 (Aug. 24-30) | Paperwork Due: Supervisor Agreement and Contact Sheet  
|             | Print Project Hours Log  
|             | Discussion #1: Introductions |
| Week 2 (Aug. 31-Sept. 6) | Begin Project |
| Week 3 (Sept. 7-Sept. 13) | Discussion #2: Ethics Due |
| Week 4 (Sept. 14-20) | Paper Introduction |
| Week 5 (Sept. 21-27) | Work on Project |
| Week 6 (Sept. 28-Oct.4) | Literature Rough Draft |
| Week 7 (Oct 5-11) | Work on Project |
| Week 8 (Oct 12-18) | Work on Project  
|             | Discussion 3: The Pitfalls of Research |
| Week 9 (Oct 19-25) | Methods Due |
| Week 10 (Oct 26-Nov.1) | Work in Project |
| Week 11 (Nov. 2- 8) | Work on Project |
| Week 12 (Nov. 9- 15) | Work on Project |
| Week 13 (Nov. 16- 22) | Results Due  
| Week 14 (Nov. 23- 29) | Work on Project and Rough Drafts of Poster Presentation Due |
| Week 15 (Nov. 30- Dec 4) | Poster Presentations (Discussion #4: Poster Presentations)  
|             | Project Due (complete Revisions and add Discussion Section) |
| Finals Week (Dec. 5- 11) | Final copy to Department & Instructor with all revisions 12/7 5pm  
|             | Supervisor Evaluation 12/7 5pm  
|             | Completed Project Hours Log 12/7 5pm |