

**Research Methods in Sociology**  
SOCIOL 361  
Fall 2020 via Canvas (asynchronously)

Instructor: Prof. Esther Chan  
(she/her/hers)  
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Office hours: Monday's 2:30-4:30pm  
(sign up on Canvas)

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Office hours: Wednesday's 12-2pm  
(sign up on Canvas)

**Course Description**

As social animals we are constantly making observations about the world around us. Maybe you've wondered why there are fewer women in certain science fields. Perhaps you've questioned the representation of gender and race in the media. Maybe you've seen a statistic on crime and wonder how the researchers came to that statistic. While scrolling down your social media feed, maybe you've seen articles with titles stating, "Researchers find..." This course will provide you with the methodological tools to investigate the social world around you as well as critically evaluate research you may come across.

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

- Design research studies to answer sociological questions.
- Evaluate different research methodologies.
- Understand how theoretical and philosophical perspectives underlie various research methods.
- Understand potential ethical dilemmas of research.
- Write a research proposal.

**Course Format**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be meeting asynchronously and online. All lectures and course readings besides the textbook will be posted on Canvas. I will upload lectures every Monday by 12 pm. In addition, your quizzes and writing assignments will be due via Canvas.

You will be expected to complete assigned readings and listen to the weekly lectures. One is not a substitute for the other. You will have weekly quizzes due every Friday by 5pm from Weeks 2-12 on the readings and lecture for that week. Weekly quizzes will be posted every Monday by 12pm on Canvas. You may complete the weekly quiz any time before the Friday due date. The quiz with the lowest score will be dropped from assessment.

Please note that quizzes are meant to be easy and not a way to trick you! As long as you have read and listened to the lecture *prior* to taking the quiz, you will be able to answer the questions. All quizzes are multiple choice and will contain four questions. Each question is worth half a point.

Finally, you will write a research proposal for this class. There will be four writing assignments to facilitate the completion of this over the course. These will be due on Monday's by 5pm for

weeks 3, 6, 9, and 12. The final product will be due Monday, December 14, by 5pm. A detailed description of the research proposal will be posted on Canvas.

No late assignments will be accepted to facilitate a timely return of your written assignments. If you have extraneous circumstances, please email me as soon as possible. Late assignments will be accepted on a case by case basis.

If you have questions about how the course works, assignments, problems with the website, or anything like that, please post your question to the “Course Questions” discussion forum (Under “Discussions” tab in Canvas). That way, everyone can see the question and benefit from my response, or if you think you can address someone else’s question, please do!

If you need to discuss anything of a personal nature, emailing me is the way to go. In general, I will do my best to respond to emails within one to two days. If I do not respond within that time period, please feel free to send me another email. I promise I am not ignoring you but that emails often get buried. Please also note that I do not check my e-mail on the weekends.

Your success in this course is important to me! Please check out these resources from the CETL for learning online.

- <https://uwm.edu/cetl/keep-learning-tip-sheet-for-students/>
- <https://uwm.edu/cetl/be-a-successful-online-student/>

### **Required Texts**

Carr et al. 2018. *The Art and Science of Social Research*. WW Norton and Company Inc, NY. ISBN: 978-0393911589.

Other required articles and readings will be uploaded to Canvas.

In this course, you will read a number of research proposals. These proposals are written by individuals who received grant money to carry out their research projects. In other words, these research proposals were deemed exemplary and worthy of financial support. These proposals will vary in length and will provide you with examples of excellent research proposals. **Please do not share these proposals outside of our class.**

### **Grades & Evaluation**

Assignments in this course add up to 100 points.

10 Quizzes (20 points) due: Every Friday by 5pm, Weeks 2 through 12.

Research Proposal Development & Due Dates:

- Research Topic (5 points) due: Week 3, Monday by 5pm
- Annotated Bibliography (10 points): Week 6, Monday by 5pm
- Introduction & Literature Review Draft (20 points) due: Week 9, Monday by 5pm
- Methods Draft (20 points) due: Week 12, Monday by 5pm
- Final Draft (25 points) due: Finals week, Monday by 5pm

Assignment	Points
Quizzes	20
Research Topic	5
Annotated Bibliography	10
Introduction & Literature Review	20
Methods	20
Final	25
Total	100

Total Points	Grade	Total Points	Grade
94-100	A	74-76	C
90-93	A-	70-73	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
84-86	B	64-66	D
80-83	B-	60-63	D-
77-79	C+	0-59	F
Partial points will always be rounded up.			

As the UW System assumes “that study leading to one semester credit represents an investment of time by the average student of not fewer than 48 hours” (UWS ACPS 4), a 3-credit course such as this one will require a minimum of 144 (3 x 48) hours of your time. You may find it necessary to spend additional time on a course; the numbers below only indicate that the course will not require any less of your time.

- 37.5 hours reviewing instructional materials prepared by your instructor and placed online. This is instead of physically coming to class and sitting through a lecture.
- 75 hours preparing for class, which may include reading, note taking, completing minor exercises and assignments, and discussing course topics with classmates and the instructor in structured settings
- 31.5 hours preparing for and writing major papers and/or exams.

### **Course Schedule:**

**\*please note this does not show the weekly assigned readings!**

Week	Topic	Due Monday's by 5pm	Due Friday's by 5pm
1	Introduction		
2	Construction of Knowledge		Quiz 1
3	Theory and Ethics	Due Mon: Topic paragraph	Quiz 2
4	Operationalization & Measurement		Quiz 3
5	Sampling		Quiz 4
6	Surveys	Due Mon: Annotated Bibliography	Quiz 5
7	Experiments		Quiz 6
8	Ethnography		Quiz 7
9	Interviews	Due Mon: Intro & Literature Review	Quiz 8
10	Material-Based & Historical-Comparative Methods		Quiz 9
11	Mixed Methods		Quiz 10

12	Public Sociology	Due Mon: Methods	Quiz 11
13	Thanksgiving		
14	Project Consultations		
15	No class - finalize your projects		
Finals	Dec. 14	Due Mon: Research Proposal	

## **Course Schedule: Weekly Assigned Readings & Due Dates**

### **Week 1 (Aug 31-Sept 4): Introduction & Syllabus Review**

- Self-introductions on Canvas discussion boards

Readings:

- Syllabus
- Research Proposal Assignment Details

### **Week 2 (Sept 7-11): Construction of Knowledge**

Friday, Sept 11, by 5P: Quiz 1 due

Readings:

- Textbook Ch 1
- Choosing a research problem: <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchproblem>

### **Week 3 (Sept 14-18): Theory & Ethics**

Monday, Sept 14, by 5P: Research topic due

Friday, Sept 18, by 5P: Quiz 2 due

Readings:

- Textbook Ch 2-3

### **Week 4 (Sept 21-25): Operationalization & Measurement**

Friday, Sept 25, by 5P: Quiz 3 due

Readings:

- Textbook 4-5
- <https://guides.library.uwm.edu/soc361> (Read through this webpage and watch the two videos on Sociological Abstracts and College Level Sources.)

### **Week 5 (Sept 28-Oct 2): Sampling**

Friday, Oct 2, by 5P: Quiz 4 due

Readings:

- Textbook Ch 6
- Ecklund et. al 2016. "Religion Among Scientists in International Context: A New Study of Scientists in Eight Regions." *Socius* 2:1-9.

**Week 6 (Oct 5-9): Surveys**

Monday, Oct 5, by 5P: Annotated Bibliography due

Friday, Oct 9, by 5P: Quiz 5 due

Readings:

- Textbook Ch 7
- Survey research proposal example

**Week 7 (Oct 12-16): Experiments**

Friday by 5P: Quiz 6 due

- Textbook Ch 8
- Pager, Devah. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108: 937-975.

**Week 8 (Oct 19-23): Ethnography**

Friday, Oct 23, by 5P: Quiz 7 due

Readings:

- Textbook Ch 10
- Research proposals examples

**Week 9 (Oct 26-30): Interviewing**

Monday, Oct 26, by 5P: Introduction & Literature Review due

Friday, Oct 30, by 5P: Quiz 8 due

Readings:

- Textbook Ch 11
- Interview research proposal example

**Week 10 (Nov 2-6): Material-Based & Historical-Comparative Methods**

Friday, Nov 6, by 5P: Quiz 9 due

Readings:

- Textbook Ch 12
- Research proposal example

**Week 11 (Nov 9-13): Mixed Methods**

Friday, Nov 13, by 5P: Quiz 10 due

Readings:

- Small, Mario Luis. 2011. "How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study: Recent Trends in a Rapidly Growing Literature." *Annual Review of Sociology* 37:57-86.
- Research proposal example

**Week 12 (Nov 16-20): Public Sociology**

Monday, Nov 16, by 5P: Methodology due  
Friday, Nov 20, by 5P: Quiz 11 due

Readings:

- Nichols, Laura. 2017. "Public Sociology." The Cambridge Handbook of Sociology: Volume 2 Specialty and Interdisciplinary Studies. Pp. 313-321 K. O. Korgen (Ed.). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

**Week 13 (Nov 23-27: Thanksgiving**

**Week 14 (Nov 30 – Dec 4): Project Consultations**

- Sign up for a time slot and we will meet online.

**Week 15 (Dec 7-11): No class – Finalize your proposal!**

**Final Proposal Due: Monday, December 14, by 5PM via Canvas.**

## UNIVERSITY AND SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES

The Secretary of the University maintains a web page that contains university policies that affect the instructor and the students in this course, as well as essential information specific to conduct of the course. The link to that page is:

<https://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2016/12/Syllabus-Links.pdf>

**Students with Disabilities.** In the pursuit of equal access and in compliance with state and federal laws, the University is required to provide accommodations to students with documented disabilities. To learn more, please visit:  
<http://uwm.edu/arc/>

**Religious Observances.** Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to religious observance are found at the following: <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm>

**Students called to active Military Duty.** Students called to active military duty. Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty should be noted.

**Students:** <http://uwm.edu/active-duty-military/>

**Employees:** <https://www.wisconsin.edu/ohrwd/download/policies/ops/bn9.pdf>

**Incompletes.** A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work. <https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%201-13.%20Incomplete%20Grades.pdf>

**Discriminatory Conduct.** Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of students, faculty and staff. Policies regarding discriminatory conduct can be found at: <https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%205-1.%20Discriminatory%20Conduct%20Policy.pdf>

**Title IX/Sexual Violence.** Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education program or activities, and UWM policy prohibits such conduct (see Discriminatory Conduct, above). This includes sexual violence, which may include sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, and/or stalking in all educational programs and education-related areas. UWM strongly encourages its students to report any instance of sex discrimination to UWM's Title IX Coordinator ([titleix@uwm.edu](mailto:titleix@uwm.edu)). Whether or not a student wishes to report an incident of sexual violence, the Title IX Coordinator can connect students to resources at UWM and/or in the community including, but not limited to, victim advocacy, medical and counseling services, and/or law enforcement. For more information, please visit:  
<https://uwm.edu/sexual-assault/>

**Academic misconduct.** Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University.  
<http://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/>

**Complaint procedures.** Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. <https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%205-1.%20Discriminatory%20Conduct%20Policy.pdf>

**Grade appeal procedures.** A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School.  
<https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%201-10.%20Grade%20Appeals%20by%20Students.pdf>

**LGBT+ resources.** Faculty and staff can find resources to support inclusivity of students who identify as LGBT+ in the learning environment. <https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/>

**Smoke and Tobacco-Free campus.** UWM prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco on all campus property.  
<https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%2010-8.%20Smoke%20and%20Tobacco-Free%20Campus%20Policy.pdf>

**Final Examinations.** Information about the final exam requirement, the final exam date requirement, and make-up examinations. <https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%201-9.%20Final%20Examinations.pdf>

**Book Royalties.** In accord with department policy, the royalties from the sale of UWM sociology faculty-authored books to students in their classes are donated to a UWM Foundation/Sociology Account to support future awards and activities of UWM sociology students.