Stephen F. Austin State University  
Department of Anthropology, Geography, and Sociology  

SYLLABUS  
SOCIOLOGY 378.500 (CRN: 23158)  
METHODS IN SOCIAL RESEARCH  
Spring, 2016 Semester (January 19 through May 13)  

Professor  
Dr. Ray Darville, Regents Professor of Sociology, 2015-2016  
Office Number: LA350 (faculty office)/LA335 (department office)  
Phone Number: (936) 468-2256 (office phone)/468-4405 (department number)  
FAX Number: (936) 468-2162 (department FAX)  
Class Hours: Tuesdays 1:00-2:00 and Thursdays 8:30-9:30  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00-11:00 and 1:00-3:00; Wednesdays 1:00-2:00; Thursdays 10:00-12:00; others by appointment  
E-mail Address: rdarville@sfasu.edu (email through D2L only)  
Web Address: D2L.SFASU.EDU  
Assistant: Mrs. Peggy Moss (468-4405)  

Program Learning Outcomes for Sociology  
1. The student will be able to identify, compare, and contrast sociological classical and contemporary theories.  
2. The student will be able to identify the principles of good social scientific research design. Such principles include validity, reliability, precision in measurement, and sampling methodology.  
3. The student will possess sociological knowledge as evidenced by the identification of the major concepts involved with social stratification, demography, race and ethnic relations, deviance, and globalization.  
4. The student will be able to apply sociological knowledge and skills to a variety of settings.  
5. The student will recognize the implicit assumptions behind claims of knowledge about the social world, will be able to evaluate and distinguish between strong and weak arguments, and will be able to draw conclusions from a set of premises.  
6. The student will be able to read theoretical arguments and to identify their major strengths and weaknesses.  
7. The student will be able to analyze a data set using statistical techniques and draw conclusions from the results.
Student Learning Outcomes for SOC378
After successfully completing this course, a student will be able to:
(1) identify a research article’s hypotheses, sample size, unit of analysis, sampling technique, research design, data gathering techniques, major results, and important conclusions
(2) be able to identify serious problems when they exist in a research article’s review of the literature, methods, presentation of results, and conclusions
(3) access their major discipline’s research code of ethics and state some of its major research guidelines
(4) explain in his or her own words important research concepts such as causality and correlation, level of measurement, reliability, validity, research design, and sampling
(5) take a theoretical concept and operationally define it so that it can be used in research
(6) define, give an example, and state advantages and disadvantages of experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental research designs
(7) compare and contrast obtrusive forms of data collection (such as surveys and some forms of observation) and unobtrusive forms of data collection (such as content analysis, secondary analysis, and some forms of observation)
(8) define, give an example, and state advantages and disadvantages of probability and nonprobability sampling
(9) identify the major steps in assessment research
(10) form and interpret hypotheses that include independent, dependent, and control variables
(11) explain what information can be gained from each of the following: mean, median, mode, minimum, maximum, standard deviation, and confidence interval
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Learning Outcome for Sociology</th>
<th>Supported Student Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Skill Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLO1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Basic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Basic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLO7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How SOC378 Supports the Social Work Curriculum. By addressing knowledge, values, and skills associated with quantitative and some qualitative research methods, SOC378 supports the following BSW generalist practice behaviors (GPB):

- Students will use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry. (GPB 21)
- Students will use research evidence to inform practice. (GPB 22)

**Text and Readings**
- There is one *required text*: Babbie, Earl. *The Basics of Social Research*, Sixth Edition, Wadsworth, 576 pages. (ISBN: 9780495812241). It is a paperback and should be available for purchase at all local bookstores. The text will provide you core information about social science research methods. There is an e-book version that you may purchase directly from the publisher:
  [http://www.cengage.com/search/productOverview.do?Ntt=The+Basics+of+Social+Research||9780495812241&N=16&Ns=P_Copyright_Year%7C1&Ntk=all%7C7CP_Isbn13](http://www.cengage.com/search/productOverview.do?Ntt=The+Basics+of+Social+Research||9780495812241&N=16&Ns=P_Copyright_Year%7C1&Ntk=all%7C7CP_Isbn13)

  The publisher (Wadsworth) also has created a free companion website for students at:
There will be selected additional material for you to read this semester. The material will be provided you via D2L or the links to the articles will be provided you through D2L. You may be tested over the readings on the exams, but you will not get any questions concerning the readings on your reading quizzes. These are given to you in order for you to improve your readings skills in reading social science research literature and to illustrate key concepts and principles that you will learn from the textbook and lecture notes.

Structure of the Course

- I expect excellent class attendance and participation through D2L: I monitor participation through the tracking tool in D2L. Participation is a crucial measure of your commitment to the course and to your learning. While I recognize that this is an online only class format, I will provide opportunities for you to be engaged in the class, with me, and with your fellow students.
- I will be providing you lecture notes for this class through D2L. These will give you key points and details designed to supplement your textbook. I also encourage questions and class discussion. I reserve the right to make some changes to notes and will upload any file that has been changed substantially.
- I expect you to be responsible for your own learning. This means your learning and your performance in this course were your responsibility. I will do my best to provide a positive, supportive learning environment.

Student Behavior - Acceptable Student Behavior

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert
Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

Assessment

- **Examinations**
  Three examinations, including the final, will be given, consisting of multiple-choice questions and short answer questions (see schedule for dates). The examinations are worth a total of 100 points each. They will be based on lectures, class discussions, and assigned readings. Some questions will involve basic knowledge while other questions will be applied questions, which require not simply a memorization of material, but comprehension and application of material. Thus, in your study, you *must* go beyond simple memorization of facts, ideas, definitions, etc. I will give you a non-graded practice exam before the first examination. While completing the exam is voluntary, it should serve as an indicator of the types of questions and the level of difficulty of those questions and it should serve to give you a crude idea of what you know and what you do not know before the exam. Hence, it will serve as a diagnostic tool; I will provide the correct answers to the questions. The final exam (examination) does not cover the entire course, but rather only the material covered after the second examination. Each examination will have 50 randomly-selected multiple choice questions (using simple random sampling) from a question bank of over 100 questions.

- **Chapter Reading Quizzes**
  With each chapter that is covered in the Babbie text you will have a reading quiz. These quizzes will be conducted before or while a particular chapter is being discussed in class. They will consist of 10 questions each taken directly from the text. There are approximately 25 questions in each quiz bank. When you start your quiz, the test program in D2L will choose randomly 10 questions for you through simple random sampling. Questions are multiple-choice and true-false. I do not drop any scores. Failure to take a quiz by the deadline results in a score of 0 for that quiz; no make-ups will be allowed. All quizzes will be taken on-line using D2L. The due dates and times for the quizzes will be announced on the D2L calendar tool and in the assessment tool. The quizzes are open book and open note. I recommend that you have your lecture notes with you when you take your quizzes; however, bear in mind that I have not referenced my lecture notes when writing quiz questions. The quizzes serve as a motivator to you to read the text material. Historically, there is a moderate, positive relationship typically between quiz scores and exam scores. This suggests that students who perform well on the quizzes usually (but not always) perform well on the exams. There is no guarantee for any given student, but the pattern is there. You will note below that quizzes as an element in the final course average calculations are worth 10%. While this may sound relatively insignificant, quizzes are not insignificant. In fact, some previous students have improved their overall course grade through high quiz scores.

- **Assignments**
  During the semester you will be given assignments and exercises, which are designed to improve your research knowledge and skills. Furthermore, they will help prepare you for your examinations. All assignments will be posted on D2L using the
assignment tool with complete instructions and deadlines. Not completing them is a mistake for two reasons: (1) They have educational value to help you better understand and apply the information you should be learning and (2) Collectively, they account for a significant part of your final class average.

**Grading**

- **Philosophy**
  I believe that a grade is a reflection of a students’ performance in a given course, not necessarily how much a student has worked during the semester or how intelligent a student is. In other words, two students may end up receiving the same final letter grade, but their amount of work and effort in the class may vary greatly with one student working much more than the other. I also believe that this course is unlike any other course you have taken in college and therefore commands serious attention of your time and commitment to learning. It is not simply a memorization course, but requires abstract thinking, logical reasoning, and the ability to apply methodological concepts in specific research situations. Last spring, the final class average was about 71 with about one-third of the students receiving an A or B in the course. Hence, this class needs your complete attention beginning now and continuing until the end of the course if you are to succeed. Lastly, I believe that I do not “give” grades, but rather assign grades based on student performance. You can be successful in this course, but work is required. My job is to help you succeed; I’m ready to do so. Are you ready to work and to learn?

- **Formula (Weights) for Final Class Average Calculation**
  1. Examinations 60%
  2. Assignments 20%
  3. Quizzes 20%
    100%

- **Grading System**
  I do not automatically “round up” final averages. I will consider raising a final letter grade for those students who have demonstrated a strong commitment to the course and who have a “9” average such as 89. Your grade will be determined using the following standard system. Make the most of these opportunities; every assessment opportunity is precious. Social work majors, you are required by the School of Social Work to earn at least a grade of C; if you are considering going to graduate school for a M.S.W. degree, then a B is needed. Check with your advisor in the School of Social Work for details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Average</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A=&quot;excellent&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>B=&quot;good&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>C=&quot;fair&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>D=&quot;poor&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>F= &quot;failing&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Missed Examinations and Assignments
Students are expected to take their examinations at the scheduled times. Officially-recognized school activities are exceptions. Complete documentation that is satisfactory is required for any missed exams to be made up. In cases of illness or family emergency, I may allow make-ups. This is purely and exclusively my decision.

Course Evaluation
Near the end of the semester, you will be asked to electronically complete an evaluation for this course. The Department of Social and Cultural Analysis uses the data from course evaluations for these purposes: (1) course and program improvement, planning, and accreditation; (2) instructional evaluation; (3) decisions regarding faculty tenure, promotion, merit pay, and retention. As you evaluate this course, we ask you to be thoughtful, thorough, and accurate. The department faculty members are committed to teaching excellent and appreciate your feedback and therefore we want your thoughts on this course. The evaluation process has been simplified and will be completed through MySFA. Although the instructor will be able to see the names of students who complete the evaluation, all ratings and comments are anonymous and will be made available to the instructor until after the grading cycle for this semester has been concluded.

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.
You should read the complete policy at: http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp.

Withheld Grades Policy (A-54)
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the
same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

### Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week No.</th>
<th>Monday of Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1       | January 18 18  | Human Inquiry and Science                  | Read learning module
Read Babbie, chapter 1
Complete assignment: Honesty Statement
Complete assignment: D2L Orientation (non-graded)
Complete Module 1 Assignment
Complete reading quiz 1
Attend class session |
| 2       | January 25 25 | Paradigms, Theory, and Research            | Read learning module
Read Babbie Chapter 2
Complete reading quiz 2
Attend class session
Complete assignment |
| 3       | February 1   | Causation                                  | Read learning module
Attend class session
Complete assignment |
| 4       | February 8   | The Ethics and Politics of Social Research | Read learning module
Read Babbie, chapter 3
Attend class session
Complete reading quiz 3
Attend class session
Complete assignment |
| 5       | February 15  | EXAM 1                                     | **Complete examination 1**
Attend class session |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week Number</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>Read learning module &lt;br&gt;Read Babbie, chapter 4 &lt;br&gt;Complete reading quiz 4 &lt;br&gt;Attend class session &lt;br&gt;Complete assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement</td>
<td>Read learning module &lt;br&gt;Read Babbie, chapter 5 &lt;br&gt;Complete reading quiz 5 &lt;br&gt;Attend class session &lt;br&gt;Complete assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Indexes, Scales, and Typologies</td>
<td>Read learning module &lt;br&gt;Read Babbie, chapter 6 &lt;br&gt;Complete reading quiz 6 &lt;br&gt;Attend class session &lt;br&gt;Complete assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
<td>NO CLASSES-Rest and Relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>The Logic of Sampling</td>
<td>Read learning module &lt;br&gt;Read Babbie, chapter 7 &lt;br&gt;Complete reading quiz 7 &lt;br&gt;Attend class session &lt;br&gt;Complete assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 28</td>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>EXAM 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Complete examination 2</strong> &lt;br&gt;Attend class session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Experiments and Single-System Designs</td>
<td>Read learning module &lt;br&gt;Read Babbie, chapter 8 &lt;br&gt;Complete reading quiz 8 &lt;br&gt;Attend class session &lt;br&gt;Complete assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Survey Research</td>
<td>Read learning module &lt;br&gt;Read Babbie, chapter 9 &lt;br&gt;Complete reading quiz 9 &lt;br&gt;Attend class session &lt;br&gt;Complete assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Unobtrusive Research</td>
<td>Read learning module &lt;br&gt;Read Babbie, chapter 11 &lt;br&gt;Complete reading quiz 11 &lt;br&gt;Attend class session &lt;br&gt;Complete assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Evaluation Research</td>
<td>Read learning module &lt;br&gt;Read Babbie, chapter 12 &lt;br&gt;Complete reading quiz 12 &lt;br&gt;Attend class session &lt;br&gt;Complete assignment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|    |   May 2   | Quantitative Data Analysis | Read learning module  
|    |     |                             | Read Babbie, chapter 14  
|    |     |                             | Complete reading quiz 14  
|    |     |                             | Attend class session  
|    |     |                             | Complete assignment  
|    |   May 9   | **FINALS WEEK. FINAL EXAM** | Complete final examination  

**Important University Dates This Semester**

- January 19—First day of classes for Spring, 2016 semester
- January 22—Last day to add classes
- March 2—Last Day to apply for degrees to be completed in August, 2016
- March 9—Mid-semester
- March 12—Beginning of spring holidays
- March 21—classes resume following spring holidays
- March 23—Last day to drop courses
- March 23—Last day to withdraw from the university without WP or WF
- March 24—Beginning of Easter holidays
- March 28 (4:00 p.m.)—Classes resume following Easter holidays
- April 1—First day to apply for degrees to be completed in December, 2016
- April 26—Last day to withdraw from the university
- May 9-13—FINAL EXAM WEEK
- December 14--COMMENCEMENT