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SOC 64 – The Process of Social Research

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### Textbook & Readings

There is one textbook for the course and there will be supplemental readings that you will find online in the Readings box on our Catalyst class website. You can purchase used and new copies of the textbook in the Campus Bookstore and there are 2 copies on reserve at the Library (currently located in the Learning Center West on the second floor).

The book is NOT optional; you will need it to pass the class. The required textbook is:

Chambliss, Daniel F. and Russell K. Schutt. 2013. *Making Sense of the SocialWorld: Methods of Investigation*. 4th ed. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

A Dictionary is also recommended.

Dear Students,

**I am here to help you.** If you have outside responsibilities or other potential barriers to completing the work for this course, please come talk to me *as soon as possible*. Don't wait until it's too late to get help.

If you have any disability, either temporary or permanent, which might affect your ability to participate fully in the course, please let me know right away. We can figure out what accommodations will be necessary to provide for equitable participation.

Don't be a stranger! I would like to learn a little bit about all of you, including your names, and it would help enormously if you would feel comfortable enough to come up and introduce yourself to me before or after class, remember to state your name when you participate in class, and visit me during my office hours. Getting to know you is the best part of my job.

I believe that every single one of you can do well in this class. In fact, I expect you to come with your game face on, to try your best, to put as much in to this class as you can and get as much out of this class as you can, to ask me for help when you need it, to ask for and offer help to your classmates, and to work with me to ensure your success.

Finally, I want to stress that ALL students are welcome in my class, regardless of national origin, religious affiliation, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical challenge, socioeconomic status, or cultural background. Let us work to make our classroom an environment marked by kindness and mutual respect for one another. It is our differences, even more than our similarities that offer the richest opportunities for learning.

* Jen Myhre

# http://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/images/shareIt.pngAssignments, Projects & Exams

By the end of the term, *you will be researchers*. You will have engaged in the kinds of day-to-day activities that social researchers do, such as research, thinking, talking with your colleagues about sociology, reading, teaching, presenting, and writing. Most importantly, I hope that by the end of the term, you will have learned to ask questions about the social world. It is the asking of questions, rather than the finding of answers, that is the most joyous part of the sociologist's job.

Also, I invite you to approach this class with the goal of *taking-the-role-of-the-other*, an idea developed by an early sociologist named George Herbert Mead. This means trying to put yourself in someone else’s shoes to get a sense of how s/he might view or experience social life and using that view to reflect on your own life. When you sit down to do a reading in this class or watch a film or converse with a classmate, I would like you to try to put yourself in the other’s shoes. This means developing your empathy muscles. Empathy means to feel or suffer *with* someone. It is not the same as pity. In part, it involves imagining how you would feel if you were in a similar situation. It involves putting aside our feelings of defensiveness, judgment, or rejection of the other, so that we can learn about another’s experience. As sociologists, we are endlessly curious about how life is for others. Role-taking helps us learn.

# Student Learning Outcomes

The Sociology Department has two official learning outcomes for SOC64(SOC14):

* *The student will distinguish the sociological perspective from other sciences, including its methods, theories and empathetic standpoint.*
* *The students will responsibly and ethically apply the scientific method to the study of social life.*

I have broken these broad outcomes into a series of more specific goals for your learning. My goals for this course are to help you:

1. Learn the systematic steps of conducting social research from beginning to end.
2. Understand the advantages and limitations of different strategies of social research and the kinds of questions they answer most effectively.
3. Learn to speak the “language” of social research--to understand and apply such terms as design, conceptualization, measurement, operationalization, reliability, validity, sampling, analysis, quantitative and qualitative approaches, etc.
4. Digest and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of actual examples of social research.
5. Learn real and important information about the social world that can be used to improve lives.
6. Learn how to convey effectively the results of your investigations to wider audiences.
7. Bring the sensibility of a social researcher to your everyday lives.
8. Become familiar with a body of knowledge in sociology that will prepare you for transfer or for additional coursework in sociology.
9. Learn how to build convincing arguments using concepts and evidence.
10. Practice taking-the-role-of-the-other, or putting yourselves in other’s shoes.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS OF THE COURSE:

* How do social scientists study the social world?
* How do the kinds of questions we ask about the social world shape the kinds of research strategies we use to answer those questions?
* What considerations do we need to make in the research process in order to increase our confidence that the answers we find capture something true about social reality?

### MAJOR ASSUMPTIONS OF THE COURSE:

* As human beings, we engage in research--asking questions and pursuing strategies to answer those questions—every day.
* If we are thoughtful and careful, we can use the tools of social research to learn real things about the social worlds in which we participate.
* The social sciences are an integral part of the kind of general education that makes us thoughtful and effective human beings. The kind of analysis of the world that sociology provides is useful, valid and worth developing.
* We are not simply individuals with complete autonomy and self-determination, but rather social beings who both shape and are shaped by the social world in which we live.
* Education doesn't have to be painful in order for us to learn. Learning can be fun; in fact, we probably learn best when our minds and bodies are actively engaged in the learning process.

# Expectation Agreement

### As a student in SOC 64, you are expected to…

* Read and/or re-read the assignments before coming to class. Your success in this class is dependent on reading and digesting the assignment.
* Print out copies of reading material before coming to class.
* Arrive to class on time and prepared with books, paper, writing implements, and preferably a dictionary. Your supplies should be on your desk BEFORE class begins.
* Check your email daily.
* Stay focused and ready to participate in class.
* Participate in civil & respectful class discussions.
* Turn in projects on time.
* Turn cell phones off and put them away before class begins.

### As your instructor, I will…

* Be available for my office hours and by appointment
* Keep our class Catalyst page engaging and up-to-date.
* Assist you with finding additional support should you need it.
* Respond to emails.
* Come to class prepared with activities and lecture materials.

# Please Be Open To Participating Fully In Class!

I believe that students learn best when presented with a variety of teaching strategies.

Not everyone will like every strategy; to paraphrase

Lincoln, you can't make everybody happy all of the time. However, given the absolute strangle-hold the lecture format has on college classes, I still think it is valuable to try out a variety of activities in the classroom.

As much as is possible given the constraints of time and room setup, classroom activities will be organized with a hands-on approach, asking students to engage in some of the day -to-day activities of sociologists (including reading, writing, discussion, analysis, and empirical research).

Research shows that people learn better when they are actively involved in the learning process. In order to facilitate this, you will also be asked to participate in various in- and out-of-class activities and discussion. If you are usually a talker, then your challenge will be to listen more and talk less. If you are usually quiet or an observer, your challenge will be to take risks and speak up from time to time.



### JEN’S FAVORITE FREE PODCASTS, WITH SOCIOLOGICAL RELEVANCE:

Office Hours

Radio Lab

To the Best of Our Knowledge

Planet Money

This American Life

The Moth

Latino USA

99% Invisible

These podcasts make great listening and often cover topics relevant to sociology. It would be a great habit to listen to at least one of them during our quarter together, as well as read a newspaper or newsmagazine.

Course requirements for your grade will consist of reading journals, participation, course projects, a final reflection, and exams.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| REQUIREMENT | DUE DATE | % OF TOTAL GRADE |
| Projects:  Content Analysis of Faculty Doors  Interview Project, Part 1: Interview and Transcription  Interview Project, Part 2: Analysis of Interviews  Journal Article Analysis | January 20  February 9  March 16  March 18 | 15%  15%  20%  10% |
| Participation | In-class activities  On-line activities on Catalyst | 10% |
| Reading Quizzes and Terminology Log | Throughout the quarter | 20% |
| Final exam | March 25 (Wednesday), 7:00am-9:00 | 10% |

COURSE PROJECTS. One project will involve collecting data on what full-time faculty members here at De Anza put on their doors and analyzing this data both quantitatively and qualitatively. You will also have a big quarter long project involving in-depth interviews in which you will conduct and transcribe an interview and then also analyze the pool of data that the class as a whole collects from our interviews. One other project will involve comparing the strengths and weaknesses of surveys, interviews and field work by examining three examples of published research.

PARTICIPATION. Research shows that people learn better when they are actively involved in the learning process. In order to provide extra encouragement for your active involvement in the course, participation will count for 10% of your final grade. You will be asked to turn in participate in in-class activities during most weeks of the quarter and you will also be asked to participate in on-line discussions, activities and quizzes throughout the quarter. The total of all of these activities will account for your participation grade.

READING QUIZZES AND TERMINOLOGY LOGS. For every reading assignment, you will be asked to list and define each of the key terms from the chapters from *Making Sense of the Social World* in your own handwriting. The terminology log will be graded on a pass/fail basis. The number of these logs you turn in will be totaled for the quarter, with one free miss. They are *due at the start of class* on the day the reading is scheduled for; after that, they will be counted as late and can be turned in for half-credit. You may use your terminology logs on the final exam. In addition, I may also give in-class or on-line quizzes on the readings. Together, the logs and quizzes are worth 20% of your total grade.

EXAM. There will be one comprehensive final exam on March 25 (Wednesday) from 7:00am-9:00. **There are no make-up exams. You need to meet with me if you have a documented physical or family emergency that causes you to miss an exam and I will review your case and we’ll figure out how to address it.**

### A Note About Attendance…

I do not count attendance as a separate part of your grade. You have chosen to participate in this class. I want you to come to class because you WANT to come to class. In fact, I want you to make a conscious decision about whether to come to class. I want you to be clear on why you are here and what you hope to get out of class. However, you should also be mindful that when you miss class, you begin to sabotage your own learning. You also deprive your classmates and me of your thoughts and contributions. And I worry about you when you don’t show up to class. Part of being in community means showing up for each other and paying attention to who’s making it, who needs help, and who’s struggling. I will be looking out for you and I’d like you to be watching out for each other. Because it gets harder and harder to catch up when you miss class, s*tudents who have missed 8 class sessions may be dropped from the class*.

Late arrivals are disruptive to the class and to your learning. Please plan to arrive at class on time.

Meet with tutors and attend workshops in the Student Success Center: [www.deanza.edu/studentsuccess.](https://email.fhda.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=2G4io2dy7kS1eVgtfsFpelTs3pwe6dEIvFGNlmumNTy5eIrD2eCYYdzWQng2qVodbd2rslGpqis.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.deanza.edu%2fstudentsuccess." \t "_blank)  **Can't make it to campus?** Use the free online tutoring available to all De Anza students.  Just login to [MyPortal](https://email.fhda.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=2G4io2dy7kS1eVgtfsFpelTs3pwe6dEIvFGNlmumNTy5eIrD2eCYYdzWQng2qVodbd2rslGpqis.&URL=https%3a%2f%2fmyportal.fhda.edu" \t "_blank), go to the Students tab, and find the Smarthinking link.  For more information, go to [deanza.edu/studentsuccess/onlinetutoring/](https://email.fhda.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=2G4io2dy7kS1eVgtfsFpelTs3pwe6dEIvFGNlmumNTy5eIrD2eCYYdzWQng2qVodbd2rslGpqis.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fdeanza.edu%2fstudentsuccess%2fonlinetutoring%2f" \t "_blank)

# Resources

Writing and Reading and Tutorial Skills Center, ATC 309, 864-5840

Math/Science Tutorial Center, S43, 864-8683

Counseling Center, 2nd floor Student & Community Services Bldg., 864-5400

Transfer Center, 2nd floor Student & Community Services Bldg., 864-8841

Career Center, 2nd floor Student & Community Services Bldg., 864-5711

Disability Support Services, 1st floor Student & Community Services Bldg., 864-8753

Financial Aid, Baldwin Winery Building, 864-8718

Health Services, Lower level Campus Center, 864-8732

Child Development Center, 864-8822

Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, Lower level Campus Center, 864-8950

# Grades

Grades aren’t the only reason to study and work hard in a class—curiosity and the desire to learn are damn good reasons. The fact that no one can take our education away from us is another good reason. However, if grades are one of the things that help motivate you, then here are some things I have learned from watching students about how to sabotage yourself, on the one hand, and how to get high grades, on the other.

To reach your goal of an “A” in the course, if grades are important to you:

* Check your e-mail and Catalyst regularly
* Read the assigned reading each time it is assigned
* Turn in your reading terminology logs on time
* Come to class on time and every day
* Do the on-line activities on time
* Take good notes on your readings and on class lectures and activities
* Build a study group to discuss the readings, work on assignments and prepare for the exam
* Meet with Jen regarding each project BEFORE the project is due
* Meet with Jen with a draft of each project BEFORE it is due
* Meet with Jen before the final to check your understanding

Practices that will make it difficult for you to pass the class, if that is your goal:

* Not doing the reading
* Not turning in your reading terminology logs
* Turning in your reading terminology logs
* Coming to class late
* Not coming to class
* Not checking e-mail or Catalyst
* Not turning in any parts or all of any of the projects
* Coming to class everyday but not doing the assigned work or not turning work in
* Only showing up for the exam thinking that will be enough to pass
* Not showing up for the final

The Sociology Department has agreed on our approach to giving feedback on student writing and assignments. We understand that students can interpret the feedback they get from teachers in a lot of different ways and that sometimes it can be difficult to receive critical feedback. We have high expectations for the quality of your work in our classes. We want you to know that when we give feedback, it is because we believe in your ability to reach those expectations. We believe in your intellectual abilities and in your desire to grow as a student. The goal of our feedback is to help you develop your skills.

### Keeping Track of Your Grades

All assignments will be given point scores or letter grades. These scores or grades will be turned into percentages and weighted according to the table above to average your final grades. The final percentage will be assigned a letter grade as follows: 90% or above=A, 87-89%=B plus, 80-86%=B, 77-79%=C plus, 70-76%=C, 67-69%=D plus, 60-66%=D, and below 59%=F. Standard mathematical rounding rules will apply.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ASSIGNMENT | Letter Grade | % (out of 100) | Weight | Multiply % by Weight |
| Reading quizzes and terminology logs |  |  | .20 |  |
| Content Analysis |  |  | .15 |  |
| Interview Project, Pt 1 |  |  | .15 |  |
| Interview Project, Pt 2 |  |  | .20 |  |
| Journal Article Analysis |  |  | .10 |  |
| Participation |  |  | .10 |  |
| Exam |  |  | .10 |  |
| TOTAL GRADE |  |  |  | SUM= % |

Note: You will have 13 chapters on which to complete terminology logs, so you can keep track of your score for the logs by totaling the number of points and dividing by 13. Your reading quizzes should be averaged. Similarly, you can keep track of your participation grade by totaling your points on in-class and online activities and dividing by the total number of possible points.

# Plagiarism & Cheating

Frequently asked questions is a great addition to your syllabus. Consider the repetitive questions you hear each quarter…can you answer them here?

Don’t cheat. It is unethical and, frankly, sad. Don’t copy off of the tests of those around you. How do you know they’ll do any better than you? If they do score higher than you, why should you get to benefit without effort from their studying? Don’t copy from the assignments of others or get others to do your work. Don’t givework to others for them to copy. You give up your integrity when you do these things. When you cheat, you cheapen what we are doing here in class, you deprive yourself of learning and growth, you sell yourself short, and you betray the time and effort I devote to teaching the class. It can also have long term consequences, as you will see below.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. I understand that many of you do not fully understand what plagiarism is or how to cite reference materials properly. I am happy to go over this with you. In short, if you use someone else’s ideas without giving them credit, if you use someone else’s words without putting quotation marks around them and giving them credit, or if you introduce information you learned from a specific source without giving it credit, that is plagiarism. If you didn’t make it up from your own mind, you need to provide an in-text citation.

I will offer a half journal of extra credit if you take the tutorial on plagiarism at the following website and bring me the certificate that says you can recognize plagiarism: [**https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/**](https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/)

Taking text or information or ideas from the internet, or from other sources, **without giving credit** to the person or persons who came up with those ideas and those words is STEALING. IF I CATCH YOU PASSING OFF THE WORK AND IDEAS OF OTHERS AS YOUR OWN, YOU WILL RECEIVE ZERO CREDIT FOR THAT ASSIGNMENT, WITH NO OPPORTUNITY TO RE-DO IT. *In addition, the De Anza Student Handbook specifies that students can be subject to College discipline (including suspension and expulsion) for plagiarism and cheating.*

# Course Calendar

### SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS (due *BEFORE* you walk in on the date listed)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week 1**  What are we doing here? What is social research? | **January 5 – Welcome to Class**  *Review Syllabus* | **January 6 – Overview of Course Approach and Requirements**  *Read syllabus carefully and deeply; come with your questions for me about it.* | **January 7 – The origins of social sciences**  *Read Harriet Martineau excerpt from How to Observe Morals and Manners, available on Catalyst.* | **January 8 – The origins of social sciences (cont.)**  *Read Chapter 1, pp. 1-14, “Science, Society and Social Research,” in MSSW - TERMINOLOGY LOG DUE* |
| **Week 2**  How do we get started? | **January 12 – Overview of the research this class will undertake**  *Read Chapter 2, pp. 17-38, “The Process and Problems of Social Research,” in MSSW -TERMINOLOGY LOG DUE* | **January 13 – The Research Wheel**  *Read pp. 60-63 of “U.S. Males and Pornography” on Catalyst, up to the Methods section* | **January 14—Research Designs**  *Read p. 63 of “U.S. Males and Pornography,” the Methods section (on Catalyst)* | **January 15—Ethical Considerations**  *Read Chapter 3, pp. 39-58, “Ethics in Research” in MSSW- TERMINOLOGY LOG DUE* |
| **Week 3**  What are concepts? How do we relate to concepts? | **January 19—DE ANZA CLOSED IN HONOR OF HOLIDAY FOR DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.** | **January 20—Activity on Conceptualization and Operationalization**  *CONTENT ANALYSIS OF FACULTY DOORS DUE* | **January 21--Conceptualization**  *Read first half of Chapter 4, pp. 59-75, “Conceptualization and Measurement” in MSSW*  *TERMINOLOGY LOG DUE* | **January 22--Operationalization**  *Read pp. 63-64 in “U.S. Males and Pornography,” the Measures section (on Catalyst)* |
| **Week 4**  How do we assess the accuracy of our measurements? | **January 26—Activity on reliability and validity**  *No new reading* | **January 27—Measurement validity**  *Read second half of Chapter 4, pp. 75-84, “Conceptualization and Measurement” in MSSW TERMINOLOGY LOG DUE* | **January 28 – Reliability**  *No new reading.* | **January 29—Generalizability**  *No new reading* |
| **Week 5**  How do we choose the units to include in our research? | **February 2—Activity on probability sampling**  *No new reading* | **February 3—Probability sampling**  *Read Chapter 5, pp. 85-102, “Sampling” in MSSW*  *TERMINOLOGY LOG DUE* | **February 4—Probability sampling** **(cont.)**  *No new reading* | **February 5—Nonprobability sampling**  *Read pp. 216-224 of “Maintaining Racial Boundaries,” the Intro/Lit review/Methods and Field Site sections (on Catalyst)* |
| **Week 6**  What criteria do we use to determine causation? | **February 9—Activity on causality**  *PART 1 OF INTERVIEW PROJECT DUE* | **February 10—Criteria to establish causation**  *Read Chapter 6, pp. 103-127, “Causation and Experimental Design” in MSSW*  *TERMINOLOGY LOG DUE* | **February 11—Criteria to establish causation (cont.)**  *Read pp. 64-70 of “U.S. Males and Pornography” on Catalyst, Results/Discussion/Limitations* | **February 12--Experiments**  *No new reading* |
| **Week 7** How do you design and implement social surveys? | **February 16—DE ANZA CLOSED IN HONOR OF PRESIDENTS’ DAY HOLIDAYS** | **February 17—Activity on survey research**  *No new reading* | **February 18—Strengths and weaknesses of surveys as a research tool**  *Read Chapter 7, pp. 128-153, “Survey Research” in MSSW*  *TERMINOLOGY LOG DUE* | **February 19—Strategies for constructing and administering surveys**  *No new reading* |
| **Week 8**  What kinds of things can you find out by observing people? | **February 23—Activity on taking field notes**  *Read sample field notes (posted on Catalyst)* | **February 24—Strengths and weaknesses of ethnography/field work as a research tool**  Read first half of Chapter 9, pp. 178-195, “Qualitative Methods” in *MSSW*  *TERMINOLOGY LOG DUE* | **February 25—The observation/participation continuum**  *Read “Research through Imperial Eyes” (posted on Catalyst)* | **February 26—Strategies for conducting field work**  *Read pp. 224-233 of “Maintaining Racial Boundaries” (posted on Catalyst)* |
| **Week 9**  How do you go about doing qualitative methods/ interviews? | **March 2—Activity on interviewing**  *Read interview samples (posted on Catalyst)* | **March 3—Strengths and weaknesses of in-depth interviewing as a research tool**  *Read second half of Chapter 9, pp. 195-204, “Qualitative Methods” in MSSW*  *TERMINOLOGY LOG DUE* | **March 4—Strategies for in-depth interviewing**  *Read pp. 466-471 of “Reproducing Stories” (posted on Catalyst)* | **March 5—Activity on interviewing**  *Read pp. 471-479 of “Reproducing Stories” (posted on Catalyst)* |
| **Week 10**  What are different strategies for analyzing data? | **March 9—Activity on descriptive statistics**  *Read Chapter 8, pp. 154-177, “Elementary Quantitative Data Analysis” in MSSW*  *TERMINOLOGY LOG DUE* | **March 10—Activity on examining the relationship between two variables**  *No new reading* | **March 11—Activity on coding**  *Read Chapter 10, pp. 205-233, “Qualitative Data Analysis” in MSSW*  *TERMINOLOGY LOG DUE* | **March 12—Different approaches to qualitative analysis**  *No new reading* |
| **Week 11**  How do we present our research findings? | **March 16—The scientific report**  *Read last section of Chapter 12, pp. 272-277, on Reporting Research in MSSW*  *TERMINOLOGY LOG DUE*  *PART 2 OF INTERVIEW PROJECT DUE* | **March 17—The infographic**  *Read handout on infographics (posted on Catalyst)* | **March 18—The journal article**  *Review the 3 journal articles we read this quarter: “U.S. Males and Pornography,” “Maintaining Racial Boundaries,” and “Reproducing Stories”*  *JOURNAL ARTICLE ANALYSIS DUE* | **March 19—Communicating science to wider publics**  *Read samples of social science in the media (posted on Catalyst)* |
| **Week 12** | **March 23—Wrap up, review and preparation for the final exam**  *No new reading* |  | **March 25 (Wednesday),  7:00am-9:00  FINAL EXAM** |  |