



**Department of Sociology & Social Work**  
**SOC 460 Social Research Methods & Design**  
**4 Units**

**Spring 2017**

“Good sociology is sociological work that produces meaningful descriptions of organizations and events, valid explanations of how they come about and persist, and realistic proposals for their improvement or removal.”

- Howard S. Becker

<b>Meeting days:</b> Tuesday & Thursday	<b>Instructor title and name:</b> Daniel Davis
<b>Meeting times:</b> 11:00am – 12:40pm	<b>Phone:</b> 707-362-0186 (voicemail only)
<b>Meeting location:</b> Liberty Station 205B	<b>E-mail:</b> danieldavis@pointloma.edu
<b>Final Exam:</b> TBD	<b>Office location and hours:</b> Rohr Hall #110, after class or by apt.

**PLNU Mission**

**To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send**

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

**Department Mission**

As followers of Christ, our mission is to nurture servant scholars who critically evaluate social and cultural patterns, and constructively engage as agents of hope.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*Catalogue Description:* A study and application of the methods of social research: development of a design, collection and analysis of data, and development of a final report.

*Instructor Elaboration:* The study of research methodology is one of the most fundamental aspects to becoming a social scientist in general, and a sociologist in particular. Theory and methods are the foundation upon which all other areas of sociological study are built. Even if you do not intend on pursuing graduate work in the social sciences, understanding social research methodology is vital for almost any career or service position that interacts with statistics, studies, reports, etc. Developing these skills will serve you in becoming a more discriminating consumer of media as well, as media outlets report on studies, polls, and more. At its essence, a methodology course is a sub-division of epistemology (“how do we know what we know”), methodology seeks to answer the related question, “how do we find out?” Students will design and carry out a research project.

## COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

---

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- ✓ Articulate the broad range of tools used by sociologists to learn about the social world.
- ✓ Find, select, understand and use refereed journal articles when writing.
- ✓ Plan out concrete steps on how to measure patterns in the social world in robust ways.
- ✓ More capably engage in critical thinking, deep reasoning, and use a sociological imagination.
- ✓ Hone their written and oral communication skills necessary for success in more advanced study.

## REQUIRED TEXTS AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES

---

### Required:

Babbie, Earl. 2010. *The Basics of Social Research*, 5th Ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing. ISBN-13: 978-0495812241.

*American Sociological Association Style Guide, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*. 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0912764214.

### Recommended Software:

SPSS for quantitative and ATLAS.ti for qualitative projects. You will spend many hours analyzing your data, without a personal copy of the appropriate software for your project you will have to do all of it in the library. Also, highly recommended is Tableau for data visualization, you can get a free student copy.

## ASSIGNMENTS

---

### Discussion Leading (3x5pts = 15pts)

Three times you will bring a 2pg outline based on the chapter or article assigned, and lead a group discussion. See the discussion-leading template on Canvas for exact requirements. The chapters are from the Babbie text. The four articles are selections of *your choice* from the *American Sociological Review* (five years old or less), pay particular attention to the methodology and the findings/core argument.

### Research Question & Data Plan (5pts)

Turn in a single typed page with a concrete research question and a strategy to collect the relevant data. Vague questions or unclear strategies will not be given full credit. Operationalize to something specific, focused, and do-able.

### References Page (5pts)

Turn in a single typed page with 10 peer-reviewed journal articles on it that you plan to use in your paper. They must be written in ASA style for the sociology majors, APA is an option for criminal justice and social work majors. Put the references in alphabetical order with hanging indents. No books, reports, newspapers, etc. for this, only journal articles.

### Introduction & Literature Review (5pts)

Turn in a 4-5-page introduction and literature review that introduces your topic, clearly states your research question, and synthesizes the relevant literature around your topic. Please use sub-headings in the literature review to separate sections of similar literature.

**Methods Section (5pts)**

Turn in a 1-3-page methods section that explains what data you are gathering, details about that data, your sampling selection strategy, and procedures about how you plan to analyze the data. Sub-headings can be useful in a methods section.

**Results Section (5pts)**

Turn in a 4-6-page results section that reports your findings. For qualitative papers this will consist of the themes discovered and any relevant figures. For quantitative papers this will consist of your statistical findings and relevant tables and figures.

**Discussion & Conclusion Section (5pts)**

Turn in a 2-3-page discussion and conclusion section that explains the implications of the findings you reported on in the results section. You may also include a section about limitations to your research and suggestions for future research. If you are ending with the creation of a theory or hypothesis, explain it thoroughly here. A conclusion paragraph that summarizes the entire paper (sort of like a slightly extended abstract) is a common practice as well.

**Mid-Term Quiz (10pts)**

This will be a multiple choice quiz with 20 questions (.5pt each) covering the key vocabulary covered in the textbook up to this point.

**Stats Quiz (10pts)**

This will be a multiple choice quiz with 20 questions (.5pt each) covering key concepts as discussed in class about using statistical methods with social science data. This will include some basics on means testing, correlation, statistical terminology, and basic uses of SPSS.

**First Draft (5pts)**

Turn in a fully assembled version of your paper reflecting edits from all of the previous sections. Include a cover page, a running head, an abstract, keywords, and references page. Number the pages. Be sure to use ASA style in your citations and references. Full credit will only go to papers that are stapled, have appropriately labeled figures and tables, make good use of primary and secondary headings, and have minimal grammar and spelling errors.

**Presentation (10pts)**

An 8-minute presentation of your research, plus 2min of Q&A. Slides should not be too wordy and the presenter should not just read the slides. Two of the 10 points has to do with professional appearance and delivery, as if you were at a real conference. A presentation rubric will be given out in class.

**Final Draft (20pts)**

A final digital copy of your paper should be turned in by midnight on the due date at the end of the semester—emailed to [ddavi1@pointloma.edu](mailto:ddavi1@pointloma.edu). It should be your very best paper, edited and re-edited to your highest capability. This paper may be built upon for your senior thesis, for the honors society, and/or as a writing sample to graduate school. Zero grammar or spelling mistakes should remain in this version.

**Extra Credit**

There is a maximum allowance of 5pts extra credit from all possible sources. Below are some options; additional options will be offered in class:

- 1pt- Join a professional association
- 1pt- Attend a relevant conference to your major or career aspirations
- 1pt- Research Assistant tasks for instructor or other students' research
- 1pt- Tutoring a student struggling with a specific part of their paper that you have mastered

## COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	CLASS CONTENT	READING & ASSIGNMENTS DUE
1/12/17	Course Overview, Associations, Journals	Syllabus
1/17/17	Theory, Sources of Data, Paper Strategy	Chpt. 1
1/19/17	General Social Survey	Chpt. 2 (Laptop)
1/24/17	Research Ethics and IRB	Chpt. 3, Research Question & Data Plan
1/26/17	Research Design, ASA Style References	Chpt. 4
1/31/17	Conceptualization, Operationalization,	Chpt. 5
2/2/17	Scales & Typologies, Writing a Lit Review	Chpt. 6, References Page w/10 Journal Articles
2/7/17	Sampling Logic, ASA Style Citations	Chpt. 7
2/9/17	Experimental Design	Chpt. 8, Introduction & Literature Review
2/14/17	Survey Research, Writing a Methods Section	Chpt. 9
2/16/17	Field Methods, Interviews & Observations	Chpt. 10,
2/21/17	Unobtrusive Research	Chpt. 11, Methods Section
2/23/17	Evaluation Research	Chpt. 12
2/28/17	Writing Clinic, Writing a Results Section	(Bring Laptop to Class)
3/2/17	Mid-Term Quiz	Mid-Term Quiz (Laptop)
3/7/17	Spring Break - No Class	
3/9/17	Spring Break - No Class	
3/14/17	Qualitative Data Analysis—Coding	Chpt. 13
3/16/17	Quantitative Data Analysis—Statistics	Chpt. 14, Results Section
3/21/17	Statistics & SPSS Workshop	Chpt. 15 (Laptop)
3/23/17	Stats Quiz	Stats Quiz (Laptop)
3/28/17	Writing a Discussion/Conclusion Section	Article #1,
3/30/17	Tableau Data Visualization Intro	Article #2, (Laptop)
4/4/17	Tableau, SPSS practice or Open Writing	Article #3, Discussion & Conclusion Section
4/6/17	Writing Workshop	Article #4, (Laptop)
4/11/17	Writing Workshop	Paper Copy of Complete First Draft
4/13/17	Easter Break - No Class	
4/18/17	Writing Workshop	(Volunteers present for +1 EC)
4/20/17		Presentations
4/25/17		Presentations
4/27/17	Last Day of Class	Presentations
5/2/17		Final Paper Due by Midnight

## ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

---

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion Leading, 15%</li><li>• Research Question/Data Plan, 5%</li><li>• References Page, 5%</li><li>• Intro &amp; Lit Review, 5%</li><li>• Methods, 5%</li><li>• Results, 5%</li><li>• Discussion/Conclusion, 5%</li><li>• Mid-Term Quiz, 10%</li><li>• Stats Quiz, 10%</li><li>• First Draft, 5%</li><li>• Presentation, 10%</li><li>• Final Research Paper, 20%</li></ul>	A=93-100 A-=92-90 B+=87-89 B=83-86 B-=80-82 C+=77-79	C=73-76 C-=70-72 D+=67-69 D=63-66 D-=60-62 F=0-59
---	---	--

## FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

---

Campus Policy: Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination **on its scheduled day**. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class Schedules](#) site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

Course Policy: Your final is your research paper, due midnight on May 2, 2017. Send it by email to: [ddavi1@pointloma.edu](mailto:ddavi1@pointloma.edu) (do not post it to Blackboard). Paper copies turned in class on 04-27-17 or earlier earn +1 extra credit point.

## PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY

---

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

## PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTY

---

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

## PLNU ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

---

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at [DRC@pointloma.edu](mailto:DRC@pointloma.edu). See [Disability Resource Center](#) for additional information.

## **PLNU ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

---

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See [Academic Policies](#) in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.

*Course Specific Policy:* Three absences will be allowed, no reasons necessary. Each additional absence (without official documentation of valid reason) will result in a 2pt deduction of the final paper grade.