

## **Sociology Syllabi for Reregistration**

(1) Soc 315: Social Research Methods

(2) Soc 335: Sociological Theory

## SOCIAL RESEARCH METHODS (ASOC 315), (3 credits)

TTH 4:30pm – 5:50pm

Room: TBA

**Instructor:** To Be Announced  
**Office:** XXX Arts & Sciences  
**Telephone:** To Be Announced  
**Email:** To Be Announced  
**Office Hours:** By appointment

Note: Most of our faculty can and do teach this course. It rotates between faculty each semester.

**Course Prerequisites:** ASOC 115 – Introduction to Sociology

### Course Description:

*The Content:* How do sociologists “know” what we know? How do they study our everyday lives? This course is designed to teach you about social research methods, which are used by sociologists to produce the scientific knowledge that lies at the core of our discipline. You will learn about these scientific research methods, and you will apply the methods to studying society. The specific dimensions of the process that you will learn will include: research problem formulation, ethical issues in scientific inquiry, identification of appropriate scholarly work, conceptualization and measurement of social science phenomena, and research designs (surveys, experiments, nonreactive research, and historical-comparative studies). By the end of the course, you will have learned the steps of the research process and will be able to critique studies that use these methods. Such knowledge will help you in future sociology courses and in being consumers of data in your daily lives.

This course satisfies the *Information Literacy* competency for the Sociology major. According to university policies (<https://www.albany.edu/generaleducation/information-literacy.php>), courses that satisfy this competency enable students to:

1. locate, evaluate, synthesize and use information from a variety of sources;
2. understand and use basic research techniques appropriate to the course discipline;
3. understand various ways in which information is organized and structured;
4. understand the ethical issues involved in accessing and using information.

*The Approach:* The best methods of learning social research methods involve thinking and working on problems; in this class, you will *learn* social research methods by *doing* social research methods. Instead of sitting through 3 hours of lectures each week, you will read the material on your own and engage in guided discussions and activities with *team members* that will get you thinking like a social scientist. I employ a *Team Based Learning (TBL) approach* to teaching you social research methods rather than using a traditional lecture format. What will this look like?

*The Process:* The course content is divided into the following four key units of study, each focused on a core area of social research methods:

1. Introduction to the Research Process
2. Conceptualization, Measurement, and Sampling

3. Survey Research and Hypothesis Testing
4. Experiments, Nonreactive Research, and Qualitative Research Designs

You will do much of the processing and analysis of the reading individually and in teams into which you will be placed on the first day of class and will stay in for the entire semester. Your interactions and performance in your team will be crucial to your success in the course. For each unit of study, we will go through a similar set of steps:

1. You will read the text on your own and will take a short Readiness Assessment Test (RAT) on that section at the beginning of the unit of study to assess your comprehension of the material. You will actually take each RAT twice – once on your own (iRAT) and once as a team (tRAT). Both grades count (see *Course Grade* section below).
2. As the unit progresses, you will continue reading portions of the text as well as outside reading materials and will engage in in-class activities, both on your own and as a member of your team, that are designed to fulfill the learning objectives listed below. Your work on the in-class activities will be graded (see *Course Grade* section below).
3. As you work through the reading and activity sequence, there will be occasional mini-lectures to help fill in the gaps in your understanding.
4. There will be a research project and three, short homework assignments that you will complete to aid your understanding of the course material (see *Course Grade* section below).
5. There will be two exams (non-cumulative) to test your mastery of the units.

**Learning Objectives:** By taking and fully participating in this course, you will be able to:

1. *Articulate* the essential steps of the scientific research method.
2. *Distinguish* between ordinary knowledge and knowledge generated from the scientific method.
3. *Evaluate* whether applications of sociological theories are appropriate.
4. *Identify* and *synthesize* high-quality scholarly literature to answer a research question.
5. *Construct* and *critique* measures of social phenomenon.
6. *Critically analyze* and *evaluate* methods that link social phenomenon together.
7. *Examine* whether structure of data analyses is sound for hypothesis testing.
8. *Interpret* and *be critical of* statistical information from the media based upon your knowledge of sociological methods.

**Required Reading:**

1. Neuman, W. Lawrence. 2012. *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Third Edition. Boston, MA: Pearson. Available at the University bookstore, MaryJane Books, and is on reserve at the circulation desk of the University library.
2. There will also be some readings available free of charge on Blackboard.

**Course Grade:** The grade for the course will be based upon:

1. Readiness Assessment Tests (15%) – iRATs/tRATs -- Your final RAT score is an average of your individual (iRAT) and team (tRAT) scores for each set of learning unit RATs (4 in total). Because the process of completing the RAT as a team is essential to the experience of the course, ***there will be no opportunities for make-up RATs***. To accommodate an absence or poor performance, however, the lowest RAT score will be dropped so that 3 out of 4 scores (i.e., the average of your individual and team RATs) will count towards your final grade.

2. In-class Activities (5%) – In-class activities completed individually and with your team will comprise 5% of the total. These will take many forms -- you will write a short response, applying the knowledge that you gained from the reading to a problem posed in class; you will evaluate tables or charts on social phenomenon under study and write a short paragraph asking to identify and explain the patterns and/or relationships observed; and you will be asked to develop your own methodological tools/components that pertain specifically to the methodologies we are covering in class.

**Note:** Completing all of these activities in a timely fashion (i.e., exactly when they are assigned) is crucial to your preparation and performance in class. As such, ***no make-up opportunities will be offered for these assignments and no late assignments will be accepted.*** However, because there will be times when you cannot make it to class or adequately complete the work, ***you may drop 3 of your lowest grades on these individual and team assignments.***

3. Exams (40%) – 2 non-cumulative exams each worth 20% of the final grade. Each exam will consist of open-ended questions requiring written responses and will be administered after covering two of the learning units. All tests must be taken on the assigned date.

**Make-up exams will not be granted except with an official letter from the office of the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education (LC 30, 518-442-3950). After you have presented a person in this office with acceptable documentation for an excused absence (for illness or religious observance), the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education sends a letter directly to me excusing the absence. For more information about the university's attendance policy, see [https://www.albany.edu/undergraduate\\_bulletin/regulations.html](https://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html). The University's Medical Excuse Policy may be found at: [https://www.albany.edu/health\\_center/medicalexexcuse.shtml](https://www.albany.edu/health_center/medicalexexcuse.shtml). With appropriate documentation, absences due to religious observance will be accommodated per New York State Education Law (Section 224-A).**

4. Research Project (20%) – Each of you will be choosing a sociological research question (with one independent variable and one dependent variable), establishing the importance of that question, and finding at least 10 scholarly sources to answer that question. Below are the components of the project:
  - a. First, you will identify your research question and establish the importance of it in a short written assignment, which will be worth 2% of your grade and will be due on **September 12<sup>th</sup>**.
  - b. Second, you will hand in an annotated bibliography, listing the 10 sources that you've found on your topic and identifying how each source answers your research question. This assignment will be worth 3% of your grade and will be due on **October 8<sup>th</sup>**.
  - c. Finally, you will hand in a 5-7 page paper drawing on the work you've done in the previous two assignments. You will identify your research question, the importance of the question, and discuss how it's been answered in the literature. This paper will be worth 15% of your grade and will be due on **November 7<sup>th</sup>**.
5. Short Homework Assignments (15%) – You will be required to complete three short assignments (1-3 pages) (each worth 5%). The nature of these assignments will vary (e.g., identifying the theoretical frameworks and hypotheses in a research article; identifying key concepts in a research article and the way those concepts are operationalized; discussing the sampling strategy used in a research article; critiquing existing survey questions; interpreting crosstabs; and evaluating content analysis research).
6. Team Member Performance (5%) – Because your work in your team is crucial to your success in this course as well as that of your teammates, you will be held accountable for your contribution to your team. Your team members will give you feedback on your performance at least twice during the semester.

Final course grades will be calculated according to this scale:

A = 94-100	A- = 90-93	B+ = 87-89
B = 83-86	B- = 80-82	C+ = 77-79
C = 73-76	C- = 70-72	D+ = 67-69
D = 63-66	D- = 60-62	E = Below 60

### General Policies:

1. **Attendance:** Your in-class performance is crucial to your success in this course. Attendance itself is not graded explicitly, but RATs and graded in-class activities on assignments constitute an important part of the course grade. Missing class means earning an automatic “0” for the activities or assignments missed. No make-up opportunities will be available. However, as stated above, you will be able to drop your lowest RAT grade and three of your lowest in-class activities grades. ***If you know that it will be difficult for you to consistently attend class, you should drop this course and take it at a later date.***

Per university guidelines ([https://www.albany.edu/undergraduate\\_bulletin/regulations.html](https://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html)), students are expected to attend **all classes and all examinations and to complete all course requirements on time.** As stated above, make-up exams **will not be allowed without proper documentation.** **With appropriate documentation, absences due to religious observance will be accommodated per New York State Education Law (Section 224-A).**

2. **Lateness-Tardiness:** Missing an assignment or activities that happened at the beginning of class before you arrive or at the end of class after you leave early will also earn a “0,” and there will be no make-up opportunities. ***If you know that it will be difficult for you to consistently get to class on time and stay for the entire period, you should drop this course and take it at a later date.***
3. **Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to adhere to the University at Albany’s standards of academic integrity (see [http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate\\_bulletin/regulations.html](http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html)). Any student who engages in academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, unauthorized collaboration, forgery) will receive a failing grade on the RATs, exams, and/or homework assignments and will be reported to the University Judicial System. As stated in the regulations, “After considering the case under the procedures provided by the University, the appropriate University judicial body will recommend the disposition of the case that can include disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University.” Please familiarize yourself with these policies.
4. **E-mail Etiquette:** The professor and teaching assistant will only accept e-mail from an Albany e-mail account ([XXXX@albany.edu](mailto:XXXX@albany.edu)). The best way to ensure this is by sending e-mails through the Blackboard system (<http://blackboard.albany.edu>). This rule is instituted because of problems with various e-mail providers going directly to junk mail and the frequency of SPAM. Please use grammatically correct and spell-checked sentences.
5. **Disabled Students:** Students who qualify for extra accommodations because of a diagnosed disability should submit a letter to the professor from Disabled Student Services no later than the second week of class so that arrangements can be made as needed. Disabled Student Services is located in BA 120 (518-442-5490): <http://www.albany.edu/disability/index.shtm>
6. **Academic Support Services:** The Office of Academic Support Services (University Library 94, 518-442-5180) offers study skills workshops, study groups, & access to tutors: <http://www.albany.edu/oaee/>

Students having difficulty in the course should seek help from the professor and/or teaching assistant as well as from this office.

### Course Outline and Readings:

**Reading should be completed PRIOR** to the class for which it is assigned. The readings come from the textbook, except those preceded by “BB,” which denotes that they’re available free of charge from Blackboard. T=Tuesday; R=Thursday. This syllabus and reading list are also posted on Blackboard.

**Note:** This reading schedule may be subject to changes throughout the semester.

Class	Date	Day	Topic	Reading Assignment
			<b>Unit 1: Introduction to the Research Process</b>	
1	8/27	T	Introductions, Team Formations, Syllabus <b>Practice RAT</b>	Syllabus
2	8/29	R	The Sociologist's Toolkit: Methods, Theory, Ethics <b>Unit 1 RAT</b>	Chapter 1: pp. 2-11; 18-21; Chapter 2: pp. 26-34; Chapter 3: pp. 53-59; 64-65; 68-70;
3	9/3	T	Social Research Methods: the Basics	Chapter 1: pp. 11-18; 21-23; BB: Pew Report on Generation Z
4	9/5	R	Applying Sociological Theory in Social Research	Chapter 2: pp. 34-50; BB: South, Trent, Bose – “Skewed Sex Ratios and Criminal Victimization in India” pp. 1019-1024
5	9/10	T	Ethical Issues in Social Science Research	Chapter 3: pp. 59-64; 65-68; BB: ASA Code of Ethics
6	9/12	R	Ethical Issues, Information Literacy, & Unit 1 Wrap Up <b>Research Project Assignment #1 Due</b>	Chapter 4: pp. 73-88; BB: ASA Quick Tips for ASA Style
			<b>Unit 2: Conceptualization, Measurement, &amp; Sampling</b>	
7	9/17	T	From Conceptualization to Operationalization, <b>Unit 2 RAT</b>	Chapter 4: pp. 95-101, 106-111; Chapter 5: pp. 113-120; Chapter 6: 146-147, 151-154
8	9/19	R	<b>Meet with Librarian Carol Anne Germain for help with Research Project Assignment #2</b>	<b>Location == Library B48</b>
9	9/24	T	Unit of Analysis and Creating Variables from Concepts	Chapter 4: pp. 101-106; Chapter 5: pp. 127-129
10	9/26	R	Reliability and Validity	Chapter 5: pp. 121-127; BB: Hadaway et al. "What the Polls Don't Show: A Closer Look at U.S. Church Attendance"
11	10/1	T	Creating Scales and Indices	Chapter 5: pp. 129-143
12	10/3	R	Nonprobability Sampling	Chapter 6: 147-151
13	10/8	T	Probability Sampling <b>Research Project Assignment #2 Due</b>	Chapter 6: 151-170

Class	Date	Day	Topic	Reading Assignment
14	10/10	R	Exam #1	
	10/15	T	FALL BREAK – NO CLASS	
			<b>Unit 3: Survey Research and Hypothesis Testing</b>	
15	10/17	R	The Logic of Survey Research and Analysis, <b>Unit 3 RAT</b>	Chapter 7: pp. 172-175; 183-187; 203-205; Chapter 10: pp. 262-265; 283-287
16	10/22	T	Constructing the Questionnaire	Chapter 7: pp. 175-183; 187-194
17	10/24	R	Mode of Administration Effects	Chapter 7: pp. 194-203; BB: Dolan & Kavetsos "Happy Talk: Mode of Administration Effects on Subjective Well-Being"
18	10/29	T	Logic of Univariate and Bivariate Analyses	Chapter 10: pp. 265-278
19	10/31	R	Crosstabs	
20	11/5	T	Crosstabs and Bivariate Analyses continued	
21	11/7	R	Logic of Multivariate Analyses and the Elaboration Paradigm <b>Final Research Project Paper Due</b>	Chapter 10: pp. 279-283
			<b>Unit 4: Experiments, Nonreactive Research, and Qualitative Research Designs</b>	
22	11/12	T	Moving beyond Surveys -- Other Research Method Designs, <b>Unit 4 RAT</b>	Chapter 8: pp. 208-216; Chapter 9: pp. 238-241; 249-254; Chapter 11: pp. 290-293; Chapter 12: pp. 322-329
23	11/14	R	Experimental Designs	Chapter 8: pp. 216-224; 231-235;
24	11/19	T	Internal and External Validity: in Theory and Practice	Chapter 8: pp. 224-231
25	11/21	R	Quasi-experimental Designs	BB: Pager et al. -- "Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment"
26	11/26	T	Coding Nonreactive Data	Chapter 9: pp. 241-249; 254-260
	11/28	R	<b>NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!</b>	
27	12/3	T	Coding Nonreactive Data II	Heuer et al.: “Obesity Stigma in Online News: A Visual Content Analysis”
28	12/5	R	Historical-Comparative Research	Chapter 12: pp. 333-349
	12/12	R	<b>EXAM #2 -- 10:30am -- 12:30pm</b>	

## SOC 335- Sociological Theory (3 Credit Hours)

Days/Times: T TH 3-4:20  
Room: TBA

Note: Professor Richard Lachmann or  
Professor Ronald Jacobs teach Soc 335.

Instructor: To Be Announced  
Office Hours: By Appointment

### Course Description:

What are the main characteristics of modern society? How are individuals affected by the fact that they live in society with other human beings? Durkheim, Marx, and Weber each offer answers to these questions. We will read what they had to say and see how their answers shaped the field of sociology.

Assignment Requirements: The 3 tests each count for 25 points (25%) and the final paper for 25 points (25%), for a total of 100 points (100%).

### Learning Outcomes/Course Objectives:

Students in this course will meet the following objectives:

- Read and understand the core writings of Durkheim, Marx, and Weber, the three theorists who have set the contours of the discipline of sociology
- Be able to explain what Durkheim, Marx, and Weber saw as distinct about modern society and how their theorist explained the advent of modern society
- Be able to explain what Durkheim, Marx, and Weber identified as the ways in which individuals are affected by the fact that they live in society with other human beings
- Explain how Durkheim, Marx, and Weber's theories and empirical work have been developed by more recent sociologists as exemplified in the work of Goffman, Burawoy and Mills
- Be able to convey these understandings in essay tests and through a final paper
- Develop their capacities to explicate the complex texts written by Durkheim, Marx, and Weber in clear contemporary language in their test essays and especially in their final paper

Prerequisites: A SOC 115

### Topic Outline:

Week 1:

Introduction to the course, overview of the syllabus

Part One: Durkheim and Goffman

Week 2:



Emile Durkheim, *Suicide*, Book Two, Chapter 2-5, pp. 152-276

Week 3:

Durkheim, *Suicide*, Book Three, Chapter 3, pp. 361-392 and Erving Goffman, "The Nature of Deference and Demeanor," pp. 47-95 in *Interaction Ritual*

Week 4:

In-class review and First test on Durkheim and Goffman.

Part Two: Marx and Burawoy

Week 5:

Karl Marx, Introduction to Marx and *Capital*, excerpts, pp. 437-65

Week 6:

Karl Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, pp. 31-61

Week 7:

Karl Marx, excerpts from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, pp. 594-617.

Week 8:

Michael Burawoy, "Marxism as Science: Historical Challenges and Theoretical Growth" in *American Sociological Review* (December 1990) volume 55, pp. 775-793.

Week 9:

In-class review and Second test on Marx and Burawoy.

Part Three: Weber and Mills

Week 10:

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Chapters 2, 3, and 4 (section A only) pp. 47-92, 98-128 [this book is not on electronic reserve] [see "PowerPoint for Weber- Protestant Ethic" on e-reserve for this class's lecture notes.]

Week 11:

Max Weber, "Class, Status, Party," pp. 180-95 and "The Sociology of Charismatic Authority," pp. 245-52 in *From Max Weber*.

Week 12:

Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," pp. 196-244 [on electronic reserve as "Weber, Bureaucracy"] [see "PowerPoint for Weber- Bureaucracy #1" and "PowerPoint for Weber- Bureaucracy #2" on e-reserve for this class's lecture notes]

Week 13:

C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*, Chapters 1, 11-13, pp. 3-29, 242-324.

Week 14:

In-class review of Weber and Mills and Third test on Weber and Mills.

Week 15:

Final Paper. Write a 6-8 page doubled-spaced paper on one of the following six topics. Class time this week is devoted to questions on the topics and discussing how to outline an effective essay.

1. What are the social causes of each of the four types of suicide? Would the social reforms, proposed by Durkheim, reduce the rate of each type of suicide? You may suggest alternative reforms, which you believe would be more effective than those given by Durkheim, for better integrating individuals into modern society.
2. Define and describe deference and demeanor. How do deference and demeanor enhance organic solidarity? To what extent does the practice of those everyday rituals decrease anomie, egoism, altruism, and fatalism?
3. According to Marx, how do individuals become aware of their class identities and interests? Under what conditions will members of classes join together to take political actions? How do the political actions of workers and capitalists affect government? Specifically, do states become more or less democratic during periods of class conflict?
4. Choose any three of the Marxist theorists discussed by Burawoy. Explain how their theories build upon or revise the arguments Marx made in his writings about how the working class forms and acts upon its interests.
5. Why does Weber believe that bureaucracy is the most efficient type of organization? Identify the essential aspects of bureaucracy, according to Weber and explain how each contributes to making bureaucracy efficient. Then explain how Protestantism, capitalism, and charisma each affect bureaucracy.
6. To what extent does Mills' power elite derive its power from bureaucratic office? Could the policies Weber proposes to limit the power of bureaucratic officials and their capitalist allies also be employed to limit the power of Mills' elite?