



SOCI 4403.783 Social Research Methods

Fall 2020

Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Sebahattin Ziyanak,

Office: MB3202

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Course Introduction

SOCI 4403 is a four hour course in research methods. The course provides a comprehensive overview of social science research methods, with considerations given toward methodology, measurement strategies, and research designs. A strong understanding of research methods is a vital aspect to understanding how we come to measure and understand the social world, and this course will provide you with many skills toward that understanding.

This course includes a one-semester credit hour lab that focuses on the steps undertaken in the completion of a research paper. The course will progressively work toward the development and writing of a research proposal. This proposal may serve as a basis for future research, such as your senior research project. Prerequisite: SOCI 3317 or CHLD 3301 (Introductory Statistics) and at least one additional course in sociology. You are also highly recommended to be either a junior or senior to take this course.

The writing component of this course is considerable, but I do not expect you to come in as an expert. Rather, we will focus on developing the skills necessary to write academically, and the combination of my comments, editing of your own work, and editing your peers' writing will go a long way toward honing your writing skills.

Communication Plan

The most efficient way to reach me for this course is to email me at ziyanak_s@utpb.edu. I will respond within 24 hours Monday-Friday (sometimes takes a little longer on the weekend), and if I have not, feel free to email me again. Very specific to this class, however, you may

also benefit from posting general questions about the course in the "Course Questions" forum on the Discussion Board. I check this frequently and will answer those on a daily basis.

Objectives/ Measurable Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Show that research is a reliable process for acquiring information that contributes to making good decisions.
- Identify the role of critical thinking in the conduct of research and in the consumption of research knowledge and information.
- Identify the nature of research as an empirical and evidence-based science that offers provisional knowledge which is subject to challenges, improvements, and change and help to conduct research
- Explain the uses of quantitative and qualitative research data, and identify which is appropriate to address your research question.
- Describe the different data collection techniques which researchers use such as experiments, surveys, content analysis, existing statistics, ethnographic field research, and historical-comparative techniques.
- Distinguish between exploratory, descriptive, explanatory and evaluation as the four major purposes of research.
- Analyze the orientations of basic and applied research.
- Construct a research proposal, including understanding how to write an Introduction, Literature Review, & Hypothesis section.
- Explore topics relating to research ethics, and thereby gain firsthand experience in developing and writing one's own research proposal for submission to the Institutional Review Board
- Identify the process of survey construction and conduct peer review of other students' surveys

Course Description

- **Course Credits:** 4.0
- **Location:** This course is a full Web course and is conducted in Canvas
- **Course Prerequisites:** SOCI 3317 plus one additional Sociology course or permission of instructor.

- **Course Catalog Description:** The course provides a comprehensive overview of social science research methods, with emphasis given to the concepts used in the conduct of research, measurement strategies, and research designs. This course includes a one-semester credit hour lab that focuses on the steps undertaken in the completion of a research paper. Required for all Sociology majors.

Overview of the Course

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this course is to gain an understanding of how social science research methods can be used to better understand the social world.
- **Objectives/outcomes:** Students will be familiarized with the fundamental elements of social research methods. The course is designed to prepare students for the final required core course, Senior Research Seminar. This preparation includes the development of critical thinking skills in relation to social science research, as well as picking one's research question, and developing that question into a research proposal that could feasibly be pursued.
- **General Topics:** The course will provide instruction on the diverse set of methods used by social science researchers, including first hand development of students' own research ideas and engagement with various methods. Topics to be examined include picking a research question, sampling, measurement of variables, planning a study, types of quantitative and qualitative research, research ethics, survey construction, peer reviewing techniques, and writing a research proposal.
- **Target Audience:** This course is intended for social science majors. That is, the focus of the course is on learning the methods social scientists use to come to understand the social world. As such, the course may also be relevant to persons in fields other than social science, such as business, humanities, and education majors may find benefit in the methods.
- **Required for any specific major/minor?:** Required for all Sociology and Child and Family Studies majors. Course serves as a precursor to Senior Research Seminar, the final course for Sociology majors.

Method of Instruction

The course is structured around online lectures in written form. Each lecture is written similar to the style of a classroom lecture, but will provide you with the opportunity to approach the material at your own pace. Further, you will have the opportunity to test your basic knowledge along the way, so that you can gain basic mastery of concepts before moving on.

"Lab" credit that was previously awarded through an extra hour of course time will be accounted for through a good deal of hands-on work. Students will have the opportunity to work through social science research issues at various points in the research process. Further, substantial peer review will be included, as thinking critically about others' work is a crucial part of the research process.

Thus, beyond the lecture modules, students will submit work to each other for peer review. They will learn how to review other's work and ideas, as well as how to respond to these ideas. The instructor will facilitate the peer review process. Participation in peer review will comprise a substantial portion of the course grade.

Discussion Board posting will be used to deal with questions on assignments. Students will be expected to post on the board weekly to discuss the topics for each Module. Such posting will expose students to a wide variety of research topics and ideas, and should thus facilitate development of a broader set of critical thinking skills.

I will expect students to submit their work and research ideas to me throughout the semester, and especially early on, I will expect them to speak with me about their research ideas. Multiple platforms exist for us to discuss these ideas. Among these are email, telephone, Discussion Board posting, and an online forum called WIMBA. Through past experience, I have found that the Discussion Board is among the best forums to handle general questions, as others are likely to have the same question as you.

Course Schedule

Week of:	Module Number/ Class Topic	Reading
Aug. 24 – Aug. 30	Module 0: Syllabus, Overview of Course Introductions	Chapter 1
	Module 1: Introduction to Research / How to Peer Review	
	Module 2: Planning a Study	Chapter 2
Aug. 31 – Sep. 06	Module 3: Research Ethics / Institutional Review Board	Chapter 3
	Module 4: Sampling	Chapter 4
Sep. 07 – Sep. 13	Module 5: Writing a Lit Review/Citation format	Slides only

	Module 6: Measurement, Part I: Operationalization & Conceptualization	Chapter 5
Sep. 14 – Sep. 20	Module 7: Measurement, Part II: Reliability and Validity	Chapter 5
	Module 8: Survey Research	Chapter 6
Sep. 21 – Sep. 27	Module 9: Qualitative Methods	Chapter 10
	Module 10: Secondary Data/Content Analysis	Chapter 8
Sep. 28 – Oct. 04	Module 11: Experiments	Chapter 7
	Module 12: Historical and Cross-Cultural Research	Chapter 11
Oct. 05 – Oct. 11	Module 13: Quantitative Data Analysis	Chapter 9
	Module 14: Writing a Research Report	Chapter 12
Oct. 12 – Oct. 16	Final edits/Revisions	
	<i>Final Paper due</i>	

Fall 2020 First 8 weeks Classes Begin

August 24, 2020

Last day to drop or withdraw

Fri, September 25, 2020

Required Materials

John w. Creswell & J. David Creswell, *Research Design, 5th Edition*. Sage Publication. 2018.

ISBN 978-1-5063-8670-6

Other materials: Microsoft Office – 2003 or newer

Computer Skills, Other Requirements

Basic Microsoft Office skills will greatly benefit you, although the course will approach the use of these applications with the understanding that some of you may have had limited experience with them.

For those of you who are extremely unfamiliar with Microsoft Office applications, I strongly recommend that you familiarize yourself with the "Help" function, as it will troubleshoot a wide scope of basic questions. When you cannot find the answers you need, you may also want to search for whatever question you have on Google or another search engine, as there are a plethora of resources devoted to both basic and more advanced computing questions. For example, simply type in "how do I enter a formula in Excel." This query will bring up a number of pages that should help you figure out what you may have been missing.

I will attempt to help you navigate technology issues specifically relating to the course when it comes to specific methods we are using in the course. I am not a computer expert and likely will not be able to help you with more general issues or problems with hardware or software, although I will do my best to advise you on whom you should consult for advice on such issues.

Assessment

The following components will make up your grade in the course.

Research Proposal – 50%

The central requirement for this course is the development of the first sections of a research proposal. Unlike some term papers, this proposal will be developed incrementally from the very beginning of the semester. This process will allow for a good deal of idea development as well as extensive editing. Various assignments throughout the semester will require you to submit drafts of specific sections of the proposal.

You are not allowed to study minors in this course. In other words, the subject must be 18 years of age. You will NOT be expected to collect your own data for this proposal. In fact, as you will learn early on the semester, **you cannot collect your own data without first obtaining explicit approval from UTPB's Institutional Review Board.**

This proposal will be turned in at the end of the semester, and will serve as the final product in a semester of work. I will provide you with a clear rubric that outlines the expectations and grading details for this proposal. **Your research project is 8 pages, excluding cover page and references worth (50% of your total points.)**

In general, the research proposal will include:

- Introduction
 - Statement of the Problem

- Purpose of the Study
- Rationale of the study
- Research Question/s
- Review of the Literature and Theoretical Framework
- Hypotheses
- Methodology
 - Data
 - Sampling
 - Methods
- Discussion / Limitation / Recommendation for Further Studies
- Conclusion
- References

Discussion Board Participation / Peer Evaluation – 15%

This course involves a good deal of discussion and lab work. As a 4-hour class, each module will have lab activities that you will be expected to participate in. Sometimes these activities will happen in conjunction with the discussion board posting. Other times the Discussion Board and lab will be separate. Each Module will have clear instructions as to the expectations for discussion board and lab. **No late Discussion Board posts will be accepted.**

The Discussion Board is a useful tool that allows you to post questions and comments, and also to respond to others' questions or comments. We will use the board in the development of your own ideas in some cases.

Lab activities typically will involve a hands-on approach to addressing various aspects of the research process. Sometimes you will be peer reviewing your fellow classmates' work, whereas at other points you will be doing other activities relating to course material.

I have chosen not to assign lab work in groups, because of the fact that in online work, I have found groups to be somewhat ineffective when someone fails to play their part. The person who does not do their required posting no doubt will see an impact on their grade, but I have attempted with this course structure not to punish those who do turn in their work on time.

Course Questions Forum: On the Discussion Board, you will find a forum entitled "Course Questions." This area is designated for you to ask questions on anything from the basic structure or requirements of the course to small questions about assignments, labs, etc. **You must post at least two questions on this forum some time during the semester.** You may post multiple questions if you would like at any point, as long as you have one. This will serve as an informal "Frequently Asked Questions" class, so read through existing questions before you post. Your question should not be a repeat of an existing question that has already been answered.

Assignments and Quizzes - 35%

In addition to our work on the research proposal, you will complete short assignments for each module. We will not have any major exams in this course, as the primary focus is upon the development of one's final research proposal. Most assignments will be related to the development of the research proposal, but will involve early stage development of various sections. Failure to turn in drafts or assignments on time will result in deductions from your assigned grade.

Assignments, in addition to Discussion Board postings and lab activities will be clearly outlined in the "Assignments" tab. If anything is unclear to you, then that is a great opportunity to post on the "Course Questions" forum of the Discussion Board.

Student E-mail

All UTPB students are provided with email accounts through the university server. Every student must use the university email for student-instructor interaction. Through Campus Connect, you may forward University correspondence, including canvas email, to your personal email account (e.g., Gmail, Hotmail, etc.).

Each email that you send me should begin with a Subject line that tells me something about your question (e.g., Stats help – frequency distributions). In your email, please sign your name as well. Those two things alone will make your email much more likely to be returned efficiently. You cannot imagine how often I get student emails with no subject line, no name signed, and from an email address that does not indicate who the person is.

Policies and Procedures

Course Content Structure

The course is divided into 14 modules. Most modules cover one chapter in the *Understanding Research* textbook, and will have accompanying assignment, Discussion Board post(s), and/or lab activities to go along with it. The primary aim of the course is the development of a full research proposal, leading up to, but stopping short of, submitting an IRB request and collecting data.

You should read the textbook section first, and then review the online lecture. The lectures will be summaries, elaborations of the textbook material, and links to related information on the Web. After you have completed reviewing the lecture, note the

assignment and activities for that Module, which in some cases will be a quiz and in others a short assignment of some type.

Collaboration with fellow students will be a major component of the course. You will be expected to post on the Discussion Board regularly. Additionally, you will do a substantial amount of peer evaluation of your fellow students' writing and ideas. In critiquing your colleagues' research proposals and surveys, you will gain a good deal of insight into the research process and this experience should be very useful to you in turning a critical eye to your own research.

It is essential that you address other students and their ideas with constructive criticism. That is, you should treat their work with respect, and provide useful, but not insulting, feedback. Everyone is learning new methods in this class, and when you are critiqued, you are simply working toward the improvement of your work. Criticism can be hard for all of us to take at times, but remember that the focus is on improving your work. Do not take it personally. If you feel you receive feedback that is unfair or unnecessarily harsh, please let me know and I will address the situation accordingly.

Grading and Feedback

The majority of course activities will be graded within one week after the set due date. Should longer assignments ever take additional grading time, I will be in contact with you about such delays.

You can check your grades by going to GradeBook in Canvas. If there is any discrepancy in the grade, you must contact me immediately. I will provide individual feedback or a general feedback in the performance of the course activity.

Cheating/Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor) or the attempt to commit such acts.

"Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to the appropriation of, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, other expression and media, and presenting that material as one's own academic work being offered for credit.

Whereas collaboration is welcomed and encouraged for homework assignments, exams should be completed only by you, the student. Should you have questions about the exam, they should be directed to me.

NOTE: Students found plagiarizing or cheating will receive a zero on the course activity which could cause failure in the class and/or suspension or dismissal from the college.

Discussion Board Participation

Discussion Board will primarily be used for discussing course content related topics and issues. You will be expected to participate in discussion for each of the 14 modules this semester.

In addition to the course content related topics in discussion tool there will be a few general topics: Getting to Know Each Other, Technical problems/issues, General Questions related to the course content, etc. The posts under these topics will not be graded.

Discussion Board posting in this class will vary from week to week, and thus, you will need to be aware of what the content is for each Module. Often you will be responding to ideas or posting research ideas of your own. Other times I will post a question or topic and ask you to respond to that topic in a substantive way. The Discussion Board expectations are outlined in each Module under the "Assignments" tab.

It is important to note that in order to receive credit for Discussion Board posts, you need to substantively address the material. Therefore, "Great idea" or "I was thinking that too" or "This is hard!" are not sufficient posts. Rather, you need to add to the conversation by contributing your thoughts or adding a new question.

Submission of Course Assessment Activities

All the course assessment activities will be submitted via **Assignment Tool**. Keep in mind the following standards/practices for submission of assignments:

- All course assessment activity files that will be submitted to the instructor should be in Word 2007 or RTF, with occasional supplements in Excel 2007
- Be sure to put your name at the top of each page header
- Always keep a copy of all the work you submit so that you won't need to re-do it if it should get lost in cyberspace.

Make-Up/Late Submission Policy

All course activities must be submitted before or on set due dates and times. If the student is unable to abide by the due dates and times, it is her/his responsibility to contact the instructor immediately. **There will be a 50% deduction for each week of**

late submission of the assignment. NO late Discussion Board posts will be accepted.

If you have extenuating circumstances that prevent your completion of an assignment, let me know as soon as possible. It is very important that you complete all the coursework, but I also understand that sometimes things come up that conflict with schoolwork. Keep me in the loop.

NOTE: The due dates and times for the activities will adhere to the Central Time Zone.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

· **Privacy and accessibility statement:** For the accessibility and privacy statements of external tools used within courses, go to [Accessibility and Privacy Statements](#).

· **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

Students with Disabilities: The University of Texas of the Permian Basin in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provides “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities. Any student with a disability who is requesting an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter from the ADA Officer for Students. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored.

Adapted from UTSA ADA syllabus statement.

ADA Officer for Students: Mr. Paul Leverington

Address: Mesa Building 4243

Voice Telephone: 432-552-4696

Email: ada@utpb.edu

Course Incomplete/Withdrawal/Grade Appeal

All students are required to complete the course within the semester they are signed up. Incomplete grades for the course are rarely given and will only be granted if the student has completed at least 75% of the course with a grade of ‘C’ or better and provides a valid, documented excuse for not being able to complete the course on time and has contacted me prior to the scheduled last class to request an extension. The student will sign a contract that includes the incomplete course activities and the new due dates.

For grade appeal process go to <http://ss.utpb.edu/dean-of-students/student-grievances/>

Rules of Behavior

Anything you type in the discussion area is public – which means that every student in this class (including your instructor) will see what you write. Please pay attention to the language you use and adhere to the following guidelines:

- Do not post anything too personal;
- Do not use language that is inappropriate for a classroom setting or prejudicial in regard to gender, race, or ethnicity;
- Do not use all caps in the message box unless you are emphasizing (it is considered shouting)
- Be courteous and respectful to other people on the list
- Do not overuse acronyms like you would use in text messaging. Some of the list participants may not be familiar with acronyms.
- If the posting is going to be long, use line breaks and paragraphs
- Fill in a meaningful Subject Line
- Write your full name at the end of the posting
- Be careful with sarcasm and subtle humor; *one person's joke is another person's insult.*

Should other problems arise with discussion board posting, I will send an announcement to the class informing you of the updated standards. In short, however, please be clear in your message and respectful of your fellow students and I don't think we will have any major problems.

NOTE: If you do not adhere to the guidelines for any posting, you will lose the points that would have been granted, and the instructor reserves the right to remove your posting and to deny you any further posting privileges.

Refer to the following links for additional help on netiquette:

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

<http://www.dtcc.edu/cs/rfc1855.html>

Attendance and Class Participation

Regular and active participation is an essential, unmistakably important aspect of this online course. The expectation of the instructor is that students will log on a minimum of three times every seven days. It is critical that you read all of the lecture and assignment materials as well as all of the public discussion materials. Your full participation ON A WEEKLY BASIS is not only a requirement; it is also an essential aspect of the online course process. All students are expected to do the work assigned, notify the instructor when emergencies arise, and make up assignments no later than the due dates.

Tracking

Canvas course platforms have a tracking feature. This feature quantifies how often and when students are active in the course and also provides information if the student has accessed different pages of the course.

Absenteeism

All the course activities have set dates to be completed and submitted. After the due dates the activities will not be available for the students. Thus, if you are ill for a prolonged time and cannot complete the activities, you must contact me and update the situation. You are expected to log into the course at least once a week. For summer courses you are required to log in everyday.

If I am going to be out because of ill health, attending a conference, etc you will be notified through email.

Extra Credit Opportunities

No extra credit for the course is planned. However, I reserve the right to alter this should it become necessary during the semester.

Hardware and Software Requirements

Computer

PC Configuration - A CPU with 1 GHz processor, 256 MB RAM and Windows XP operating system

Mac Configuration – A CPU with 300 MHZ (G3), 256 MB RAM and Mac OS X 10.2 or newer operating system

Peripherals

You will need external speakers to be able to listen to audio files (if present in the course).

Should you wish to talk with me through audio on Wimba, you will need a headset and microphone. Many Mac computers may have speakers and a microphone built-in.

Software

The course content is presented through Microsoft Office 2007, and will use Microsoft Word, Excel and Powerpoint. If you have an earlier version of Office, you should be able to download a plug-in that will allow you to open the newer version Office files (ending in .docx, .xlsx, and .pptx). [Follow this link to access the Microsoft Compatibility Pack.](#)

All assignments for the course will be turned in using Word or Excel documents. If you are operating using an earlier version of Excel (or Excel for Mac), you can likely get by without having to pay for an upgrade. However, what is important is that the screenshots will be oriented toward Microsoft Office in Vista, and therefore, it will be your responsibility to figure out where the pertinent commands are located. If using an alternative version of Office, you can often search in Google to find the appropriate help that you need.

Anti-Virus Software

Anti-virus software is highly recommended for students and instructors. Online courses involve much file sharing, which increases your risk of computer virus infection. Anti-virus software will help protect your computer in case of exposure to a computer virus.

Other software: There may be audio/video files in the course for which you will need [Windows Media Player](#) or [QuickTime](#) or [Real Player](#).

Internet connection

Recommended - Cable modem, DSL, or intranet (T-1); or 128 KBPS modem

Note: Corporate or academic security firewalls may block some course content, such as chat or streaming media. Accommodations for access can usually be arranged if you contact your network administrator, though local security policies ultimately dictate what is allowed. 56 K modem or better

Technical Information

[24/7 Technical Help](#) [Browser Test](#) [Browser Configuration](#) [Download Plugins](#)

Supported Browser

Firefox 3.5 or higher for PC; and Safari 3.X – 4.0 for Mac
[Download Firefox](#) [Download Safari](#)

Unsupported Browsers

America Online (AOL), Prodigy, Juno, MSN, Yahoo and other Internet Service Providers (ISPs), provide their own internal and proprietary web browsers. These browsers may not be compatible with online courses.

Online Student Authentication

UTPB requires that each student who registers for an online course is the same student who participates in, completes, and receives credit for the course. This course satisfies the second method of student authentication by having students submit an approved photo ID and photo of themselves through an assignment submission.

*Approved photo identifications are: passports, government issued identification, driver's licenses, military ID from DoD; dual credit and early college high school students use school district identifications.

Preparation for Computer Emergencies

Given the online nature of this course, it is strongly recommended that you have a back-up plan should you experience a computer emergency. This might include access to another computer in your household or alternatively, to a computer lab in a local library that you can access in an emergency.

Should you experience difficulties with computer access that will prevent your progress in the class, you should contact me as early as possible so that we may discuss the best solution to such a problem.

Student Support Services

SERVICE	CONTACT
ADA Accommodation/Support	ADA Officer for Students: Mr. Paul Leverington Address: Mesa Building 4243 Voice Telephone: 432-552-4696 - Email: ada@utpb.edu
Advising	UTPB E-Advisor at http://cas.utpb.edu/academic-advising-center/e-advisor/
Bookstore	(432) 552-0220 http://www.bkstr.com/texas-permianbasinstore/home
Email, Outlook 365,	Information Resources Service http://www.utpb.edu/services/ird

my.utpb.edu	
Financial Aid and Scholarship	(432) 552-2620 http://www.utpb.edu/campus-life/financial-aid
Library	(432) 552-2370 The J. Conrad Dunagan Library Online at http://library.utpb.edu/
Registrar	(432) 552-2635 http://www.utpb.edu/services/academic-affairs/office-of-the-registrar
Student Services	http://www.utpb.edu/campus-life/dean-of-students
Technical Support	Canvas 1-866-437-0867 https://guides.instructure.com/
Tutoring & Learning Resources	If you are taking courses through UTPB the following links provide services: Smarthinking Online Tutoring (provides tutoring services), SmarterMeasure (measures learner readiness for online course). https://www.utpb.edu/academics/undergraduate-success/success-center/tutoring/writing/online-writing-lab

End-of-Course Evaluation and Instructor Evaluation

Every student must complete end-of-course evaluation provided by UTPB.

Disclaimer & Rights

Information contained in this syllabus was to the best knowledge of the instructor considered correct and complete when distributed for use in the beginning of the semester. However, the instructor reserves the right, acting within the policies and procedures of UTPB to make changes in the course content or instructional techniques without notice or obligation. The students will be informed about the changes, if any.