

SOC 3240 (WI)

Logic of Sociological Inquiry

Spring 2021

Instructor: Rick Matthews
Office: Lentz 310
Office Hours: By Appointment

Class: DSC 163: 2:20 to 4:00 T/R
Office Phone: (262) 551-5825
Email: rmatthews@carthage.edu

Required Texts:

There is no required text for this class.

Course Description:

Since you have taken Introduction to Sociology (and perhaps other sociology courses) you should know that sociology is much more than “common sense.” Sociology is the systematic study of society and people. Sociologists strive to understand social forces, human interaction, cultures, and social institutions.

While your introduction to sociology course should have provided you with a basic introduction to the theoretical perspectives, methods and basic vocabulary of the discipline, this course is designed to help you develop broader, deeper and more complex sociological point of view that relies on the intersection of theory, method and data.

Unlike other courses you may have taken, this course is focused entirely on developing the skills that are required to conduct sociological research. To that end, each of you will spend the semester working on a topic of your choice, and by the end of the semester, you will have developed a literature review and a short proposal for a research project. While some students go on to further develop these projects in their senior thesis class, this class is intended to help prepare you for the senior thesis, no matter what topic you choose.

Course Goals:

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

- ✓ Conduct effective library research. This includes not only identifying and evaluating appropriate resources (e.g., books, journal articles, etc.), but also reading them critically.
- ✓ Write a clear, coherent, and effective complex literature review using APA Style.
- ✓ Develop a research question that is grounded in the academic literature.

- ✓ Propose a research project to gather empirical evidence to answer a research question.

Important Dates:

January 12, First day of class
January 19, Last day to add/drop a class
January 25, Last day to drop a spring class
February 26, Midterm grades due
April 19, Last day of classes for spring semester

Important Note on Flexibility

This syllabus is designed to meet Carthage College's Adaptive Course Design (ACD) for teaching during the COVID pandemic. Because there are many uncertainties entering this semester, we will need to be flexible. This means that I might have to change the syllabus at some point in the semester. For example, if we are no longer able to meet in person, I may need to modify the syllabus for remote instruction. It is therefore important for everyone to be mindful of the fact that changes to the syllabus may be necessary.

I will do my best to make sure any changes to the syllabus do not disadvantage the class (e.g., increase the workload). If you are experiencing a situation that requires additional flexibility, you must contact me so we can discuss your particular needs. The best way to contact me is through email. I check email daily and will typically respond within 24 hours.

Attendance, Participation, and Engagement:

The format of this class is best described as a hybrid workshop seminar. Some days we'll be talking about issues related to your projects, how sociologists conduct research, and the practicalities of finishing major projects. Other days, you'll have time to work on your project in class, and to ask me questions.

I will use a recurring Zoom link to broadcast the class from the classroom for those taking the course remotely or for those who have been asked to quarantine. If you are not quarantined or taking the class remotely, you should plan to attend class in-person.

I will ask you to do work outside of class in order to maximize our time together. As such, it is important for you to come to class prepared each day (in the course outline at the end of the syllabus, I list what you need to do each day prior to class).

I do not take attendance in this class, and I will not be looking over your shoulder during workshop days to make sure you're staying on task. One of the most important skills you'll need to develop in completing major projects is the ability to manage your own time.

Falling behind will make it more difficult for you to complete your project. Not attending class (either in person or remotely) will mean that you will miss important class discussions, and time to work. It is important to note, also, that there is no book required for this class. Rather than require a book, I will be discussing important ideas, concepts, and research

strategies in class. My experience has been that students who routinely miss class fall behind with their projects. Falling behind leads to poor overall performance in the class.

Extra Credit:

There are no opportunities for extra credit in this course.

Academic Honesty and the Carthage Community Code:

Academic honesty is essential to maintaining a high level of academic integrity. Treating others with respect and dignity is also an important dimension in creating a vibrant community where people are free to investigate intellectual ideas, conduct research, and share ideas with others. You are expected to abide by Carthage College's community code, which covers a wide range of community expectations for both faculty and students at: <https://www.carthage.edu/community-code/>

Statement on Learning Differences:

Carthage College strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers (including mental health, learning disorders and chronic medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, you also need to register with Diane Schowalter in Learning Accessibility Services (dschowalter1@carthage.edu).

Attendance and Engagement:

Engaging the course material, your peers, and myself will benefit you in several important ways, and is likely the most significant factor for your success in this course.

Because of the complexities with COVID, I will not take attendance. I expect people to attend class (either remotely or in person), barring unforeseen circumstances like becoming ill.

Please note that some days in our course schedule are marked “Work Days.” These are days that I would normally ask students to work in-class on their projects, and make myself available for individual conferences. To follow social distancing guidelines, I will make myself available on Zoom these days. Therefore, on “Work Days,” you can stay at home and work and conference with me on Zoom if needed.

Classroom Conduct:

Due to the ongoing pandemic, Carthage College has adopted a policy requiring masks to be worn by all individuals in all buildings. Masks must be worn at all times in the classroom, laboratory, studio spaces, hallways, bathrooms, and during in-person meetings. The face covering must conform to CDC guidelines and must cover both the nose and mouth at all times. Note that bandanas, neck gaiters, and masks with exhalation or external valves are not acceptable and are not sufficient for protection of others or yourself. Acceptable masks tie behind the head or loop behind the ears, fit snugly over the nose and chin, and can

include cloth masks, medical/surgical masks, and N95s or KN95s. Eating and/or drinking are prohibited while in the classroom (because those activities interfere with consistent mask wearing).

Any student who refuses to wear a mask will be dismissed from the class.

Stay Safe Guidelines: <https://www.carthage.edu/carthage-covid-19/stay-safe-carthage/>

Frequently Asked Questions: <https://www.carthage.edu/carthage-covid-19/faqs/>

Course Assignments

Literature Review Matrix (25% of course grade)

Prior to writing your annotated bibliography, you will be required to complete a pre-writing exercise (a “KWL” worksheet), and a total of fifteen entries in your literature review matrix. The template for the matrix is on our Schoology course site. Any matrix entry that is turned in late will be assessed a letter grade penalty.

Annotated Bibliography (10% of course grade—including draft):

You will be required to write an annotated bibliography that includes a minimum of 5 peer reviewed journal articles addressing your chosen topic. I will provide a handout for this assignment. Please note that there are multiple drafts due for this assignment and you will receive a grade on each one.

Literature Review (40% of course grade—including multiple drafts)

The literature review assignment will be approximately 10 pages in length, and worth 40% of your overall course grade. Like the annotated bibliography, you will be required to submit drafts at various points in the class. Failure to submit drafts (or to submit them on the due date) will result in a grade reduction for the final literature review grade. I will provide a handout for the literature review assignment on Schoology. Please note that there are multiple drafts due for this assignment and you will receive a grade on each one.

Research Proposal (15% of course grade)

I will provide a handout for the research proposal on Schoology. The purpose of this assignment is to help you think about how you might gather the data that is necessary to answer your research question. Please note that there are multiple drafts due for this assignment and you will receive a grade on each one.

Poster (10% of course grade)

The final portion of your course grade will be your research poster. Please note that there are multiple drafts due for this assignment and you will receive a grade on each one.

Participation in Peer-Reviews

You will see in the course schedule there are several days where we will be doing peer reviews. It goes without saying that if you do not have a complete draft for someone to review, the benefits of the peer review will be limited.

If you do not submit a draft for peer review that day, you will lose one letter grade for that draft.

If you do not review someone else's paper that day, you will also lose one letter grade for that draft.

Grading:

Letter grades will be assigned using the following percentage scale:

A = 94% - 100%	B- = 80% - 82%	D+ = 67% - 69%
A- = 90% - 93%	C+ = 77% - 79%	D = 63% - 66%
B+ = 87% - 89%	C = 73% - 76%	D- = 60% - 62%
B = 83% - 86%	C- = 70% - 72%	F = 59% or less

Finally, I encourage you to keep the original copies of all your work in this course. This is important if you have any concerns about your grade at the end of the semester. I will not make grade changes without proof of the assignment.

Tentative Course Schedule Please note, we may make changes to the schedule depending on how our work in the course progresses.

Also, bring a laptop to class each day.

Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments Due
1/12	Introduction	None
1/14		Class discussion: What are qualitative research methods, and why would we use them? Selecting a topic for research. KWL exercise. Finding resources in the library, how to read a journal article (structure, important components, finding relevant information quickly). Citing in APA.
1/19		To do prior to class: Find 5 refereed journal articles related to your topic and bring them to class (may bring an electronic copy you've downloaded). Class discussion: Organizing your articles, how to use the literature review matrix, citing in APA

1/21		<p>To do prior to class: Matrix entries 1 & 2 are due. Please note: I have shared an Excel file with you and you should use that file for your assignment. I will check your file to make sure it's complete, add comments, etc. There is no need to upload a file to Schoology.</p> <p>Class discussion: How to get the most from your matrix, citing in the matrix (APA, paraphrasing, and direct quotes).</p>
1/26		<p>To do prior to class: Matrix entries 3-6 are due. Please note: I have shared an Excel file with you and you should use that file for your assignment. I will check your file to make sure it's complete, add comments, etc. There is no need to upload a file to Schoology.</p> <p>Class discussion: Matrix entries, finding additional sources.</p>
1/28		<p>To do prior to class: Matrix entries 7-10 are due. There is no need to upload a file to Schoology.</p> <p>Class discussion: Refining your entries</p>
2/2		Work Day
2/4		<p>To do prior to class: Matrix entries 11-15 are due. There is no need to upload a file to Schoology.</p> <p>Class discussion: Organizing your entries, looking for patterns. Drafting your annotated bibliography.</p>
2/9		Work Day
2/11		Class discussion: Determining research methods.
2/16		<p>To do prior to class: Bring to class the first draft of your annotated bibliography. Annotated bibliography will include ten sources on one or two main themes in the literature of your topic. We will do a peer review in class.</p> <p>Class discussion: Organizing your literature review around major themes, creating outlines and pre-writing.</p>
2/18		To do prior to class: Bring to class a draft outline that details where the articles you've found fit in the main topics of your outline.

		Class discussion: Incorporating source material, paraphrasing, avoiding plagiarism.
2/23		To do prior to class: Upload final draft of annotated bibliography to Schoology. Class discussion: Writing the first draft of your literature review.
2/25		Work Day
3/2		Work Day
3/4		To do prior to class: Bring to class the first draft of your literature review (at least five pages). We will do a peer review in class.
3/9		Class discussion: Developing good research questions, considering the logic of your research project.
3/11		To do prior to class: Bring to class second draft of literature review. We will do a peer review in class. Class discussion: The research proposal, putting it all together, peer review of second draft of literature review.
3/16		Work Day
3/18		Work Day
3/23		To do prior to class: Bring to class full draft of literature review. Class discussion: Peer review.
3/25		Work Day
3/30		To do prior to class: Complete literature review is due on Schoology prior to class. Class discussion: Research proposal.
4/1		To do prior to class: Bring to class first draft of research proposal. We will do a peer review in class.

		Class discussion: Peer review and creating a poster
4/6		Work Day
4/8		To do prior to class: Bring to class completed draft of research proposal and poster. Class discussion: Peer review.
4/13		Work Day
4/15		Work Day
4/23		Final Papers and posters are due at 3:00