

SIENA HEIGHTS UNIVERSITY at LCC
SOC341 – Research in the Social Sciences
COURSE SYLLABUS



Course: Research in the Social Sciences
Credit Hours: 3 semester hours
Instructor: Thomas R. Radecki, M.A., Ph.D., J.D.
Office Hours: By Appointment
Home Phone: (616) 453-2930

Class Dates and Hours:
Tuesday October 27 – December 15
6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Required Texts:

- 1) Salkind, Neil J., Exploring Research, 7th Edition, Pearson-Prentice Hall Publishing, NJ, 2009. ISBN 0-13-6011373.
- 2) Pyrczak, F. & Bruce, R. Writing Empirical Research Reports, 6th Edition, Pyrczak Publishing, 2007. ISBN 1884585752.
- 3) Maimon, E., Peritz, J., & Yancey, K. (2007). A Writer's Resource: A Handbook for Writing & Research. 2nd Edition, McGraw Hill, ISBN 0073259381

Pre-Class Assignment: Please read Chapters 1 & 2 in Salkind

Course Description and Learning Strategies

1. This course provides a basic introduction to the research process as conducted in the social and behavioral sciences. It provides an overview of the essential elements of the research process. A key feature of the course will be its emphasis on how to read and understand research articles and evaluate the quality of research. The course will also discuss how to write research proposals and research papers.
2. The material covered in the course will be organized into two units with an exam given on each unit. Study guides will be provided for each unit to aid the student in preparation for these exams.

Methods of Evaluation and Assessment

1. There will be two major exams. Each exam will make up 30% of the course grade and be based on a 100-point scale. The exams will be noncumulative and consist of a wide variety of question types including: true/false, multiple choice, matching, and essays. The exams will be comprehensive and will be based on all sources of material used in the course.
2. In addition to the exams, there will be a number of required written assignments. The written assignments may be both individual and group, and together will constitute 20% of the course grade.
3. All students will be required to prepare or evaluate a research proposal or article. The format of this project, and the instructions for preparing it, will be given during the course. The research project will constitute 20% of the course grade.
4. Students are expected to be present and prepared to participate in all class sessions. Class participation and discussion will be a major activity of the course and is highly encouraged. Reading the assigned material is crucial to success in the course.
5. Grading Scale:
90-100 = A
80-89 = B
70-79 = C
60-69 = D
59 or below = E

Course Objectives

1. Understand the scientific method and the basic characteristics of science.
2. Understand the research process and major characteristics.
3. Distinguish between the major types of social research and give examples of each.
4. Identify and understand basic principles of ethical research.
5. Be able to formulate a research question and hypothesis and review recent literature.
6. Understand the measurement process, the levels of measurement, and the concepts of reliability and validity.
7. Understand the major principles of good survey research and how to construct a questionnaire and do an interview.
8. Understand and be able to compute some of the basic descriptive statistics.
9. Understand the meaning of statistical significance and be able to perform a simple test of significance.
10. Understand the experimental method and some of the major experimental designs.
11. Be able to read, understand, and evaluate social science research articles.
12. Be able to write a research proposal and know how to write a research paper.

Learning Outcomes of the Sociology Program

1. Systematically collect information about social patterns/processes in a variety of ways using multiple senses.
2. Utilize sociological and anthropological conceptual maps to interpret, analyze, and evaluate their own lived experiences and those of others in the past and present.
3. Utilize an assortment of skills to communicate effectively with diverse populations.
4. Utilize sociological and anthropological perspectives to make ethical professional and personal decisions and to work with others in constructing socially just environments.
5. Understand and articulate the conditions in which they personally learn most

Assessment of Learning Outcomes of the Sociology Program

This course most directly assesses the first learning outcome of the Sociology Program. This outcome is assessed primarily by means of written examinations, written assignments, and a written research proposal. The weight given each assessment strategy is indicated above. The grading scale used is also indicated above.

Academic Accommodations

In accordance with University policy and the equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may be eligible for as a student with a disability. Please contact me to discuss course accommodations as soon as possible. Requests are not retroactive. Students must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities for disability verification and determination of reasonable accommodations. Bob Ritz is the Coordinator of the Office for Students with Disabilities. He may be reached by phone at 517-264-7863 or by e-mail at rritz@sienaheights.edu. It is your responsibility to work with your instructors to assure a fair opportunity to perform well.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

“Academic dishonesty is unethical behavior, which in any way violates the standards of scholarly conduct.” (See the University Catalog for a complete definition of this policy.) It includes such acts as cheating on examinations, submitting essentially the same paper for more than one course, and plagiarism. “Plagiarism is the failure to give credit for the use of material from outside sources. It includes, but is not limited to, verbatim use of a quote without quotation marks and adequate documentation, submission of a paper prepared by another person as one’s own work, using the ideas, facts, work, or data of someone else and claiming them as your own, or not documenting ideas, facts, words, or data gathered during research.” A violation of the University’s Academic Dishonesty Policy will result in a failing grade on the particular item which was the subject of the dishonesty and/or a failing grade in the course.