Research Methods
Sociology 450A
Fall 2015
Aug 17 – Dec 11

David Westfall
BC 121A
dwestfal@emporia.edu
Office phone: 341-5718

MWF 1:00-1:50
Butcher 126
Office hours MWF 2:00 – 3:00;
T/Th 12:30-2:00

Required Material:

- A few additional readings may be assigned. These will be made available electronically.
- A calculator with a square root key.

This course will make use of Canvas. Students should visit the site regularly as assignments, scores, and important course information will be posted there.

Introduction

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the basics of social research methodologies. This course will allow conscientious students to acquire practical skills that will help them on the job, at graduate school, and in everyday life. Students will leave this course (and SO 550, Research Methods and Statistics in Sociology) with specific skills that will prepare them for careers, graduate school, and citizenship.

Course Objectives

- Provide an academic experience that will inform students about how knowledge is created and disseminated.
- Provide critical thinking skills that will help students as researchers and citizens to determine the accuracy of information presented to them at the academy and in their personal lives.
- Develop research-related skills with specific emphasis on content analysis, questionnaire and survey research.
- To prepare students for SO 550 Research Methods and Statistics and the data based research project that they will begin in SO 450 and continue in SO 550.

Student Learning Objectives - Upon successful completion of this course students should be able to:

- Understand and apply multiple research methodologies
- Prepare and carry out a research design for projects in their subject matter area
- Act as an educated consumer of data
- Accurately collect, analyze, and report data
- Present complex data or situations clearly
Review and analyze research findings that affect their agency

Policies and Procedures

You are required to attend class, complete assignments, read, think, write, and discuss. You will also be required to use the Internet. It is critical that you attend class faithfully and that you come prepared to discuss the subject matter. Please note: Students are allowed 3 unexcused absences for family and/or personal reasons. After the 3rd absence, 5 points per absence may be deducted from that students’ final point total. This is NOT a course that allows for excessive absences. Students MUST attend faithfully in order to learn this difficult and technical material. Family, work, health and personal issues must be addressed in such a way as to allow the student to attend class faithfully.

Grading

Upper-division university level performance is required in this class. Your grade will be determined by the following:

1. Attendance and participation. Excessive absences may count against your final grade.
2. Completing 2 examinations worth 100 points each and a final exam worth 200 points
3. Completing the first portion of a major, group based research project worth 200 points. More information on this project will be provided.
4. Completing minor “homework” assignments for a total of 200 points.

Total of 800 points possible. Grades will be awarded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>750–800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>720-749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>700-719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>670-699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>640-669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>620-639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>590-619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>560-589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>480-559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;= 479</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Borderline grades, curves, and other grade inflators. I am more than happy to help you succeed in this course. However, grades for this course will not be “curved.” I do not grade on the basis of need. If you “need” an A in this course, note the total number of points necessary to earn an A, and I will be glad to give you advice on how to achieve that goal. Do not come to me and ask me to change your final grade unless you suspect a mathematical error has been made. Results of individual assignments may be discussed via email, by phone, or in my office.

Please note: You MUST earn a “C” or better in this class for it to count toward your major in Sociology. If you earn less than a “C” you must repeat the course next year. You cannot enroll in SO 550 until you pass this course with a “C” or higher.

General Education

Purpose: Emporia State University is committed to providing a liberal education for all its students. One important component of this liberal education is the completion of all designated general education requirements. This general education core curriculum is the heart of the college experience at ESU and is integral to the student’s major program. The goals of this general education program reflect the mission of this institution and are common to all student programs, regardless of majors and career goals. The general education curriculum provides the intellectual background and skills necessary to be “an
educated person,” as it improves and enhances quality of life. As a result of completing the general education program, graduates of Emporia State University will be knowledgeable of our pluralistic society; be able to think with breadth and comprehension, to communicate effectively, to understand what it means to be human, and to function with skill and knowledge in the everyday world.

Goals:
The general education curriculum ensures that students will:

1. Develop proficiency in written and oral communication, and in mathematical computation, reasoning and problem solving. Graduates of ESU must achieve proficiency in basic skills. Our goal is to significantly raise the basic skills of Emporia State University students.

2. Learn the basic concepts and principles, the history, and the mode of inquiry of the various general education disciplines: the fine arts, history, literature and philosophy, the social behavioral sciences, and the life and physical sciences.

3. Learn how to make connections between the disciplines within the general education curriculum, apply knowledge from the perspective of these disciplines, think critically, analyze issues, and clarify values.

4. Understand cultural diversity in the contemporary world, and increase their awareness and acceptance of similarities and contrasts in people of different cultures, nationalities, religions, races, and genders.

5. Develop a commitment to scholarship, intellectual curiosity, lifelong learning and the life skills necessary to function as healthy and effective citizens.

Emporia State University Policies

Disability Services: Emporia State University will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students need to contact the Director of Disability Services and the professor as early in the semester as possible to ensure that classroom and academic accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. All communication between students, Disability Services, and the professor will be strictly confidential.

3D.0701 ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY (FSB 95002 approved by President 1/31/96; FSB 03002 passed by Faculty Senate 1/20/04; approved by President 2/9/04; FSB 05002 passed by Faculty Senate 1/17/06; approved by President 2/7/06; title update approved by President of the Faculty 8/22/2010; FSB 10007 passed by Faculty Senate 3/15/2011; approved by President 3/21/2011).

Academic dishonesty, a basis for disciplinary action, includes but is not limited to activities such as cheating and plagiarism (presenting as one’s own the intellectual or creative accomplishments of another without giving credit to the source or sources). The faculty member in whose course or under whose tutelage an act of academic dishonesty occurs has the option of failing the student for the academic hours in question, or for any components or requirements for that course. Departments, schools, and colleges may have provisions for more severe penalties. Emporia State University may impose penalties for academic dishonesty up to and including expulsion from the student’s major or from the University. In addition, acts of academic dishonesty shall be grounds to deny admission to a department or program. In addition to the penalties above, the faculty member shall notify in writing his/her department chair and the registrar of the infraction. The department chair shall forward a report of the infraction to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life. The registrar shall block the student from withdrawing from the course to avoid the penalties that result from the infraction. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life shall act as the record keeper for student academic infractions. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life will notify the student in writing that an infraction has been reported and inform the student of the right to appeal and of the appropriate appeal procedures. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life shall notify the student, the department chair, and the faculty member that initiated the proceedings, of any additional action taken beyond those already imposed by the faculty member. Should a single infraction be so egregious, or
should a student have a record of multiple infractions, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life may impose additional penalties, including expulsion of the student from the University. The student has the right to appeal the charge of academic dishonesty (see Student Conduct section). If after an appeal it is found that the student did not commit an act of academic dishonesty, no penalties will be imposed on the student. 3-65 A chair of a department or director of a program may request from the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life a list of all currently enrolled ESU students within that major or program who have committed acts of academic dishonesty. This request may be a standing request to be filling automatically during each semester until the chair or director rescinds the request. In addition, a chair of a department or director of a program may submit to the office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life a list of applicants to a program or major and the chair or director may be informed if any of the applicants has committed any acts of academic dishonesty. Prior to the beginning of the next academic year, the office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life shall send to the Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate a list containing nonspecific student identifiers, such as Student 1, Student 2, etc., their specific academic infraction(s) reported to the Provost’s office, the total number of infractions that have been reported for each student, and any actions taken by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Life.

3D.07 STUDENT CONDUCT (FSB 01011 approved by President, 4/29/02)
Excessive absenteeism is defined as a number of absences beyond which the faculty member has determined on his/her syllabus that a student cannot complete the course without the academic integrity of the course being compromised. Emporia State University is committed toward development of sensitive and responsible individuals and believes this goal is best achieved through a sound educational program and reasonable policies concerning student conduct, both in and out of the classroom. Operating from this concept, recognition is given to the importance of an honest approach to learning which ideally is shared by the instructor and the student. Faculty members may make the disposition of any cases of disruptive behavior, excessive absenteeism, or academic dishonesty within their classes as they deem appropriate. Following such cases, the faculty member shall make available to the chair of the department and to the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs a record of such student absenteeism or disruptive behavior and the action taken by the faculty member. (This information will be helpful in dealing with those students who may have had similar problems in other classes or departments.) If the problem is not settled between the faculty member and the student, assistance will be given from the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. If the problem cannot be resolved at this point the student may request a hearing. This request must be in writing. If a case of dishonesty, excessive absenteeism, or disruptive behavior also involves a disagreement regarding a grade, the student may be referred to the committee which hears academic appeals. If the behavior is such that broader disciplinary action by the school/college is recommended, a hearing board shall be established by the President of the University to make disposition of the case. (In all cases of disciplinary action the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs is available for assistance.) At any point where student conduct directly interferes with the health, safety, or well being of individuals in the campus community, the University may apply sanctions or take other appropriate action. Since the University is responsible for the subsidiary duties of maintaining property, keeping records, providing living accommodations, and sponsoring a variety of nonclassroom activities, it is necessary that a climate supportive of such duties be maintained. Student status will not be a basis for any special consideration from the University when a community, state, or national law has been violated, although every effort will be made to assist with the rehabilitation of a student violating such laws. This is done by working with law enforcement or other agencies, and ordinarily further sanctions are not applied after such a case is closed. No disciplinary sanction as serious as suspension, probation, or adverse notation on permanent records (available to other than official personnel of the college) will be imposed without proper notification given to the student in writing. This notification will state the charges and will give the accused the opportunity to appear alone, or with appropriate representation before the proper committee, judicial council, court, or official. Included will be the nature and source of evidence and the encouragement for the student to present evidence in turn. Following this review final disciplinary action will be taken by the University. Students may also request that such 3-64 appearance before committees, councils, courts, or officials be waived and the case be determined in conference with appropriate campus officials. The University conduct policy commits all individuals serving on any of the above named groups dealing with student problems to a code of confidence. Failure to comply may lead to sanctions from student, faculty, or administrative governing bodies, or officials. Students, faculty, and administration shall have the opportunity to participate fully in the formulation of policies and rules and their enforcement. Penalties for men and women shall be based equally; like penalties following like violations.
4E.13 FACULTY INITIATED STUDENT WITHDRAWAL (FSB 76006; FSB 95008 approved by President 5/9/96; FSB 09016 approved by President 5/3/2010)

If a student's absences from class, disruptive behavior, lack of prerequisites, or academic dishonesty become detrimental to the student's progress or that of other students in the class, the faculty member may advise the student to withdraw from the class. Withdrawal may also be advised if the student is inappropriately enrolled in the class. If the faculty member chooses to withdraw the student, he/she shall attempt to notify the student in writing that a faculty initiated withdrawal is in progress. This notification will be copied to the department chair and Academic Affairs office to serve as the request for withdrawal. If efforts to contact the student have been unsuccessful, or unacknowledged, the faculty member shall then seek the aid of the Academic Affairs office in contacting the student. The Academic Affairs office shall provide the student with information about the existing appeals procedures. Upon receiving a written request for withdrawal from the faculty member, the Academic Affairs office may initiate a student withdrawal from the class. None of the above implies or states that faculty members are required to initiate any student withdrawal.

Class Policies

Canvas. Please check Canvas for various kinds of information usually provided in handouts or other kinds of feedback. It is your responsibility to check these sources for any announcements or information pertinent to class and class assignments.

Class attendance. Class attendance is monitored. There is an old saying that 90% of life is just showing up. This statement holds true in education. Habitual tardiness/absences will negatively impact your grade.

Class Etiquette. Be sure that your cell phones are turned off. Texting, facebooking, surfing the net, arriving late, and packing up early are distracting to your colleagues AND the instructor. Please be respectful. If laptops become a nuisance, you will be asked to close them.

Late Assignments. Typically, late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day past due.

Makeup work. Typically, no makeups for exams or other assignments will be given. You are expected to notify me at least one week in advance if you must miss a scheduled assignment.

Office hours. I will be available for communication during the times listed above. This is a time when you can drop in to talk about your progress in the course or any other course related matters. I am also available by appointment. I also encourage e-mail communication and will reply with timeliness.
Tentative Schedule

Please note the schedule below is subject to change depending upon the flow of the class. Such changes, if they occur, will be announced in class. The “Homework” assignments and research projects will be announced and covered in class and are not listed below.

1. Science, Society, and Social Research      Text Ch. 1
2. The Process and Problems of Social Research Text Ch. 2
3. Ethics                                  Text Ch. 3
4. Conceptualization and Measurement       Text Ch. 4

5. **Exam 1, Friday, September 18**

6. Sampling                                Text Ch. 5
7. Research Design and Causation            Text Ch. 6
8. Content Analysis                         Text Ch. 13
9. Survey Research                         Text Ch. 8

10. **Exam 2, Friday, October 23**

11. Experimental Design                    Text Ch. 7
12. Qualitative Methods                    Text Ch. 9
13. Qualitative Data Analysis              Text Ch. 11
14. Reporting Research                     Text Ch. 15

**Final Examination: Monday, December 7, 1:00 pm**