Lecture: TR 10:00-11:20 in 221 McKenzie
Office Hours: 3:30-5:00 TR, 632 PLC
Phone: (541)346-5272 (Note: I rarely check my voice mail, email is the most effective way of reaching me.)
Email: light@uoregon.edu

Graduate Teaching Fellow: Jessica Schultz
Office Hours: 12-2 R, 614 PLC
Email: jessicas@uoregon.edu

Graduate Teaching Fellow: Lauren Stewart
Office Hours: 10-12 W, 617 PLC
Email: lstewart@uoregon.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
We are inundated with social scientific information: We read polls in newspapers, see interviews on the television, clips of events on the internet. We form opinions based on this information and information that we collect ourselves through stories that we hear, events we participate in, or other experiences that we have. We can’t resist our own desire to play “arm chair” social scientists. Unlike our personal observations, however, social research is a rigorous and systematic way of generating knowledge that often relies on principles derived from social scientific methods. Throughout this class, you will be introduced to the various ways in which social scientists, particularly sociologists, go about conducting research. In so doing, we will learn to think more critically about the social scientific information that we consume and more thoroughly about the observations that we make.

Because the best way to learn is often through doing, the course is designed to give you hands-on experience with conducting your own research. In the first part of the class, we will explore the idea of sociology as a science with an emphasis on the basics of research design. Next, we will discuss how social scientists go about measuring the social world, including different ways of generating data. The course concludes with a very basic introduction of statistical techniques used to try to make sense of the collected data. Some of the questions we will attempt to answer include: What, exactly, do sociologists do when they do research? How can we build and test social theory in a manner that is consistent with the best available evidence? What are the best ways to generate and evaluate new knowledge related to the social world?

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
The main objective of this course is to help provide an understanding of the basics of social research methodology (terms, methods, assessments). Hopefully, by the end of the quarter you will be more familiar with what many sociologists do and how they do it. This course is also designed to bring to light professional social scientific writing styles with the goal of improving your own writing skills. In addition, I also hope that you will be better equipped with the tools to become a more knowledgeable and critical consumer and evaluator of social scientific research that you frequently encounter (e.g., news reports, claims made by advertisers, “new” research findings, etc.). After all, as the saying goes, knowledge is power.
**REQUIRED READINGS (ONE TEXT, 8 ARTICLES):**

**Required Text:** Earl Babbie’s *The Practice of Social Research, 5th* edition (2010)

**Required Articles:** All can be found on Blackboard.


Weiss, Robert S. 2004. “In their own words: Making the most of qualitative interviews.” *Contexts* 3: 44-51.

You are expected to have read the non-textbook assigned readings **before** you come to class. Because there is a great deal of material to get through, **I expect you to be somewhat familiar with key terms/ideas before the lecture.**

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

*Assignments.* Throughout the quarter, you will be required to complete four assignments. All of the assignments (except assignment 4) constitute a step-by-step progression that will culminate in the final research project. So, in essence you will be working on your final paper over the entire quarter.

*Final Research Paper.* This will be due the last week of class. You will synthesize the exercises into a 10-12 page research paper on a topic of your choice.

*Exams.* There will be a mid-term and a final exam. The final is not designed as a cumulative exam, however it will draw upon information learned in the first part of the course. Exams may include material that was solely discussed in class.

*In-Class Reading Quizzes and Exercises.* You must have read the **non-text book articles** prior to their scheduled class. There will be occasional quizzes to help assess whether you have read the material. Additional in-class exercises will be graded for completion during class. You may miss one quiz or exercise without a deleterious effect to your grade.

*Attendance.* Attendance is strongly recommended, as most of the course materials will be explained more fully in lectures and recitation. If you must miss class, be sure to get notes from someone else in the class. You are also responsible for any announcements made during the class. I’m not going to punish you for not coming to class (as you will realize that chronic absences will be punishment in the long run for you),
but I do like to reward people for being able to make most of the classes. If you attend and our on-time to
90% of classes (i.e. you miss no more than 2 classes) you can earn 2% (8 points) of extra credit to be
added to your final course grade.

OTHER ITEMS WORTH MENTIONING

- Please do not miss the exams. There are very few acceptable reasons for missing an exam. If you
  absolutely must miss the exam, you must let me know within 24 hours of missing AND you must
  have a verifiable excuse. This means, if your car breaks down, I need to see the mechanic’s note.
  Without verifiable proof, you will not be able to make up the exam.

- Please hand in your papers on time. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the
  scheduled due date. For each day that the paper is late, you will lose 5% of the possible points,
  including the weekends. Again, I must have verifiable proof, otherwise, you will be docked the
  5%/day.

- All assignments must be double-spaced, written in 12-point font with one-inch margins. It is quite
  obvious when assignments deviate from these requirements. Additionally, you will be graded on
  how well you fulfill the assignment guidelines, not on the volume of your document. As always,
  save your documents in multiple locations (flash drives, hard drives, etc.) to prevent “lost”
  papers. This is not an adequate excuse for tardiness.

GRADES AND DUE DATES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due: Date</th>
<th>Other Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>40 pts</td>
<td>10/12</td>
<td>Exam 1 100pts 10/28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>40 pts</td>
<td>10/26</td>
<td>Exam 2 100pts 12/8 @ 8am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
<td>11/4</td>
<td>In-class reading quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 4</td>
<td>40 pts</td>
<td>11/16</td>
<td>and exercises 25 pts</td>
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|              |        |            | Final Research Paper 75 pts Due: 12/2

TOTAL: 440 pts.

Letter grades
A+ 97-100% A 94-<97% A- 90-<94%
B+ 87-<90% B 84-<87% B- 80-<84%
C+ 77-<80% C 74-<77% C- 70-<74%
D+ 67-<70% D 64-<67% D- 60-<64%

COURSE OUTLINE

The dates that are provided here are tentative and could change depending on how this class proceeds. In other
words, some topics may take a bit more time than I have indicated below and some may take somewhat less time
than indicated here. Any changes in dates, including changes in exam dates or due dates will be announced in class
or through email. You are responsible for finding out about any announcements made in class or through
email.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/28</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Start Ch. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/30</td>
<td>Sociology as Science</td>
<td>Chapter 1, Berger Article</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/5</td>
<td>Theoretical Foundations</td>
<td>Ch. 2 (pp. 32-35, 41-61)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
II. Research Design and Measurement

10/7  Research Design                  Ch. 4
10/12  Correlation and Causality       ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE
10/14  Conceptualization and Operationalization Ch. 5 (pp.129-148)
10/19  Reading and Writing Social Research Skim Ch. 15 and skim Smith & Moore article
10/21  Non-Probability Sampling        Ch. 7
10/26  Probability Sampling and Review for Exam ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE
10/28  EXAM ONE

III. Methods of Observation

11/2  Survey Construction and Distribution Ch. 9 and Schuman Article
11/4  Qualitative Field Methods I: Field Methods Ch. 10 and Adler & Adler ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE
11/9  Qualitative Methods II: Interviewing/Focus Groups Weiss article and Aries & Seider article
11/11  Unobtrusive Research             Skim Ch. 11 and Grazian article SURVEYS DUE

IV. Data Analysis Techniques, Sociological Writing, and Ethical Considerations

11/16  Quantitative Analysis           Ch. 14: Pages 448-67
11/18  Introductory Statistics         Skim Hingson et al. article ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE
11/23  Thanksgiving Week: No Class
11/25  Thanksgiving Week: No Class
11/30  Ethics                          Ch. 3
12/2  Ethics: Film “Obedience”, Wrap-up and Review FINAL PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

**FINAL EXAM IS SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 8TH AT 8AM IN 221 MCK**

Encouraging Inclusive Learning Environments
The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if aspects of the instruction or course design result in barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact Disability Services in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or disabsrv@uoregon.edu.
For Your Information:

**Academic Misconduct:** The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students’ obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.