



**SOC 575—ADVANCE RESEARCH METHODS  
SECTION 01E-- CRN # 82593  
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2015**

**Instructor: Dr. Jiaming Sun**

**Office Location: SS 205**

Face to Face Office Hrs: M W: 9 am - 11am or by appointment

Office Phone: 903-886-5322

Email: Jiaming.sun@tamuc.edu

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Lectures (Web-Enhanced):** T 4:30 pm-7:10 pm  
(SS310) 8/31/2015 through 12/18/2015

This syllabus is intended to help you understand clearly the course goals, expectations, testing methods and topics we are going through so you may maximize your performance. It should also help you to avoid mistakes and misunderstandings that will affect your grade adversely.

**Text**

- Graduate Research Method (Sociology 575) Required Reading Package).
- W. Lawrence Neuman. *Social Research Method*. 7<sup>th</sup> Ed. Publisher: Pearson, 2009 ISBN-10: 0205615961; ISBN-13: 978-0205615964. It can be purchased through Amazon for the 7<sup>th</sup> edition. (optional).
- Jiaming Sun. *Global Connectivity and Local Transformation*. University Press of America. ISBN 0-7618-4008-7 (optional).

Additional reading materials to be distributed in seminars.

**Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives**

Research is the heart of social inquiry. In a Master granting program, one important goal is to train graduate students to be disciplined, productive researchers. This course fulfills one of the core requirements in the sociology graduate program. It is designed to give students a broad view of the variety of approaches for designing a good quality social research. Typically

graduate students at Texas A&M University-commerce are required to take a research methods course. The purposes or objectives of the course are:

- To develop and discipline your curiosity and passion for inquiry by converting problems and puzzles into research questions and designs for empirical research;
- To choose appropriately, and describe in detail sufficient to justify to a research design for a specific research project;
- To develop an ability to read with comprehension research reports, especially those found in professional journals. Primarily, the goal is application of information for one's professional pursuit and/or graduate study;
- To learn to write with adequate organization, clarity, and scholarly style: a research proposal, a critique of published research, a graduate paper, and a research report;
- To become familiar with the steps necessary to the writing of your master's thesis. This includes survey, ethnographic field research, unobtrusive research, and experimental types of investigations.

## **ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

This course is an eCollege online supporting course (a hybrid course or web-enhanced course). eCollege is a campus wide web-enhanced internet teaching and learning support system. Students taking this course will be able to surf the online course website, get reading material, download and upload assignments, take online quizzes and exams, check grades and cumulative points with percentiles anytime online while having regular face to face in class lectures. If you are not familiar with the use of eCollege or the Library Online Services, please avail yourself of the online tutorials which is available through your MyLeo web page.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu)

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

As per the university rule, students taking one course with three credit-hours are expected to spend six hours weekly (three hours in class, and three hours out of class) on studying lecture online,

watching videos clips, reading chapters, doing assignments, and preparing quizzes and exams.

To meet those learning goals, this course requires you to demonstrate your critical engagement with the readings and issues of research design through questions, presentations and discussions in class, and proposal completion.

You will be required to prepare questions, presentations and discussions each class meeting based on assigned readings. Your final grade will reflect your engagement of questions preparation, class presentations (discussions) and research proposal completion. At the final stage of the course, you will be required to submit a professional research proposal for "reviewing by the IRB" (Institutional Review Boards).

**Attendance and Participation**- Graduate study means learning to learn from every possible source -- from your readings, your peers, your life experience, your professor, and your research practice. Participating in discussions is one of the best ways to learn. You are expected to contribute your questions and insights to the seminar.

The culture of the seminars will, I hope, be a congenial one for self-expression. I cannot help you learn if you don't participate in discussion, however. Doing excellent written work is not enough to demonstrate adequate performance in graduate study. Whatever you do, don't suffer in silence. Say anything you can defend against reasoned argument. Treat your colleagues' contributions with respect (which means taking them seriously and challenging them as well as extending basic courtesy).

The attendance points will not be given to those who are tardy or leave early. Excuse of absence is not necessary and will not alter your attendance records. Excessive tardiness may result in a further loss of points from your overall performance points. It can mean a difference of a final letter grade. Take it seriously.

**Reading Summaries and Exams** - Each student must be prepared to discuss all the readings assigned for a class meeting unless the instructors explicitly specify otherwise. For selected readings, **students must submit reading summary to TurnItIn.**

We encourage students to discuss reading materials with each

other; however, each student must be the sole author of his/her written assignments. If you cannot complete assignments on time due to an emergency, you must let me know before the assignment is due.

**An Initial Research Proposal (IRP)** will be required to submit for your midterm exam. The length of IRP will be about 3-4 pages. Your finalized proposal is a **Professional Research Proposal (PRP)** with length no more than 16 pages. The proposal has the following elements: specify a problem of sociological significance, convert problem into a series of hypotheses, and specify the assumptions that are implicit and explicit, literature review, operationalize the concepts, develop a questionnaire, and develop a code manual..

**Pre-test and Post-test** –At the beginning of the semester, every student must take a pre-test including about 30 multiple choice questions related to basic knowledge of social research methods for undergraduate study (30 points). A post-test will take place at the final stage of the course with 30 multiple choice questions randomly selected from the same test bank (30 points).

**Grading Policy      YOU EARN YOUR OWN POINTS**

Attendance/Online Activity	120
Reading Summaries/outlines	100
Discussions/Participations	50
Pre-test and Post-test	60
Initial Research Proposal (midterm exam)	30
Professional Research Proposal (final exam)	100
Overall performance	40
Total	500

Overall performance points (40 points) based primarily on a ranking percentile in the class will be added on a student’s total points by the end of the semester. For instance, a student who is at the 80th percentile will receive 36 points, and a student who is at the 60th percentile will receive 28 points and so on (See the detail at Stimulative Grading Scheme in eCollege).

**Final letter grade:**

- A: 450-500 (Truly exceptional and outstanding work)  
B: 400-449 (Solid or near acceptable graduate-level work).  
C: 350-399 (Not acceptable level for graduate work).

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND MATERIAL NEEDS**

This is a web-based course and some obvious technological resources will be required. Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means that our course works best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0 or 8.0). Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems.

- Word processing software (Microsoft Word preferred);
- Some floppy diskettes or jump drive to use exclusively for this class;
- A speaker for watching videos when student using computer at lab or at home;
- You are strongly recommended to have a computer with Internet connections at home to complete course assignments and online quizzes.

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **Disruptive Behavior**

"Disruptive behavior" includes but not limited being rude to other people, destructive (rather than constructive) criticism of another, arriving late repeatedly, sleeping during class, belligerent or aggressive behavior, and so on. These behaviors have no place in a college classroom. You have a right to maintain your own opinions and to disagree with others, but you must do so in a fashion that is conducive to learning and does not take the form of a personal attack on others. Minimally, you are expected to treat your classmates and your professor in a respectful fashion and they will return the favor. Any behavior that obstructs or disrupts the classroom teaching and learning environment will be addressed. Serious or repeated breaches in appropriate behavior may result in a degradation of your final grade in the course and may be referred to additional University authorities.

### **Cheating & Plagiarism**

It should go without saying that every student is expected to do his/her own work. Department policy provides that anyone caught cheating in any form or fashion will receive an "F" for the course and may be subject to further disciplinary action by the university. Plagiarism (the use of others' words, phrases, and ideas in your writing without giving credit to the original author) is a form of cheating and not only violates academic ethical standards, but is against the law.

Your written work and final paper will require to be submitted into DropBox (linking to TurnItIn) in eCollege. More than 25% similarity on a paper reported will not be accepted for grading.

### **Policies on Enrollment, "X", "DP," "DF," and Withdrawal**

Every student has the right to drop the course without penalty until the drop date. Students dropping the course during this period will be given a DP (drop while passing). A grade of DP is GPA neutral, but a grade of DF counts as an F on your transcript.

If you choose to stop attending class, you may be dropped from the course due to excessive absences. If you are not satisfied with your grade in the course and wish you to drop, it is YOUR responsibility to drop the course. Once a grade of DP or DF has been registered, it won't be able to change. A student may drop a course by logging into his/her myLEO account and clicking on the hyperlink labeled "Drop a class" from a listed choices found under the myLEO section of the Web page.

Students should check the university catalog, current semester schedule, and other official sources for specific deadlines, policies, etc. It is the student's responsibility to see that all university procedures are properly followed.

## **Student Requiring Assistance**

### **ADA Statement**

#### **Students with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [Rebecca.Tuerk@tamuc.edu](mailto:Rebecca.Tuerk@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

**Nondiscrimination Notice**

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

<b>COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT</b>
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**Email Correspondence**

In this course, email is an essential corresponding method and a supplement to lectures. This means that you can expect to hear from the instructor via emails regularly throughout the semester, such as using email for reminders, clarifications, last-minute notifications, etc. Needless to say, students are expected to check email regularly in daily fashion (a couple of times a day). Conversely, you should feel free to contact the instructor via email with questions, requests or problems that might not be addressed clearly in online lessons.

You may access to your email account via myLeo - all my emails sent from eCollege (and all other the university's emails) will go to this account. Conversely, you are to email me via the eCollege email system or your myLeo email since the university spam filters will catch yahoo, hotmail, etc. and usually the emails in spam won't be checked.

HOWEVER in order to avoid duplication of questions and answers, please post all class related questions in the Virtual Office. This will be our Q&A forum. It is likely that your peers will have the same question. Emails of a personal nature or for a bonus point should be sent individually to the instructor's email address via eCollege.

If you are having problems in class, please contact the instructor immediately. Please understand that you should not contact the instructor only at the end of the semester being unhappy with your grade, asking for a way to change it.

<b>COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR</b>
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The course schedule is tentative and somewhat subject to change. Although this course will follow the schedule, it is possible that some adjustments will be made as we progress through the semester.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates (T, R)</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
1	Sep. 1	Brief introduction; Organizational meeting. Pre-test	
2	Sep. 8	A Methodology for Twenty-First Century Sociology. Joel Smith	Reading with article abstract/outline
3	Sep. 15	On the Microfoundation of Macrosociology. Randall Collins.	Reading with article abstract/outline
4	Sep. 22	Manifesto for a relational Sociology. Mustafa Emirbayer.	Reading with article abstract/outline
5	Sep.29	Theory and Method in Comparative Research: Two Strategies. Charles Ragin, and David Zaret	Reading with article abstract/outline
6	Oct. 6	A Methodology for Twenty-First Century Sociology. Joel Smith	
7	Oct. 13	Review for the exam.	
8	Oct. 20	<b>*** Mid term exam***</b>	
9	Oct. 27	Discussion of initial idea of research proposal	Reading with article abstract/outline
10	Nov. 3	Measurement of World City Network. P.J. Taylor, G. Catalano and D.R.F.Walker.	Reading with article abstract/outline



11	Nov. 10	Cross-National Research As an Analytic Strategy. Melvin L. Kohn	Reading with article abstract/outline
12	Nov. 17	Historical Method in Consumer Research Developing Causal Explanations of Change. Ruth Ann Smith, David S. Lux	
13	Nov. 24	Review for the exam.	
14	Dec. 1	Discussion research proposal individually.	
15	Dec. 8	Discussion research proposal individually.	
16	Dec. 15	<b>***Final Exam***</b>	