

Senior Capstone Course
SOC 4900/Spring 2016/ CRN32788
Dr. Ollilainen – T/H 9:00-10:15 PM (SS113)

Office hrs: (SS 116) M/W 9-10 AM, T/H 10:30-11:30 AM or by appointment
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Course Description

This course encourages you to reflect upon sociology as a discipline, field of study, career, world view, and praxis. Having completed the required course work in sociology, during this seminar, students will review the main theories and methodologies of contemporary sociology, critique sociological writings, and apply sociological tools to an independent research project ("the senior thesis").

We start the course with a discussion of sociology as a discipline and review the main theoretical and methodological approaches. From the beginning, we engage in the sociological thinking and writing process that will lead to the final project, the senior paper. The senior paper is the main product of the Capstone course and involves students embarking on their own research project. This means that you will develop a viable research question, prepare a literature review, collect and analyze data, write a full-fledged research report, and present the findings to the class. Along the way we will analyze scholarly articles, discuss writing as an entry to a field of research, and read other students' work in order to learn about critiquing and editing. In addition to the senior paper, this course examines sociology as a career through presentations, readings, and discussions that help you prepare for the graduate school application process and/or a job search with your sociology degree.

Note: In case of any interruption to regular class meetings (e.g., professor's absence or campus closure), the course will continue to meet on Canvas.

Required Reading

- The Sociology Writing Group. 2013. *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers, 7th ed.* New York: Worth. ISBN 13: 978-1-4292-3479-5
- Articles on Canvas (<http://canvas.weber.edu>)
- Hand-outs

Class Objectives

During this course, students will:

- Reflect orally and in writing on the main theories and methods of sociology,
- Engage in data collection and analysis
- Prepare and present their own research project and learn to critique others' work,
- Develop a curriculum vitae and letters of application to graduate schools and for employment

Course Format

This course is conducted as a seminar, which means that you will be heavily engaged in thinking, discussing, and writing sociology. Attendance and participation are therefore critical and necessary to pass the course. Unlike a lecture-based course, a seminar makes you an integral part of the course because it is *your* contributions and *your* work that we will discuss and evaluate during our meetings. In this kind of collaborative learning group, you will have a chance to read your fellow students' work as well as have your work read by them. My job as a professor is to guide your activities, help you find information, and provide constructive feedback.

Note on Special Needs

Any student requiring accommodations or services due to a disability must contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in the Student Service Center. SSD can also arrange to provide course materials (including this syllabus) in alternative formats if necessary. More information at: http://www.weber.edu/ssd/ssd_services.html

Evaluation

Senior paper total 80%

Students will begin the research and writing process early in the semester in order to guarantee that everyone will have plenty of time to finish before the end of the semester. You will keep working on your project throughout the semester, even while we discuss and write about other issues. The 80% includes the evaluation of all parts of the research process:

- (1) Literature review (10%)
- (2) Paper proposal (10%)
- (3) Research presentation (10%)
- (4) Final paper (50%)

Needless to say, the quality of all these individual components will be reflected in the final paper; in other words, a good proposal and a well-researched literature review will result in a good quality final paper. You will receive feedback as you turn in each draft of your paper to ensure a solid final project.

Writing assignments 10%

This part of your grade entails all short writing assignments you will be turning in this semester. They include, but are not limited to written reviews of sociological topics, research articles, curriculum vitae, and other career-oriented writing assignments.

Class participation 10%

This part of your grade consists of: Attendance, all in-class work, research log, reading presentations, and your comments and questions in class discussions (5%) and the completion of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) by April 23 (5%). Information about this assessment will be given in class. This course is a seminar and thus heavily relies on your contribution to class work. Therefore, you are allowed no more than four unexcused absences during the semester; any additional unexcused absences will accrue penalties (detailed in the class policy).

Grading rubric

B+ = 89-87%	A = 100-93%	A- = 92-90%
C+ = 79-77%	B = 86-83%	B- = 82-80%
D+ = 69-67%	C = 76-73%	C- = 72-70%
E ≤ 59%	D = 66-63%	D- = 62-60%

Class Policy
1. Attendance Unexcused absences exceeding four missed class meetings will result in a 10% reduction of your final grade.
2. Professionalism and soft skills Taking this course comes with a set of expectations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Timeliness – Class will start and end on time. You are expected to come to class on time and submit all assignments on time.• Technology – Research findings show that taking notes by hand supersedes in effectiveness any use of technology for note-taking. Therefore, for this seminar, we do not use laptops or electronics in class (unless allowed by the professor). Furthermore, cell phones (incl. texting) and earphones are not allowed in class. You will be asked to take ear phones off/put cell phone away <u>or leave the classroom</u>.

3. Late assignments and papers

- All assignments and papers must be handed in on the due date. Late papers and assignments accrue a penalty of -5% for each late day (24-hr. period) including weekends.

3. Extra credit

There is no extra credit in this class.

4. WSU Student Code

Students are expected to be familiar with the WSU Student Code and abide by it. The Code may be reviewed on line at http://www.weber.edu/ppm/Policies/6-22_StudentCode.html All necessary steps will be taken to enforce the Student Code to guarantee fairness to all students.

5. Plagiarism

As you write your senior papers, make sure you cite other people's work appropriately. Plagiarism (i.e., using someone else's work, ideas, or wording as your own without citing) is considered cheating at Weber State (see student code, section IV.D.2b) and will result, at minimum, in failing your assignment.

WSU subscribes to TurnItIn.com, an electronic service that verifies the originality of student work. Enrollment in this course may require you to submit some or all of your assignments to it this semester, and documents submitted to TurnItIn.com are retained, anonymously, in their databases.

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

Note: The required course textbook, *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers* is marked in the syllabus as "Text"

Week 1

T 1/12 Now you in a Senior Capstone course: Introductions and Expectations

Th 1/14 Reflecting on sociology and brainstorming for a research question

Reading: (1) Syllabus and CLA info sheet

(2) Text: "To the Student" and Ch 1. "Getting Started"

(3) Johnson et al. "Introduction" (Canvas)

(4) Peter L. Berger. 1963. Ch. 1 in *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective*. Doubleday (Canvas)

- **Bring your notes on the Berger article to class on 1/19.**

Week 2

T 1/19 The research project: What is a literature review?

Reading: (1) Johnson et al. Ch. 10 (Canvas)

(2) "Writing a Review of Literature on a Topic" (Canvas)

(3) Bruce Ballenger: "Habits of Mind" in *The Curious Writer* (Canvas)

Assignment I (Question-writing) due in class

Th 1/21 First visit to the library: Meet in Rm LI138 (middle level, north end) at 9 AM

Reading: (1) Text: Ch. 4 "Collecting and Evaluating Sources"

(2) ASA style Guide (Canvas)

Assignment II (Question-writing follow-up) due midnight

Week 3

M 1/25 **CLA opens, take the test by April 23**

T 1/26 Evaluating sociological research articles; building your proposal

Reading: (1) "Reading like a researcher" (Canvas)
(2) "Questions for analyzing article credibility" (Canvas)
(3) Text: Ch. 7 "The General Research Paper"

Th 1/28 Second visit to the library: Meet in Rm LI 138 (middle level, north end) at 9 AM

Assignment III (List of sociological articles in ASA style) and IV (An article title for evaluation) due midnight

Week 4

T 2/2 Ethics in Research: Protection of Human Subjects and the IRB

Reading: (1) "The Protection of Human Subjects," (Canvas)
(2) [IRB History](#) (link embedded) and [For Weber State student researchers](#) (link embedded)

Assignment V (Article evaluation paper) due in class

Th 2/4 Getting certified

[CITI Certification](#) (linked embedded): Register and take the tutorial (certificate due in class Feb 9)

Week 5

T 2/9 Ethics in writing: Citing and plagiarism

Reading: (1) Text: Ch. 5 "Citing Sources and Preparing Bibliographies"
(2) "Avoiding Plagiarism," Ch. 2 in Harris, *Using Sources Effectively* (Canvas)

CITI certificate due in class

Th 2/11 Putting it all together: The Proposal

(1) Text: Ch. 2 "Designing your paper" and Ch. 7 "The General Research Paper"

Literature review first draft due in class

Week 6

T 2/16 Research methods and data collection

Reading: (1) Text: Ch. 8 "The Quantitative Research Paper" and Ch. 9 "The Qualitative Research Paper"
(Optional: Ch. 6 "The textual analysis paper")

Paper proposal first draft due in class

Th 2/18 The writing process: Writing as learning

Reading: (1) Text: Ch. 3 "The Writing Process"

(2) Johnson et al. Chs. 1-2 (Canvas)

Week 7

T 2/23 Putting it all together—The Senior Thesis

Reading: No reading

Literature review due in class

Th 2/25 Presentations of the research proposal

Final proposal due in class, students present their proposals in class

<p>NOTE: During week 8, students will meet individually with the professor. For the days that you do not meet with me, you must keep a "research log," a detailed account of your out-of-class research activities during the scheduled research days.</p>

Week 8

T 3/1 Individual appointments/research day, no class (research logs)

Th 3/3 Individual appointments/research day, no class (research logs)

IRB proposal (if applicable) completed and ready to submit, bring proposal to the meeting

March 7-11 SPRING BREAK

Week 9

T 3/15 Careers in sociology: What can I do with a sociology degree?

Reading: (1) ASA: *21st Century Careers with an Undergraduate Degree in Sociology* (handout)

(2) [ASA careers in Sociology](#) (link embedded)

Th 3/17 Sociology as a career: Tracking SOC BAs

Reading: (1) "What Are They Doing with a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology?" *ASA Research Brief* (Canvas)

Week 10

T 3/22 How to do a sociology job search? Constructing a resume/CV (WSU career services)

Th 3/24 Job application and the interview (WSU career services)

Week 11

T 3/29 Individual appointments/research day, no class (research logs)

Th 3/31 Individual appointments/research day, no class (research logs)

Week 12

T 4/5 Sociology as a career: The graduate school application process

Assignment VI: CV or Resume due

Th 4/7 Sociology as a career: Graduate programs

Assignment VII: Graduate programs/student presentations

Week 13

T 4/12 Project updates: Students present a short oral report on their research progress; Final presentation and discussant sign up.

Senior thesis first draft due

Th 4/14 Last minute individual appointments/research day (research logs)

NOTE: Please provide a copy of your paper draft to the classmate who will be the discussant of your paper at least a day before your presentation.

Week 14

T 4/19 Preparing for the final presentation; students practice their presentations

Th 4/21 Preparing for the final presentation; students practice their presentations

Friday, April 22: Sociology & Anthropology Annual Student Research Conference

Students present their senior capstone research projects for final grade

Saturday, April 23: Last day to take the CLA

M 4/25 @ 12 noon: **Senior thesis due** in my office (SS116) or in the Soc & Anthro office (SS114). E-mailed papers will not be accepted. Late papers will accrue penalties (5% per 24hrs).

Assignment log

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Grade/Notes</i>
I. Question-writing	1/19, in class	
II. Question-writing follow-up	1/21, email by midnight	
III. List of sociological articles for literature review	1/28, email by midnight	
IV. Article title for evaluation	1/28, email by midnight	
V. Article evaluation paper	2/2, in class	
CITI certificate	2/9, in class	
Literature review first draft	2/11, in class	
First draft of paper proposal	2/16, in class	
Literature review (final)	2/23, in class	
Thesis Proposal (final)	2/25, in class	
VI. CV or Resume	4/5, in class	
VII. Presentation on a graduate program	4/7, in class	
Senior thesis first draft	4/12, in class	
Senior thesis final	4/25 @ noon, SS114 or SS116	
Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)	Jan 25-April 23	