

Department of Sociology, Social Work, Criminal Justice, and Family Science

**SOCI 3700 (01)
INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODS**

FOUR credit hours

Dr. Maria Scott

Decker Hall 224

(765) 641-4511

dmscott@anderson.edu

Course description

Introduces the student to methods and application of social research including issues of conceptualization of variables, research design, quantitative and qualitative forms of analysis, evaluation research, and utilization of social research in policy, program, and practice settings.

This course provides an *introduction to the conduct of research in the social sciences*. The emphasis in this course is directed toward a process, namely *how* one goes about designing and carrying out social research on a given topic, rather than on focusing primarily upon the “*what*” of content knowledge about a specific topic area or subject matter.

It is not expected that most students enrolled in this course have had a previous course in either methodology or statistics. It is assumed, however, that all students have some grounding in their discipline and thus are familiar with general research findings in their major field of specialization. The basic foci of this course are several-fold: (a) *the philosophical basis*, (b) *the conceptual framework*, and (c) *the practical mechanics, which make up the methodologies that are utilized to generate and collect research data in the social sciences*. Concern with the crucially important (d) *ethical dimension* involved in carrying out social science research will also be emphasized throughout the course.

This course will introduce you to these methodological issues and procedures for use in your own practice and professional work, as well as provide you with introductory preparation for more advanced, subsequent courses in research design, methodology, and statistics, at either the undergraduate or graduate level.

Textbook

Monette, Sullivan, and DeJong, *Applied Social Research: A Tool for the Human Services*, 7th edition, Thompson/Wadsworth, 2008. ISBN- 0-495-39246-4.

Course Objectives

- To discuss what is meant by the concept of the "scientific method," what assumptions this approach makes toward gaining knowledge, and to critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of this approach as a means of obtaining knowledge about human beings, their patterns of interaction, and social behavior more generally.
- To help students develop a basic understanding, awareness of and respect for the ethical issues involved in conducting social science research, as well as some of the primary means for addressing these issues in research design and practice.
- To introduce students to the professional language and technical vocabulary of science and the research process, and to expose students to the basic elements involved in social research methods of data collection and analysis.

- To examine the essential interrelationship between the development of social theory and the findings yielded from the research process in social science.
- To critically assess the grounding assumptions, strengths and weaknesses of the various methodologies commonly utilized for data collection and analysis in the social sciences.
- To provide an introductory understanding of the uses of quantitative and qualitative forms of data analysis and statistics in social research applications.
- To foster an understanding of and appreciation for social research and its relationship to social policy, applied practice, intervention, and service provision.
- To help each student develop an appreciation for research oriented literature and the skills necessary to become a “critical consumer” of social research.
- To provide an understanding of the research strategies which are utilized to systematically evaluate professional practice and service delivery within the broad area of human social service fields with a particular emphasis upon quantitative measures and related procedures for measurement, data collection, and analysis.
- To facilitate the student's ability to work through the major stages of the research process: starting with a general, substantive topic of interest, moving through the formulation of a well-constructed research problem, to the development of a complete research design outlining an appropriate methodology for studying the chosen subject matter and collecting and analyzing research data.
- As a **Writing Intensive** course, this class, through the elaboration by students of a multi-stage research proposal, **will meet the following objectives:**
 - a. **writing improvement facilitated through staged and sequenced writing assignments.**
 - b. **multiple opportunities for drafting and revising, with regular opportunities for feedback.**
 - c. **45% of the overall grade in the course will be based on writing.**

Grading Scale:

A	93-100 (465-500)	C+	77-79 (395-399)
A-	90-92 (450-464)	C	73-76 (365-394)
B+	87- 89 (435-463)	C-	70-72 (350-364)
B	83-86 (415-434)	D+	67-69 (335-349)
B-	80-82 (400-414)	D	60-66 (300-330)
		F	0-59 (0-299)

Course Requirements

1. Tests. 40%

There will be four in-class tests and a final exam.

Make-ups for the course tests may be arranged only for legitimate reasons, such as severe illness or some other catastrophic event. There will be penalties for make-up tests taken for any other reason.

2. Homework, In-class Assignments and Class Attendance & Participation. 15%

Each student is responsible for turning in various exercises assigned either as homework or completed in class from Moodle handouts. Assignments turned in late will be penalized. If you are not in class when in-class exercises are assigned, you will not receive credit for the assignment.

Student involvement and participation in the course is an important component of this class. *It is expected that students will faithfully attend class, come prepared by doing the assigned reading and homework before class, and actively participate in the course activities and discussion. Students will be evaluated on the basis of their preparation and participation in the class discussions and activities, as well as their attendance over the course of the semester.*

3. Research proposal. 45%

The course instructor must approve the topics for the Research Proposal. The exact format for this research proposal will be outlined by the instructor through a series of assignments, class handouts, and in-class discussions distributed over the course of the semester.

The research proposal is a very significant part of the course requirements. A series of cumulative assignments working toward the final proposal paper will be provided over the course of the semester. **The work completed by students on these assignments needs to be saved and kept in a folder throughout the course to be turned in by the student along with each assignment and then in complete form along with the final research proposal as a portfolio at the end of the semester.**

<i>Initial Proposal for Research Topic</i>	<i>10 points</i>
<i>Draft Literature Review</i>	<i>30 points</i>
<i>Sample Measurement Instruments Exercise</i>	<i>30 points</i>
<i>Methodological Approach Exercise</i>	<i>30 points</i>
<i>Final Research Proposal Paper</i>	<i>200 points</i>
Total	300 points

The narrative portion of this proposal (excluding appendices and bibliography) should be approximately *20 pages*.

It cannot be overemphasized how important it is to identify a topic and begin your work on the proposal as early in the semester as possible, and to keep up with the class assignments, in order to complete your work for the Research Proposal in a quality manner and on time.

The instructor retains the right to make any alterations deemed beneficial for class instruction. In such instances, the class will be notified if material or grades are affected in any way. You should read the assigned material before the class period for which it has been assigned. **Although every aspect of an assigned chapter may not be covered in class, you are still responsible for that material on exams.**

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

1. Jan 13 Course Introduction

