CRM/SOC 300
METHODS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH
University of North Carolina Wilmington
Fall 2014, MWF 10-10:50 AM
Instructor: Dr. Mike Maume
Office: Bear 120 / Hrs: MW 3:35-4:45
E-mail: maume@uncw.edu
COURSE WEB SITE: learn.uncw.edu

Catalogue description: SOC 105 or CRM 105 prerequisite. Introduction to logic and methods of sociological research; topics include connections between theory and research, problem formulation and research design, conceptualization and measurement, sampling, modes of observation and analysis, ethical issues, and the political context of research. Partially satisfies University Studies IV: Building Competencies/Information Literacy.

WARNING!
This class may be the most difficult of your educational career! It requires:
1) Looking at the world and human behavior in a new, scientific way.
2) Active, rather than passive, learning practices by students.
3) Development and use of both critical and creative thinking skills.
4) Detailed knowledge acquisition and the ability to apply new skills.
5) Use of a specialized vocabulary, including familiar words with new, more specific meanings.
6) Diligent attendance, a full allotment of time outside of class, and many hours of library research.

It may, however, also be one of the most important classes you will take. We live in the age of information technologies and “Big Data.” People with the skills to determine information needs, gather information, analyze it, interpret it, communicate it, evaluate it, and apply it have a distinct advantage over those that do not have these skills. This class is about research knowledge and skills. We focus on social science information, but the processes and skills are applicable to all information. Through class discussions, readings, and assignments, you will gain expertise in the practice of social science research and learn some basic analytical skills, which you will expand on in CRM/SOC 301, Data Analysis.

Course Objectives
At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to do the following:
- Understand the science behind the disciplines of criminology & sociology (as related to a specific area of interest)
- Develop an understanding of the strengths and limitations associated with the various methods of data collection
- Understand how theory and methods are integrated within the research process
- Appreciate how social policy is influenced by social research
- Identify and determine the types of information needed to describe and solve a specific sociological or criminological problem. (IL)
- Access information from a variety of different existing sources, including books, articles, and online databases. They will develop their data collections skills by collecting information directly from appropriate sources. (IL)
- Develop a research question, identify appropriate sources of data to support a problem statement, and design a research study. (IL)
- Design a research project and collect or utilize the appropriate data to support the project. (IL)
- Apply the professional ethics of social science, and how to apply these to their own data gathering. Students will abide by the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of UNCW in gathering information. (IL)

IL: Information Literacy priorities
Readings
2. Supplemental readings available via the course website.

Course Requirements

The grade for the course will be based on:

a. Four examinations (50 pts. each; exam total - 67%)
The first exam will be essay format. The following three exams will consist of multiple choice and short essays/problems. Questions will be based on material from class discussions, lecture and assigned readings. The final exam is not cumulative. All exams will be administered in class.

b. Research project -- writing assignments and presentations (25%)
There will be two minor and four major writing assignments in this course, which altogether will result in a completed ‘mini’ research project. Presentations on these projects are scheduled for the end of the semester. The assignments will be made available to students in separate handouts on the course website.

d. Attendance and participation (8%)
Attendance is not only encouraged, but required as well. After one (1) unexcused absence you will lose 3 points for each unexcused absence thereafter. Class participation in class exercises, discussion and outside activities will be taken into account for those who are on the borderline between grades. Specific reading assignments will be announced in advance. Readings should be completed prior to class meetings to facilitate class discussion, and you should come to class prepared to ask questions about the lectures, assignments, and/or reading material.

Grading Policy

I follow a 300-point scale in determining final grades for the course. Below are listed the weight of each of the course’s required elements in relation to the final grade, and the scale by which letter grades will be determined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>200 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the formula above, there are 300 possible points in the course. The number of points you have earned throughout the semester will be divided by 300 to obtain a percentage, which will determine your final grade.

A  > 93%  B+  87% - 89%  C+  77% - 79%  D+  67% - 69%  F  < 60%
A-  90% - 93%  B  83% - 86%  C  73% - 76%  D  63% - 66%
B-  80% - 82%  C-  70% - 72%  D-  60% - 62%

Course Expectations

You can expect the general format of each class session to involve a combination of lecture and discussion. I may also supplement our discussion from time to time with videos and guest speakers.

What you may expect of me:
- A sincere effort to help you learn the course material.
- Accessibility: I will be available to you should you desire help or clarification on course material. Although I may be unavailable at the time you initially e-mail me, I will get back to you as soon as
What I will expect of you:

- A sincere effort to learn the course material.
- Careful and complete reading of the course material and correspondence with others.
- Attention/Courtesy: just as I will not be inattentive or impolite to you, I will not tolerate insults or rudeness to me. You are expected to respect the views of others in the class. This means that you are free to disagree with them - you are encouraged to do so - but abusive language or any other means of "flaming" or "silencing" another student will not be tolerated.
  - Phones should be silenced during class.
- Promptness: You should be in class on time except when delayed by an emergency, and you should comply with all due dates.
- Honesty: Assignments that borrow from others without proper acknowledgment and citation will result in a minimum grade of F on the assignment, and at maximum will result in a grade of F in the course and a referral to the Dean of Students. Thus, you should make every effort to familiarize yourself with the various forms of misconduct and dishonesty listed in the Academic Honor Code: ignorance is not an excuse!

Course Outline

I. Introduction to Social Science Inquiry
   A. The scientific method
   B. Illogical and causal reasoning
   C. Exploration, explanation and evaluation
      Readings: Ch. 1

II. The Research Process
    A. Deduction and induction
    B. Variables and variation
    C. Research design
       Readings: Ch. 2, social science blog (TBA)

9/1 - Labor Day Holiday (no class)

9/8 - EXAM #1

III. Conceptualization and measurement
     A. Variables and variation
     B. Reliability and validity
        Readings: Ch. 4

IV. Ethics in Social Science Research
    Readings: Ch. 3
9/29 – EXAM #2

V. Survey Research
   A. The logic of sampling; concepts and methods
      Readings: Ch. 5
   B. Survey research
      1. Question writing and Questionnaire design
      2. Administration modes
      Readings: Ch. 7

10/13 – Fall Break (no class)

VI. Qualitative Methods
   Readings: Ch. 9

10/27 – Guest speaker: Mike Phillips, UNCW Career Services

11/3 – EXAM #3

VII. Quantitative Data Analysis: The Empirical Testing of Research Hypotheses
   A. Quantification of data: Codebook construction and data entry
   B. Descriptive statistics: univariate analysis; measures of central tendency and dispersion
   C. Descriptive statistics: bivariate analysis, chi square
      Readings: Ch. 8
      supplemental material on course website

VIII. Experiments and Evaluation Research
   A. Causation
   B. Experimental and control groups
   C. Threats to validity
   D. Evaluation research: applied social science research
      Readings: Babbie: Chs. 6, 11
      Pager, “The Mark of a Criminal Record” (to be assigned in class)

11/26, 11/28 – Thanksgiving Holiday (no class)

11/24, 12/1, 12/3 – STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

FINAL EXAM – Monday, Dec. 8th, 9 – 11 am

In accordance with S.L. 2010-211, you are entitled to two excused absences for religious observances per academic year. You must inform me in writing the first week of class if you will be missing any classes due to religious observance and using one of the two permissible absences for the academic year. In addition, please inform the Registrar the first week of class who will then confirm your intentions to miss class with the impacted course instructors. Any absence for religious purposes will be considered unexcused unless you submit the request in writing the first week to both me and the Registrar.

The Writing Center (DE1003) provides one-on-one writing consultations led by faculty recommended peer writing tutors who are trained to help students identify areas to improve and develop specific revision plans. Visit our website to schedule an appointment: http://www.uncw.edu/ulc/writing/center.html.
Students can also receive electronic response to their developing papers through our Online Writing & Learning (OWL) program. Visit our website for a variety of writing resources: handouts, guides, useful links, and the Online Consultation link: http://www.uncw.edu/ulc/writing/owl.html

Students can drop-in at our Writing Lab (DE 1003) for help with quick questions about their developing papers. The Writing Lab is staffed with a writing tutor, and has a few computers and other writing resources for students. Check out the Writing Lab schedule here: http://www.uncw.edu/ulc/writing/lab.html