Course Syllabus

Course Information

SOC 6V92 Research Workshop in Applied Sociology

Section 001

Spring 2012

Professor Contact Information

Bobby C. Alexander, Ph.D.

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E-mail: bcalex@utdallas.edu. PLEASE use regular UTD e-mail instead of eLearning to reach me. Thank you.

Office: GR 2.532
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00-3:45 p.m., and by appointment

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

No pre-requisites or co-requisites.

Course Description

This course is a workshop in research and research writing in applied sociology. Students will choose research questions of interest to them and write a draft research paper based upon proposed research. Students’ papers will address public policy issues. Chosen topics will have significance in the discipline of sociology and relevance to public policy.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

The course objective is to learn to write an advanced research paper in applied sociology that has relevance to public policy. Students will be able to expand their papers into a Master’s thesis, and, eventually, a dissertation.

Required Textbooks and Other Readings

Assignments & Academic Calendar

Students will submit drafts of the introduction to their papers stating students’ research question, the literature review, students’ research method and sociological theory or theories informing their research, data analysis, and the conclusion, which will include a recommendation for public policy on issues related to the research question. Because students will not have sufficient time to complete original research, the draft of their data analysis will be sketchy.

Students will make informal class presentations of their research and policy recommendations.

Instructions for all course assignments will be available on eLearning. Students will download and print the instructions and bring them to class. The instructor will go over all instructions in class.

January 17

Orientation to the Course

January 24

Sociological Perspectives and Library Research Strategies

Students will meet at the Reference Desk inside the McDermott Library.

Ms. Susie Kutchi, UTD Reference Librarian, will conduct a demonstration in searching electronic databases for scholarly sources on published research.

Recommended Reading: A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers:
Part One, "Essentials"
Ch. 1, "Getting Started" (read carefully "What Is Sociology?", pages 4-10
And "Framing a Question", pages10-12)
Part Two, "Writing from Various Data Sources"
Ch. 4, "The General Research Paper Based on Library or Internet Data"
(including "Before You Start: Choosing a Topic" and “Using the Library to Review the Sociological Literature”)

January 31

Literature Review and Constructing a Research Question

Recommended Reading: Guide:
Ch. 2, "The Writing Process", including the section on "Outlining"
Ch. 3, "Working with Sources", pages 52-58 only
Ch. 6, "The Quantitative Research Paper", pages 144-top 146 only
("Reviewing the Literature": “Stating the Problem and Choosing a Question” and “Stating Your Hypothesis”)

Read: Handout on the main sociological theories (handed out in class)

Research Question due January 31st
February 7
Literature Review Continued

Students will work with the instructor, individually and together.

February 14
Literature Review Continued

Students will work with the instructor, individually and together.

February 21
Literature Review Continued

Students will work with the instructor, individually and together.

February 28
Research Method

Recommended Reading: Guide:
  Ch. 6, "The Quantitative Research Paper" (including “Developing a Methods and Analysis Plan”), pages 142-top 157 only (reread pages 144-top 146), and pages 159-179 (student paper)
  Ch. 3, "Working with Sources", reread pages 52-58
  Part Three, "Finishing Up"
  Ch. 7, "The Ethnographic Field Research Paper"

Draft Introduction and Literature Review due February 28th

March 6
Research Method Continued

Students will work with the instructor, individually and together.

  Recommended Reading: Guide:
    Ch. 5, "The Textual (or Article Critique) Analysis Paper" (skim)

March 13  No Class: Spring Break

March 20
Research Method Continued

Students will work with the instructor, individually and together.

March 27
Sociological Theory

April 3
Sociological Theory Continued

Students will work with the instructor, individually and together.
Draft Research Method and Theory Due April 3rd

April 10
Data Analysis

Recommended Reading: Guide:
Ch. 6, "The Quantitative Research Paper", second half 151-153 (data analysis).
Also read pages 155-179 (results and student sample paper).

April 17
Data Analysis Continued

Public Policy

Students will work with the instructor, individually and together.

Read: Handout on public policy from Introduction to Public Policy by Charles Wheelan
(handed out April 10th)

April 24
Public Policy Continued

Students will work with the instructor, individually and together.

Class Presentations

Draft Data Analysis and Policy Recommendation due April 24th

May 1
Draft Research Paper

Students will work with the instructor, individually and together.

Class Presentations

May Date TBA

Draft of Complete Research Paper due

Note: Students will turn in their papers in the instructor’s office (GR 2.532) during the
regularly scheduled class time (4:00 p.m.).

Grading Policy

The percentage distribution for each of the graded assignments (total equals 100%) for the course
grade follows.

50%: the draft research paper
45%: the draft introduction and literature review, draft section on method and theory, draft data
analysis, and draft conclusion and policy recommendation combined
5%: class presentation

The grading scale follows.
A+ = 97-100
A  = 94-96
A- = 90-93
B+ = 87-89
B  = 84-86
B- = 80-83
C+ = 77-79
C  = 74-76
C- = 70-73
D+ = 67-69
D  = 64-66
D- = 60-63
F  = 59 and below

Course & Instructor Policies

Students must submit hard copies of all assignments in class on the due dates; late papers will not be accepted without the prior approval of the instructor. No electronic submissions will be accepted, unless the student is absent from class and has a legitimate reason for being absent. This requirement is intended to help students turn in their work on time and to promote fairness, since students work hard to submit work on time.

University Policies

To view university policies on Student Conduct, Grade Appeals, Disability Services, Religious Holy Days, and others, please go to the link that follows.

http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies