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Office Fax: 903-886-5330  
Email: Jiaming.sun@tamuc.edu

COURSE INFORMATION

Lectures (Web Based Class): 8/24/2020 through 12/11/2020

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). It has an electronic version in D2L.  
Additional reading materials to be distributed online.

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.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

As per the university rule, students taking one course with three credit-hours are expected to spend six hours weekly online 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 online each unit based on assigned readings. Your final grade will reflect your engagement of questions preparation, class presentations (virtual discussions) and research proposal completion. At the final stage of the course, you will be required to submit a professional research proposal for “virtually 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 virtual seminar.

The culture of the virtual seminars will, I hope, be a congenial one for self-expression. I cannot help you learn if you don't participate in virtual 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 (typing and posting) 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 participation points will not be given to those who are missing (no online activities). 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 virtual discuss all the readings assigned for a virtual meeting unless the instructors explicitly specify otherwise. For selected readings, students must submit reading summary to a DropBox (linking 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 in 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 online including about 30 multiple choice questions related to basic knowledge of social research methods for undergraduate study (30 points). An online 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance/Online Activity</th>
<th>90</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Summaries/outlines</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions/Participations</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test and Post-test</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Research Proposal (midterm exam)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Research Proposal (final exam)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall performance</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall performance points (30 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 27 points, and a student who is at the 60th percentile will receive 21 points and so on (See the detail at Stimulative Grading Scheme in D2L).

**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**

**Browser support**

D2L is committed to performing key application testing when new browser versions are released. New and updated functionality is also tested against the latest version of supported browsers. However, due to the frequency of some browser releases, D2L cannot guarantee that each browser version will perform as expected. If you encounter any issues with any of the browser versions listed in the tables below, contact D2L Support, who will determine the best course of action for resolution. Reported issues are prioritized by supported browsers and then maintenance browsers.
Supported browsers are the latest or most recent browser versions that are tested against new versions of D2L products. Customers can report problems and receive support for issues. For an optimal experience, D2L recommends using supported browsers with D2L products.

Maintenance browsers are older browser versions that are not tested extensively against new versions of D2L products. Customers can still report problems and receive support for critical issues; however, D2L does not guarantee all issues will be addressed. A maintenance browser becomes officially unsupported after one year.

Note the following:

Ensure that your browser has JavaScript and Cookies enabled.

For desktop systems, you must have Adobe Flash Player 10.1 or greater.

The Brightspace Support features are now optimized for production environments when using the Google Chrome browser, Apple Safari browser, Microsoft Edge browser, Microsoft Internet Explorer browser, and Mozilla Firefox browsers.

### Desktop Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Browser</th>
<th>Supported Browser Version(s)</th>
<th>Maintenance Browser Version(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft® Edge</td>
<td>Latest</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft® Internet Explorer®</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozilla® Firefox®</td>
<td>Latest, ESR</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google® Chrome™</td>
<td>Latest</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple® Safari®</td>
<td>Latest</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Tablet and Mobile Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Device</th>
<th>Operating System</th>
<th>Browser</th>
<th>Supported Browser Version(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Android™</td>
<td>Android 4.4+</td>
<td>Chrome</td>
<td>Latest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple</td>
<td>iOS®</td>
<td>Safari, Chrome</td>
<td>The current major version of iOS (the latest minor or <strong>point</strong> release of that</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
major version) and the previous major version of iOS (the latest minor or point release of that major version). For example, as of June 7, 2017, D2L supports iOS 10.3.2 and iOS 9.3.5, but not iOS 10.2.1, 9.0.2, or any other version.

Chrome: Latest version for the iOS browser.

| Windows   | Windows 10 | Edge, Chrome, Firefox | Latest of all browsers, and Firefox ESR. |

- You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements are:
  - 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
  - Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
  - Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution

- You must have a:
  - Sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
  - Speakers or headphones.
  - *For courses utilizing video-conferencing tools and/or an online proctoring solution, a webcam and microphone are required.

- Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. At a minimum Java 7, update 51, is required to support the learning management system. The most current version of Java can be downloaded at: [JAVA web site](http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp)

- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.

Running the browser check will ensure your internet browser is supported.

- Pop-ups are allowed.
- JavaScript is enabled.
- Cookies are enabled.

- You will need some additional free software (plug-ins) for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
  - Adobe Reader [https://get.adobe.com/reader/]
• At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

This course is a D2L online supporting course (a web based course). D2L is a campus wide web-enhanced internet teaching and learning support system. Students taking this course will be able to surf online course website, get reading material, download and upload assignments, take online quizzes and exams, check grades and cumulative points with percentiles anytime online. If you are not familiar with the use of D2L or the Library Online Services, please avail yourself of the online tutorials that are available through your MyLeo web page.

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend’s home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Brightspace Support
Need Help?
Student Support

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.
Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 or click on the Live Chat or click on the words “click here” to submit an issue via email.

System Maintenance

Please note that on the 4th Sunday of each month there will be System Maintenance which means the system will not be available 12 pm-6 am CST.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.

http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: Netiquette http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the Attendance webpage and Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01.

http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx

http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rul
Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03


Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10

http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf

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 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@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.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url: http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

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 D2L (and all other the university’s emails) will go to this account. Conversely, you are to email me via the D2L 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. Email sent to the instructor should be with a subject to “SOC 575”.

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 D2L.

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.

**COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR**

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug. 24-</td>
<td>Brief self-introduction; Organizational “meeting”. Pre-test</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aug. 31-</td>
<td>A Methodology for Twenty-First Century Sociology. Joel Smith</td>
<td>Reading with article abstract/outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sep. 7-</td>
<td>On the Microfoundation of Macrosociology. Randall Collins.</td>
<td>Reading with article abstract/outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sep. 14-</td>
<td>Manifesto for a relational Sociology. Mustafa Emirbayer.</td>
<td>Reading with article abstract/outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sep. 21-</td>
<td>Theory and Method in Comparative Research: Two Strategies. Charles Ragin, and David Zaret</td>
<td>Reading with article abstract/outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sep. 28-</td>
<td>A Methodology for Twenty-First Century Sociology. Joel Smith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct. 5-</td>
<td>Review for the exam.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Oct. 12-</td>
<td>*** Mid term exam***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Oct. 19-</td>
<td>Discussion of initial idea of research proposal</td>
<td>Reading with article abstract/outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Cross-National Research As an Analytic Strategy. Melvin L. Kohn</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Historical Method in Consumer Research Developing Causal Explanations of Change. Ruth Ann Smith, David S. Lux</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Review and post-test.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Discussion research proposal online.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Practice of IRB (Institutional Review Board) application</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td><em><strong>Final Exam</strong></em></td>
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