

# SYLLABUS

GABRIEL AQUINO

## **SOCI 204 Introduction to Research Methods in Sociology**

### **Arrangement**

Spring 2010

**Office Hours:** Monday, & Wednesday 2:00 PM-3:00 PM, online hours will be posted on the Plato page or by appointment.

E-mail: Reach me through Plato mail or WSC email (gaquino@wsc.ma.edu)

### **Description:**

The development of social research; the nature of sociological inquiry; basic methods and techniques; examination of representative sociological studies from the standpoint of methodology. Prerequisite: SOCI 101

### **Requirements<sup>1</sup>:**

1. All assigned readings are to be completed prior to the scheduled class.
2. There will be a discussion questions through Plato (35%).
3. There will be several take home assignment (40%).
4. Discussions (20%).

### **Grading:**

<b>Active Plato and Other Participation</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Discussions</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Final Project</b>	<b>35%</b>
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<b>Do Not Forget About Attendance!</b>	<b>100%</b>

**This course is set up on Plato all the reading materials, discussions, exams, assignments and office hours will be conducted through Plato unless other arrangements are made between the instructor and the student.**

### **Shared Responsibilities:**

Teaching and learning are reciprocal parts of an interactive process. It is my responsibility to come to class prepared to class, share information with you in an intelligible manner, direct you to resources which help you fulfill your tasks, provide you with opportunities to meet outside of class, ensure that the classroom is a place where we are free to respectfully acknowledge and express our differences, answer your questions, simulate creative thought, facilitate discussions, evaluate your progress, and return your work in a timely fashion. It is your responsibility to come prepared to class, ask questions, participate in class discussions, think critically, and apply the concepts you will learn in class, be respectful of others and me in the classroom, and finish your

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<sup>1</sup> Read further for a detailed explanation of each requirement.

assignments on time. If either one of us fails to live up to these standards, this interaction will break down and education becomes more difficult. To maximize your learning, I expect that you will have the reading completed BEFORE class, you will attend class, and you will inform me when you are having difficulty meeting your obligations. Last, I value your comments regarding the development of the course. If you are particularly pleased or dissatisfied with some aspect of this class, I encourage you to speak to me.

**Grade distribution:**

Letter Grade		Number Grade		If a letter grade is assigned this is the number equivalent
A	=	100-93	=	100
A-	=	92-89	=	92
B+	=	88-85	=	88
B	=	84-81	=	84
B-	=	80-77	=	80
C+	=	76-73	=	76
C	=	72-69	=	72
C-	=	68-65	=	68
D+	=	64-61	=	64
D	=	60-57	=	60
D-	=	56-53	=	55
F	=	52-0	=	0

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Week 1	Human Inquiry Science	RS: Micro and Macro Perspectives RS: Variable in Social Research
Week 2	Theory and Social Research	RS: Inductive and Deductive Models
Week 2	Ethics in Social Research	RS: Research Ethics in Sociology
Week 3	Research Design	RS: Hypothesis Construction RS: Designing a Research Project
Week 4	Operationalization	RS: Social Category and Social Aggregate
Week 4	Measurement	RS: Reliability RS: Validity
Week 5	Sampling	RS: Sampling
Week 5	Survey Research	RS: Surveys in Sociological Research
Week 6	Qualitative Research	RS: Qualitative & Quantitative Analysis RS: Sociological Content Analysis
Week 6	Qualitative Research: Interviewing	RS: Interviews

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Week 7	Qualitative Research: Ethnography	RS: Field Data Gathering
Week 8	Quantitative Research: Descriptive	RS: Analysis of Secondary Data
Week 9		
Week 10	Quantitative Research: Descriptive	RS: Descriptive Stats
Week 11	Quantitative Research: Descriptive Inferential Statistical Analysis	RS: Sociology & Probability Theory RS: Inferential Statistics
Week 12	Quantitative Research: Descriptive Inferential Statistical Analysis	RS: Confidence Intervals
Week 13	Quantitative Research: Descriptive Inferential Statistical Analysis	RS: Regression Analysis
Week 14	Quantitative Research: Descriptive Inferential Statistical Analysis	RS: The Misuse of Statistics Suppressor Variables in Path Analysis
Week 15	Writing and Presenting Research	RS: Sociological Practice Applied & Clinical
Week 16	Final Project	
Week 17		

**How to tackle the readings:**

1. What is the issue being studied?
2. What do the literature claim about the issue?
3. What does the scholar think they will find?
4. Whom is the scholar studying?
5. What is the research design and methods?
6. What are the findings?
7. What are the scholar's conclusions?
8. Are there weaknesses to the author's conclusions? Why or why not?
9. Is this a major theoretical contribution or a minor one?

## **Grading Criteria**

*Your papers (as well as your exams) will be graded according to the following criteria:*

### Content

- A- Presenting a main point and using information to support your argument.
- B- Demonstration of your understanding of relevant concepts.
- C- Incorporation of course and outside reading.
- D- Incorporation of original insights.
- E- Responding fully to all questions.
- F- Developing a discussion that incorporates interesting details from multiple sources (personal experience, readings, and/or outside primary or secondary sources).
- G- Demonstrating critical thinking by moving in thought beyond merely summarizing, defining, or reporting to analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, drawing conclusions, or gaining insight.
- H- Engaging the reader through topic choice, original approach, thorough development, etc.

### Organizational Factors

- ❖ Creating a coherent structure with an effective introduction/body/conclusion.
- ❖ Providing a clear introduction that identifies the topic/main point that establishes your intent in the paper.
- ❖ Using transitions where necessary within paragraphs and to introduce new ideas.
- ❖ Concluding in a way to draw main points together.

### Language Use and Expression

- ❖ Using accurate and mature vocabulary to make the writing clear and appropriate for conveying your main points.
- ❖ Using clear, direct, complete, varied sentence structure (e.g., free of fragments or run-ons).
- ❖ Maintaining consistent verb tense and pronoun reference.
- ❖ Avoiding slang, colloquialisms, clichés, and jargon.
- ❖ Applying grammar and usage according to acceptable standards for writing.
- ❖ Applying correct mechanical skills (spelling, capitalization, punctuation, etc.)

### Elements of Style

- ❖ Paper is typed or neatly word-processed.
- ❖ Paper is proofread and corrected for typos and other errors.
- ❖ Paper is printed on clean paper and stapled.

### An 'A' Essay...

- ♻ Addresses the topic of the assignment fully and explores each aspect thoughtfully.
- ♻ Has a clear and substantial thesis.
- ♻ Shows substantial depth, fullness and complexity of thought.
- ♻ Expresses ideas clearly and commands the reader's attention.
- ♻ Demonstrates clear, unified and coherent organization.

- ↳ Is fully developed and detailed with ideas supported by persuasive reasons and well chosen examples or references to class material.
- ↳ Has a superior style (interesting sentence patterns, smooth transitions between ideas, excellent use of vocabulary).
- ↳ Has few, if any, minor errors in grammar, usage or mechanics.

An 'A-/B+' essay:

- ↳ Strongly addresses and explores each aspect of the assignment.
- ↳ Has a clear thesis explored fully in the essay.
- ↳ Shows some depth and complexity of thought.
- ↳ Expresses ideas clearly and in an interesting manner.
- ↳ Demonstrates effective organization.
- ↳ Is well developed with supporting details and appropriate examples or references to class material.
- ↳ Has an effective style (good sentence patterns, transitions between ideas, accurate use of vocabulary).
- ↳ Has few errors in grammar, usage or mechanics.

A 'B/B-' essay:

- ↳ Addresses and explores each aspect of the assignment in a satisfactory way.
- ↳ Has a clear thesis explored adequately in the essay.
- ↳ Shows clarity of thought, but may treat the topic simplistically or repetitively.
- ↳ Clearly communicates ideas.
- ↳ Is adequately organized.
- ↳ Is developed with sufficient examples, reasoning, or references for most of the ideas.
- ↳ Has an adequate style (some variety in sentence patterns, transitions between most ideas, vocabulary accurate for the most part).
- ↳ Has some errors in grammar, usage or mechanics.

A 'C+/C' essay:

- ↳ Inaccurately responds to or neglects part of the assignment.
- ↳ Has a simplistic thesis that may show limited knowledge of the issues involved in the assignment.
- ↳ Lacks focus or demonstrates confused, stereotyped or simplistic thinking.
- ↳ May not always communicate ideas clearly.
- ↳ Is ineffectively organized.
- ↳ May not provide adequate or appropriate details or references to support generalizations, or may provide details without generalizations.
- ↳ Has a stylistic weakness (little variety in sentence patterns, few transitions, and imprecise vocabulary).
- ↳ Has an occasional major error in grammar, usage or mechanics or frequent minor errors.

A 'C-' essay:

- ↳ Indicates confusion about the assignment or neglects important aspects of the assignment.
- ↳ Has an unclear or confusing thesis which shows little understanding of the assignment or which demonstrates a misinterpretation of the assignment.
- ↳ Demonstrates confused thinking.

- ↳ Often fails to communicate ideas clearly.
- ↳ Has very weak organization.
- ↳ Has very little development of ideas; uses very few examples or references to support points.
- ↳ Has an ineffective style (monotonous or fragmented sentence structure, no transitions, simplistic or inaccurate vocabulary).
- ↳ Has many repeated errors in grammar, usage or mechanics.

An essay containing one or more of the following would be considered unsatisfactory:

- ↳ An indication of an inability to comprehend or to respond meaningfully to the assignment.
- ↳ No thesis or has an incomprehensible thesis.
- ↳ Deliberately off-topic.
- ↳ An inability to communicate ideas clearly.
- ↳ Incoherent organization.
- ↳ Incomplete or inappropriate development of ideas.
- ↳ Incoherent style (difficulties with sentence structure, pattern of vocabulary errors).
- ↳ Pervasive pattern of errors in grammar, usage and mechanics.