

SOCI 4499 Senior Seminar
FALL 2008
TH 5:00- 7:45 PM
SS Room 3027
Subject to change

Miriam W. Boeri, Ph.D.
Office: SS 4066
Office hours: Thursday 3-5PM and by appointment
Phone: (678) 797-2069
Please use WebCT Vista email for class concerns.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Pre-req: SOCI 2301, SOCI 3300

This is the capstone course designed to help senior-level students integrate their learning from previous sociology courses and other courses in their concentration. Students will (1) carry out an individual research study or project; (2) present the results of that research in relation to the existing body of knowledge; (3) listen to the presentations of others and provide constructive criticism in a community of scholars; (4) cultivate the ability to reflect upon their experiences and synthesize the material from all of their sociology courses, including the central importance of the intersecting impact of race, class, and gender; (5) hone their skills at documenting their research in a final report.

OBJECTIVES (Learning Outcomes):

- Define theory and describe its role in building sociological knowledge.
- Describe and apply some basic theories or theoretical orientations in at least one area of social reality.
- Describe and apply appropriate ethical practices in doing human-based research, including IRB processes.
- Critically assess published research articles and explain how the studies could have been improved.
- Consider opposing hypotheses and how viewpoints are critically assessed and supported by empirical data.
- Conduct a research study in an area of choice and explain why various decisions were made.
- Report findings in a paper and poster presentation.

REQUIRED READING:

Required: Experiencing Social Research by Strand

Optional: The Sociology Student Writer's Manual, W. Johnson Jr., R. Rettig, G. Scott, S. Garrison

Writing Empirical Research Reports by Pycszak and Bruce

How to Use SPSS by Cronk (for quantitative research studies)

Discovering Qualitative Methods by Carol B. Warren and Tracy X. Karner (for qualitative research studies)

Each student will conduct the research study described in your research proposal. Your study may be a qualitative or quantitative design. Please incorporate my recent comments and edits on your proposal. All final papers should include a theoretical framework. See WebCT Vista for more class material and instructions. If you do not have a research proposal, please see me in my office immediately.

Graded Assignment	Points	Percentage of grade
Discussion leader	10 points	10%
Rough draft:	10 points	10%
Peer Review	10 points	10%
Presentation:	20 points	20%
Final Research Paper:	40 points	40%
Attendance/Participation	10 points	10%

Course grade: 90-100=A 80-89=B 70-79=C 60-69=D Lower than 60=F

Attendance policy: It is your responsibility to come to class to learn how to conduct research, analyze your findings, write your findings professionally and present your research study. Academic discussion of research articles and your colleague's research is part of the learning experience in class. I will take attendance in class that counts toward your attendance and participation points. You can not participate very well if you do not read your required textbook.

Class Structure: This is a "seminar" and does not follow a typical college class format. We will be reading and discussing articles that can be used as examples to help with conducting your research and writing your own paper. The optional manuals provide excellent instructions and examples on how to write professionally in the field of sociology. Reading of the Student Manual and the Pyrczak and Bruce book are conducted at your own pace. Students conducting a quantitative research study will benefit by using an SPSS instructional workbook. Students conducting a qualitative research study will benefit by referring to the Warner and Karner textbook we used last semester. Please ask questions if you do not understand the material we cover in class or in your books. Your questions on specific text related material are welcome. If you do not ask questions, I assume you know the material. In class we will discuss your individual research projects and we will critique each student's study and progress in class in a scholarly manner. Scholarly critique of each other's work is a learning experience.

Your rough draft will be sent by attachment on WebCT email. Your final paper should be turned in hard copy. Please follow the format posted on WebCT for your final paper. Please staple all papers and do NOT enclose in any type of folder. Double spaced and number all pages. Failure to follow instructions will result in points deducted.

You are here to learn the works and ideas and viewpoints of the scholars whose books we read and discuss. These are not MY ideas of how research is conducted but standard research for our discipline. I am not grading by the number of pages. I do not give a minimum or maximum number of pages. Part of educated writing means you know how to write what you need to get across your ideas succinctly. I am grading how well you follow the instructions and how well you write and express your understanding of the material following academic style and methods used in sociology. Your grade depends on turning in all assignments according to instructions. Your final paper is graded for grammar, spelling, organization, structure and content. Please see the grading rubric and be sure you have all parts of the research sections in your final paper.

Policy on late papers and assignments: All late papers and assignments will have one point deducted for each day (weekends included) unless you have an acceptable reason for being late with documented proof.

**THE PROFESSOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DENY OR MODIFY A
PROPOSED RESEARCH TOPIC BASED ON FEASIBILITY OF CONDUCTING
THE RESEARCH.**

Description of Graded Assignments

Journal Article Discussion (10 points): You should choose an article in the reader that is similar to the type of research you are conducting. You will be the discussion leader of this article in class. Report the **goal** of the study, the **methods** used, the **findings** and what you **learned** from the article. Sign up for an article on the sign-up day. All students should read all articles and participate in all discussions. Attendance will be taken on discussion days.

One Graded Rough Draft: (10 points) I will hand back your research proposals from last semester with my edits and comments on the first day of class (for those who took Methods last semester). Use these edits and comments to modify your research accordingly. Edits should be made in your completed hard copy rough draft. The rough draft will be sent by WebCT email by midnight on the due date. The rough draft will include the actual research methods that you conducted, which may have changed from what you wrote on your proposal. Write what you did do and **not** what you *wanted* to do. Include any analysis conducted up to that point. Without some analysis in your paper, I cannot help you with further analysis. Follow all instruction carefully. Rough methods of draft should be written in present or past tense, **not** in future tense as was written in your proposal. Points will be deducted if your paper is in future tense, since this would indicate you have not conducted any research yet.

Peer Reviews (10 points): Research shows that students' reviewing other student's writing produces good results for both the reviewer and the student writer. Each student will have one other student review their research proposal. Each student will be assigned to send their rough draft to another student on the date indicated in the schedule. If you do not send your rough draft to the person for review on time, or return the review on

time, a point will be deducted for each day late. More instructions will be posted on WebCT Vista and discussed in class.

Presentation: (20 points) Each student will prepare a poster and present the poster in class. Poster presentation will last 10 minutes maximum. If you miss your presentation time, you may not have a slot to reschedule. If you do not present, you lose these points regardless of excuse. NOTE: Since this is a capstone course, visiting professors will attend the presentations to assess the learning outcomes for the sociology major. Their assessment does NOT affect your grade for the presentation.

Final Research Paper: (40 points) Submit a hard copy of typed, double-spaced paper. Spelling and grammar count. Please follow the grading rubric below. Papers must be turned in on the day you present. Use ONLY ASA documentation. Please allow yourself time to collect data and START EARLY! Past experience has shown me that students tend to wait too long to collect data. You should have collected ALL your data and have some analysis by the time rough drafts are due.

Grading Rubric:

YOUR FINAL PAPER WILL BE GRADED FOR THE FOLLOWING:

(see more details on the parts of the research paper below)

Abstract: 5 points (Please do not forget to add the abstract!)

Introduction/Research question: 5 points

Lit Review and Theory: 5 points

Methods Section: 5 points (Include ethical issues, data collection, sample)

Findings/Analysis: 5 points

Discussion/Conclusion: 5 points

ASA style: throughout 5 points

Grammar and spelling: 5 points

ASA style guide is in your student manual and also on the department website and at <http://www.calstatela.edu/library/styleman.htm>

You will receive an F for your final paper if it is the exact same as another paper you wrote for another class or if it is plagiarized. You are also responsible for reading what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html> and <http://nutsandbolts.washcoll.edu/plagiarism.html>

Academic Integrity Statement: Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Section II of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University's policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an "informal" resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct's minimum one semester suspension requirement.

Disability Clause: Kennesaw State University provides support for students with disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to identify himself/herself as an individual with a disability. A qualified individual in the area of the identified disability must provide the documentation of the disability. This documentation must show how the disability creates a significant impact on the individual's academic performance; it should include suggested accommodations that are reasonable to provided in an academic setting.

Please see professor privately for all personal hardships.

Parts of the Research Paper

(Refer to the Johnson Manual, the Pyczak and Bruce workbook for more details.)

Title Page and Abstract

(You will write the abstract when you know your findings. I will provide a handout on how to write an abstract.)

1. Introduction and Statement of the Research Problem

(The statement of the research problem more fully explained or the issue more fully elaborated. Include your contribution--what contribution does this research add to the field?)

2. Literature Review

(The literature you read that informs this research, identifying any gaps that your research might fill or areas that your research will expand upon. Include a theoretical framework include in this section.)

3. Methods

(A full description of the methodological approach and how you conducted the study and analyzed the study. Sometimes this includes sub-headings of "sample" or "data collection." See journal articles for ideas on various formats.)

4. Data Analysis/Results/Findings

(Present your data findings clearly in words, as well as tables, typologies, charts etc. See journal articles for ideas on various formats.)

5. Discussion

(Your interpretation of data; you may include this in Part 4 or 6—some authors do. I separate it here to make sure you know some discussion is needed. Include the limitations of your study and future research questions here.)

6. Conclusion

(What do the findings mean? How does it add to our knowledge?)

7. References

(In ASA format only—see Johnson et al. book, chapter 4. I am very strict about following these guidelines.)

READING AND CLASS SCHEDULE

Read all assigned material before coming to class and be ready to discuss.

We also will discuss your assignments in class.

The professor reserves the right to make changes as needed.

READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Week 1 Thursday 8/21 Q & A on syllabus IRB Instruction
Week 2 Thursday 8/28 Sign-Up for Discussions Lecture on paper/presentations (see examples on WebCT)
Week 3 Thursday 9/4 <i>Quantitative Articles</i> Discussion of Reader Articles
Week 4 Thursday 9/11 <i>Qualitative Articles</i> Discussion of Reader Articles
Week 5 Thursday 9/18 Survelum Instruction
Week 6 Thursday 9/25 <i>Quantitative Analysis</i> SPSS Instruction (required if you have QT study)
Week 7 Thursday 10/2 <i>Qualitative Analysis</i> NVivo Instruction (required if you have QL study)
Week 8 Thursday 10/9 <i>Sample Demographics and Tables</i> Coding and Analysis (required for both QT and QL studies)
Week 9 Thursday 10/16 Rough Drafts Due Sign up to meet with professor
Week 10 Thursday 10/23 NO CLASS/ WORK ON PAPERS <i>Professor and some students at GSA Conference</i>
Week 11 Thursday 10/30 Meet with professor individually (include time)
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Week 12 Thursday 11/6 Meet with professor individually (include time)
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Week 12 Thursday 11/13 Meet with professor individually (include time)
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Week 12 Thursday 11/20 Poster Presentations Final Papers Due <i>ALL PEER REVIEWS DUE</i>
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
FALL BREAK NOV 26-30
Week 14 Thursday 12/4 (5-7 pm) Poster Presentations Final Papers Due
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Last day to petition to graduate is August 21st

Last day to withdraw without academic penalty is October 10th

The professor reserves the right to make changes to class schedule as needed with prior notice given in class or on WebCT.