

# **SOCIOLOGY 307: Social Research I**

Fall 2019

Instructor:	Emily K. Carian
Email:	<a href="mailto:emily.carian@csusb.edu">emily.carian@csusb.edu</a>
Office:	SB 437
Office hours:	11:00am-1:00pm Tuesdays, and by appointment, SB 437
Class meetings:	Lectures, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00-3:50pm, CH 135 Labs, Tuesdays or Thursdays, 4:00-5:50pm, SB 356

## ***Course Description and Objectives***

Welcome to Sociology 307: Social Research I! The goal of this course is to introduce you to the process and methods sociologists use to study the social world. This course will help you become a better *consumer* of research: you will be able to critically evaluate claims you read in class, the news, on social media, and elsewhere. This course will also help you become a *producer* of research: you will be able to ask and answer your own research questions in a scientifically valid and ethical way. Our class will cover topics including problem formulation, conceptualization and measurement, sampling and generalizability, causation, survey research, qualitative methods, and experiments.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- describe, compare, and contrast basic methodological approaches for gathering sociological data, based on both quantitative and qualitative methods.
- design and implement research in an area of choice and explain why various decisions were made regarding sampling, variables, measures, methods of data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations.
- use basic statistical analysis to identify patterns in data.
- perform data entry and descriptive statistics in SPSS.
- convey research findings in writing.
- critically read and evaluate research.

## ***Required Materials***

The following text is required for this course and is available for purchase at the bookstore or for purchase or rent at [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) (where you can also buy or rent an eTextbook for cheaper).

Schutt, Russell K. 2019. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. 9th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. ISBN 978-1-5063-6119-2.

In addition to this book, you need a USB flash drive for saving your work during lab.

## ***Grading and Assignments***

You will be graded according to the following scheme:

Attendance and Participation:	5%
In-Class Assignments:	20%
Quizzes:	25%
Lab Reports:	25%
Research Project:	25%

### ***Attendance and Participation (5%):***

Most learning will take place in class. It is crucial (and mandatory) that you show up! Additionally, everyone's contribution is needed to make us a true learning community. Participate by asking and answering questions, contributing during group work and other activities, and otherwise engaging with the material. To come to class ready to participate, complete the required readings listed in the course outline below before class time. I recognize that some students are uncomfortable speaking in class; if this is you, I challenge you to step out of your comfort zone and contribute to the discussion at least once per class period. I also encourage you to speak with me regularly during office hours about the material to demonstrate your understanding. Attendance is taken at the beginning of class. If you arrive late, make sure to tell me at the end of class that you were present.

### ***In-Class Assignments (20%):***

During class time, you will be expected to complete assignments, including worksheets, pop quizzes, group work, and more. Some of these assignments will be graded based on whether you completed them and some will be graded based on whether your answers are correct. To complete in-class assignments, you must be in class.

### ***Quizzes (25%):***

You will take two quizzes during the quarter. The quiz questions cover material from lecture, the required readings, in-class assignments, and other course materials. Quiz 1 is on Tuesday, November 5 and quiz 2 is on Tuesday, November 26. To complete these quizzes, you must be in class.

### ***Lab Reports (25%):***

The purpose of lab is to (1) prepare you to complete the research project and (2) introduce you to SPSS, a statistical software social scientists, public policy analysts, and others use to analyze quantitative data. Besides allowing you to answer all sorts of questions with data, being able to use SPSS is a valuable skill—something you can list on your resume! You should be signed up for a lab on Tuesday or Thursday at 4:00-5:50pm in SB 356. To earn full credit, you must attend and complete the lab assignment. Bring your USB flash drive to every lab. As noted in the schedule below, you will usually need to prepare for lab by reading or completing a short assignment.

### ***Research Project (25%):***

One of the objectives of this course is to design and implement a research study. For this assignment, you will have the opportunity to identify a question of interest about a social issue that is important to you, and propose and put into practice a study to answer it. You will do background research, develop a survey instrument, field your survey, input your data into SPSS, analyze your findings, and write up a report. The following assignments and deadlines make up the research project:

- |  |                  |     |
|--|------------------|-----|
| 1. Question, hypotheses, and survey instrument | 10/22 or 10/24   | 5%  |
| 2. Analysis                                    | 11/19 or 11/21   | 5%  |
| 3. Report                                      | 12/5, 11:59:59pm | 15% |

All assignments will be turned in via Blackboard. More detailed instructions for the research project will be handed out later.

Students will be graded according to the following scale:

A = 93% and higher	C = 73-76%
A- = 90-92%	C- = 70-72%
B+ = 87-89%	D+ = 67-69%
B = 83-86%	D = 63-66%
B- = 80-82%	D- = 59-62%
C+ = 77-79%	F = 58% and lower

## *My Expectations of Students*

### ***Classroom Culture:***

I expect students to contribute to a respectful and inclusive learning environment with their actions and their words. As your instructor, I will strive to do the same. In addition to these expectations, we will work together to define what we want our classroom culture to be the first day of class.

### ***Communication:***

I appreciate honesty and transparency, and I expect you to communicate with me in a timely manner (i.e. within 48 hours) about issues that will prevent you from participating fully in this class. If you are experiencing a serious problem (e.g., personal illness or illness of a child/parent/etc) or unavoidable and necessary scheduling conflict (e.g., a job interview), please let me know before or after class, in office hours, or by email ([emily.carian@csusb.edu](mailto:emily.carian@csusb.edu)), especially if the problem will affect your attendance. Because many of our assignments require your attendance in class, keep me in the loop! Remember: I cannot make accommodations for you if you do not communicate with me.

### ***Late Work:***

I have high expectations for all students, including turning in assignments on time. As always, in the case of a serious issue that will prevent you from turning in an assignment on time, tell me as soon as possible to make arrangements. Exceptions to the deadline will be made on a case-by-case basis. Otherwise, late work will not be accepted.

### ***Laptops and Phones:***

Because research shows that laptops and phones are distractions to learning, laptops and phones are not allowed in this course, except for students with documented disabilities and for some class activities. I expect you to take notes by hand.

### ***Academic Honesty:***

Plagiarism (claiming credit for someone else's ideas or words) and cheating are against the Student Conduct Code. In addition to decreasing how much you will learn, plagiarizing and cheating will earn you a failing grade in this class. To avoid plagiarizing and cheating, always use your own words; avoid

the temptation to use even half a sentence written by someone else. When directly quoting others' work or using their ideas, give credit to them. To learn more about how to cite your sources, see [this guide](#) from the library.

### ***Resources to Help You Succeed***

#### ***Office Hours:***

I highly encourage you to attend office hours (Tuesdays at 11:00am-1:00pm, or by appointment) to discuss course material, ask clarifying questions, talk about new topics, seek help on assignments, talk about graduate school in sociology and job paths, and more! Office hours is also an excellent place to show your engagement with the material if you're uncomfortable talking in class. My office is located in SB 437. I expect every student to come to office hours at least once.

#### ***Email:***

In addition to communicating with me during class and office hours, you are welcome to contact me via email ([emily.carian@csusb.edu](mailto:emily.carian@csusb.edu)) with questions or clarifications. To save both of us time, please consider whether your question is best answered in office hours, in class, or over email. Before you email me a question, make sure you look for the answer in the syllabus and/or assignment instructions. While I make an effort to respond to student emails on the same day, I cannot promise I will respond to emails sent after 5pm until the next day.

#### ***Pfau Library Wedge:***

If you need additional practice or time (e.g., for the Research Project) with SPSS, the [Student Technology Support Center](#) has computers equipped with SPSS.

#### ***Support for Students with Disabilities:***

If you require an accommodation to participate fully in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so we can arrange accommodations. Additionally, contact [Services for Students with Disabilities](#) at 909-537-528 (UH-183) to verify your eligibility for services and obtain necessary services.

#### ***Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS):***

College can be stressful; make sure you take care of your mental and emotional well-being. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is available for students with personal, academic, and relationship concerns. You can call them at 909-537-5040, or visit their [website](#).

#### ***Blackboard:***

This course will make use of the Blackboard site for posting readings, turning in assignments, keeping track of grades, and making announcements. Please make sure you are able to access Blackboard and check the site frequently. Note that we will be using the Blackboard site for the lecture, not the Blackboard site for the lab sections.

#### ***University Policies:***

You can review the University's policies on plagiarism, cheating, and course withdrawal in the [Academic Regulations and Procedures](#) section of the CSUSB Bulletin of Courses.

## ***Office of Emergency Management and Business Continuity:***

For information regarding emergency procedures and safety guidelines, visit the office's [website](#).

### ***Course Schedule***

Note: This schedule is subject to change. Stay up-to-date using the most recent version of the syllabus on Blackboard.

#### ***Important Dates:***

- Tuesday 10/22 or Thursday 10/24, end of lab: Question, hypotheses, and survey instrument for research project due
- Tuesday 11/5, in class: Quiz 1
- Tuesday 11/19 or Thursday 11/21, end of lab: Analysis for research project due
- Tuesday 11/26, in class: Quiz 2
- Thursday 12/5, 11:59:59pm: Report for research project due

<b>Week 0</b>	
Thursday 9/19	<i>What is this class all about?</i> Read Before: None
Lab	No lab
<b>Week 1</b>	
Tuesday 9/24	<i>What is social research?</i> Read Before: Chapter 1: Science, Society, and Social Research
Thursday 9/26	<i>How do I write a research question? How do I know if research is good?</i> Read Before: Chapter 2: The Process and Problems of Social Research
Lab	<i>Lab 1: What is SPSS?</i> Read Before: Guide to SPSS, p. 2-10; GSS Extract Codebook, p. 2 (and skim the rest)
<b>Week 2</b>	
Tuesday 10/1	<i>How do I measure the things I'm interested in?</i> Read Before: Chapter 4: Conceptualization and Measurement
Thursday 10/3	<i>Who should I study? How can I access them?</i> Read Before: Chapter 5: Sampling and Generalizability
Lab	<i>Lab 2: How do I transform variables with SPSS?</i> Read Before: Guide to SPSS, p. 11-28
<b>Week 3</b>	

Tuesday 10/8	<i>When and how can I collect data? How do I avoid common problems in research?</i> Read Before: Chapter 6: Research Design and Causation
Thursday 10/10	Class cancelled - power outage :(
Lab	<i>Lab 3: How do I find and evaluate previous literature?</i> Do Before: Part 0 of Lab 3 (save it to your USB drive!)
<b>Week 4</b>	
Tuesday 10/15	<i>What have I learned so far? Review</i> Read Before: None
Thursday 10/17	<i>Why and how do I do survey research?</i> Read Before: Chapter 8: Survey Research
Lab	<i>Lab 4: How do I create a dataset in SPSS?</i> Read Before: Guide to SPSS, p. 32-33
<b>Week 5</b>	
Tuesday 10/22	<i>How do I analyze survey data?</i> Read Before: Chapter 9: Quantitative Data Analysis
Thursday 10/24	Class cancelled - power outage :(
Lab	<i>Lab 5: How do I craft survey questions?</i> Do Before: Part 0 of Lab 5 (save it to your USB drive!) <b>Question, hypotheses, and survey instrument for research project due at the end of lab</b>
<b>Week 6</b>	
Tuesday 10/29	<i>How do I analyze survey data? (Continued)</i> Read Before: None
Thursday 10/31	<i>How do I analyze survey data? (Continued)</i> Read Before: None
Lab	<i>Lab 6: How do I do data analysis with SPSS?</i> Read Before: Guide to SPSS, p. 27-31
<b>Week 7</b>	
Tuesday 11/5	<i>What have I learned so far? Review</i> Read Before: None <b>Bring your book to class</b>
Thursday 11/7	<i>What have I learned so far?</i>

	<b>Quiz 1 today!</b> Read Before: None
Lab	<i>Lab 7: How do I do data analysis with SPSS? (Continued)</i> Do Before: Part 0 of Lab 7 (save it to your USB drive!)
<b>Week 8</b>	
Tuesday 11/12	<i>How do I make sure my research is ethical?</i> Read Before: Chapter 3: Research Ethics and Research Proposals
Thursday 11/14	<i>Why and how do I do experimental research?</i> Read Before: Chapter 7: Experiments
Lab	<i>Lab 8: How do I create a dataset in SPSS? (Research project work time)</i> Do Before: Data collection for your research project must be completed by this lab
<b>Week 9</b>	
Tuesday 11/19	<i>How do I report my research?</i> Read Before: Chapter 16: Summarizing and Reporting Research <b>Bring materials for working on your Research Project (laptop, articles, etc.)</b>
Thursday 11/21	<i>What have I learned so far? Review</i> Read Before: None <b>Bring your book to class</b>
Lab	<i>Lab 9: How do I calculate descriptive statistics with SPSS? (Research project work time)</i> <b>Analysis for research project due at the end of lab</b>
<b>Week 10</b>	
Tuesday 11/26	<i>What have I learned so far? Concluding our class</i> Read Before: None <b>Quiz 2 today! Bring materials for working on your Research Project (laptop, articles, etc.)</b>
Thursday 11/28	No class - Thanksgiving
Lab	No lab
<b>Finals Week</b>	
Thursday 12/5, 11:59:59pm	<b>Report for Research Project due (submit via Blackboard)</b>