

SOAN 380 – RESEARCH DESIGN – Spring 2014

SOAN 380, Section 01, 02
crn 1299

T/Th 1:30 p.m. to 2:50 p.m.
Barnett Hall Room # 2226

PROFESSOR: Paul Shapiro

MY OFFICE: Barnett 2201

PHONE: 785-4055

E-MAIL: pshapiro@truman.edu

OFFICE HOURS: M/W 10:30am – 12 noon; T/Th 3:00 – 4:00 pm; and by mutual appointment.

PROFESSOR: Anton Daughters

MY OFFICE: Barnett 2207

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E-MAIL: adaughters@truman.edu

OFFICE HOURS: M, T, W, R, F: 9:20am – 10:20am.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course presents the logic of social research methodology and an overview of some of the methods and techniques most commonly used by sociologists and anthropologists. These methods include: sampling strategies, survey research, secondary data analysis, content analysis, and qualitative fieldwork. At the end of this course, you should be familiar with the major strengths and weaknesses of the various techniques as well as some of the guiding principles to keep in mind as you both read and conduct social research. While this is not a statistics course, it is an upper-division major course. Some data analysis may be necessary.

DEPARTMENT-SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES:

1. Being a successful participant in an academic discipline requires that students are taught the expectations of the discipline.
2. It is necessary to have knowledge to think with.
3. It is necessary to learn skills to read, evaluate, and craft arguments.
4. It is necessary to learn skills to identify and collect appropriate data, perform analysis, and report results.
5. It is important to encourage students to participate in activities that require them to apply and engage the knowledge and skills they learn in classes.

COURSE-SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES: The student will:

1. Understand the role of data collection in the social scientific research process.
2. Learn techniques for generating methodologically sound samples.
3. Learn the intricacies of different research designs.
4. Be able to evaluate social scientific research in terms of its methodological quality.
5. Prepare an actual research proposal that will be put into practice next semester.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Babbie, Earl. 2013. *The Practice of Social Research*. 13th ed. Thompson/Wadsworth.

(Note: The 11th or 12th edition of this book is also acceptable.)

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

Additional readings may be assigned for various classes or homework. These readings will either be made available in class or placed on reserve at the library. Some of the readings may pertain specifically to topics being covered in class. Some may compliment the reading assignments. Some may be necessary for homework assignments. Students will be notified about the additional readings in class.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Exams: There will be two examinations for this class. The exams will combine multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.
2. Homework Assignments: There will be four or five graded homework exercises assigned throughout the semester. For each, you will be asked to apply some of the concepts and techniques discussed in class.
3. Term Project: As an upper-division major course, each student is expected to complete an original research project. The research project will be in proposal form and should include an introduction, literature review, plans for appropriate methodology (with, for example, a completed survey instrument,) a strategy for data collection, analysis, and a written report. While the student will determine his or her own research topic, instructor approval is required. Students are also expected to complete the paperwork for the TSU Institutional Review Board's "Full Review."

BE AWARE: As an upper-division sequential course, this research proposal will be put into practice next semester. So you must take it seriously.

GRADING:

Exam #1:	~ 40 points.	A range: 90% and above
Exam #2:	~ 50 points.	B range: 80% - 89%
5 Homeworks:	~ 50 points.	C range: 70% - 79%
Project Draft:	~ 20 points.	D range: 60% - 69%
Term Project:	~ 50 points.	F range: 59% and below.

CLASS BEHAVIOR:

Tardiness and leaving class early are distracting to other students and is strongly discouraged. I recognize that Barnett Hall is a trek from some parts of campus; but that's no excuse for not making every effort to be punctual. If you cannot make it on time please enter the classroom as quietly and as unobtrusively as possible. Students who are habitually late, or disturb the class upon their entry, after being warned may be administratively withdrawn.

If you must leave early, please let me know in advance, and sit closer to the exits to depart as quietly as possibly.

CELL PHONES:

Turn off all cell-phones and electronic communication devices when in class. Under no circumstances should any student ever answer a cell phone in class or check a phone for messages or numbers. If your cellular device goes off during class you will be asked to leave. Repeat offenders may be given an 'F' for the semester and administratively dropped from the course.

There will be no "texting" in this class. Students caught texting or attempting to read or send text messages will be asked to leave. Repeat offenders may be given an 'F' for the semester and administratively dropped from the course.

Unless you have documentation from the Disability Services office, students are not permitted to wear headsets, iPods, earpieces, or other electronic equipment.

ADA COMPLIANCE:

The university is committed to making every possible effort to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Disability Services office (x4478) as soon as possible.

WRITING CENTER:

The Writing Center in McClain 303B (x4484) is open from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday, and is a good resource for improving your writing. They can help you to brainstorm, adjust style(s), fix grammar, references, citations, and the like. Never be too embarrassed or ashamed to seek out help.

ACADEMIC (DIS)HONESTY:

The documented policies of Truman State University concerning cheating and plagiarism will be strictly enforced in this class. Anyone engaging in plagiarism, cheating, or any other forms of academic dishonesty should be prepared to fail this course, and possibly be expelled. So don't do it. Collusion, copying from one another, or handing in the same work will not be tolerated. Working together on homework assignments is cheating! And it doesn't matter if you receive the work, or you make your work available to others. BOTH are equally guilty of cheating.

TRUVIEW ACCOUNTS:

Your Truview student e-mail account is the official communications mechanism for this class. Any official notifications that require e-mail contact will be made through your Truview account. So please check it regularly.

DISCLOSURE OF GRADES:

As a matter of policy I am NOT permitted to discuss or release grade information via e-mail or over the phone. You must come to my office to discuss your grades.

LATE PAPERS, ASSIGNMENTS, OR EXAMS:

As a matter of policy, late papers, assignments, exams, or other graded work will NOT be accepted unless you have received prior permission from the instructor.

CONCERNS, WORRIES, FEARS, PROBLEMS, QUESTIONS:

If you have a concern about any issue, in or out of class, please come by my office, call, or e-mail me and we can discuss it. You don't need to make an appointment. If I'm around Barnett Hall my door will usually be open. Be assured that anything told to me in confidence will remain in confidence unless I am required by law to disclose it.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

[This is a general guide. Unless changes are identified in class, please follow this schedule. I reserve the right to change, alter, or adjust the schedule and/or reading list as I see fit.]

1/16	1 st Week:	Intro., Syllabus, Science, Logic, Overview of Methods.	[Ch 1]
1/23	2 nd Week:	Theory, Associations, Ded./Ind., Traps, Ethics.	[Ch 2, 3]
1/30	3 rd Week:	Ethics, IRB, Research Design, Variables.	[Ch 3, 4]
2/6	4 th Week:	Res. Design, Var., Conceptualization/Operationalization	[Ch 4, 5]
2/13	5 th Week:	Conceptual/Operationalization. Sampling	[Ch 5, 6, 7]
2/20	6 th Week:	Sampling. Survey Research.	[Ch 7, 9]
2/27	7 th Week:	Survey Research [No Class 2/27]	[Ch 9]
3/6	8 th Week:	Survey Research.	[Ch 9]
3/13	No Classes	Midterm Break	
3/20	9 th Week:	Review. Midterm Examination	
3/27	10 th Week:	Content Analysis.	[Ch 11]
4/3	11 th Week	Existing Documents / Secondary Data.	[Ch 11]
4/10	12 th Week:	Qualitative Fieldwork.	[Ch 10]
4/17	13 th Week:	Qualitative Fieldwork. [No class 4/15] [Research Proposals Draft Due]	[Ch 10]
4/24	14 th Week:	Qualitative Interviewing. Focus Groups.	[Ch 10]
5/1	15 th Week:	Reading and Writing Social Research. Review. [Term Projects Due]	[Ch 17]
5/6	FINAL EXAM [Tuesday: May 6th 11:30 am – 1:20 pm]		