



# University of Pittsburgh

## *Social Research Methods (SOC 230)*

### Fall 2021

## *Course Syllabus*

Meets: Mondays and Wednesdays 8:00 to 9:15 a.m. in 2200 Posvar Hall.

Instructor: DaShanne Stokes, Ph.D.

Contact: dps26 (at) pitt (dot) edu

Office Hours: Fridays 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. and by appointment. All office hours held by phone or online due to pandemic.

### **Welcome to Social Research Methods!**

In a world bombarded with conspiracy theories and rampant misinformation, there has never been a more important time to make facts great again. Social scientists use the scientific method to cut through the hype and broaden and deepen our understanding of this complex world around us. This course will introduce you to some of the scientific methods that social scientists use to make sense of the world in a way that goes beyond bias, supposition, opinion, and personal agendas to uncover our deeper, empirical reality. Through our lectures, readings, assignments, and a research project, this course will engage you in the art and science of social research, including research design, data collection and analysis, and effectively communicating research findings.

I anticipate having a great time in class together, so I welcome you to the class

### **\*\*Special Safety Statement, Policy, and Practices\*\***

These are uncertain times, but we will get through them together! We are all still charting new, unprecedented ground in teaching and learning during a pandemic. There will no doubt be things that come up that none of us can anticipate and for which I will not have all the answers immediately. Also, there are necessarily some things about learning during a pandemic that will be unavoidably different than any classes you may have taken in the past. As such, some things we will have to learn together and invent together as things come. I ask for your flexibility,

patience, and understanding during these very uncertain times and ask that you be kind and gentle with yourselves and your colleagues.

I am very aware of the myriad ways in which the pandemic is affecting people, having had to deal with many unforeseeable events and worries and consequences myself and with those close to me. Simply told, there is no one in our country who the pandemic is not affecting. But rest assured! My classes taught during the sudden and unanticipated outbreak in March of 2020, and all my classes since then, have all done very well despite the pandemic. As a result, I am confident in our abilities to get through this together. It will require flexibility and understanding from us all. It will also require more advance planning and taking more preventative action to avoid procrastinating and to handle unforeseeable events than would normally be expected of you in being a student. It will also require us to be kind and gentle with each other and with ourselves. Self-care will be critical. I will do everything I can within reason to help you get through the course and to enjoy the course as much as possible. There will be challenges for us all, but we will get through this!

Holding in-person classes during a virulent pandemic will require our vigilance, cooperation, respect, and utmost safety and awareness to best protect everyone in class. Due to the pandemic, it is critical that we follow the university protocols and the approach noted by our Chancellor:

“Since the University does not generally know who is fully vaccinated... we will assume that everyone is unvaccinated unless an individual voluntarily provides evidence that they are fully vaccinated.”

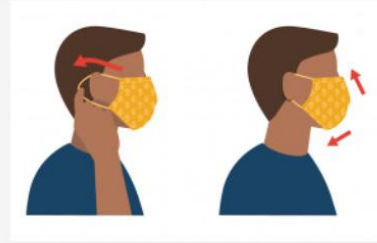
For these reasons, and in accordance with University policy, **students are required to wear face masks and to wear them correctly—covering both the nose and mouth—during class *at all times*.**

**Your safety and that of our class is my utmost concern. Therefore, in following university policy, students who are not wearing their masks correctly will be asked to wear their masks correctly. Those who refuse or for whom this presents an issue will be asked to leave.** This policy is to protect public health and save lives. Regardless of how you may feel personally, please do not put your classmates or instructor at risk by failing to wear a mask appropriately at all times.

Below are graphics from the CDC on the dos and don'ts of wearing masks:

## Wear your Mask Correctly

- [Wash your hands](#) or use hand sanitizer before putting on your mask.
- Put the mask over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.
- Fit the mask snugly against the sides of your face, slipping the loops over your ears or tying the strings behind your head.
- If you have to continually adjust your mask, it doesn't fit properly, and you might need to find a different mask type or brand.
- Make sure you can breathe easily.



## Wear a Mask to Prevent Getting and Spreading COVID-19



### Dos

- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth to help prevent getting and spreading COVID-19.
- Wear a mask in public settings when around people who don't live in your household, especially when indoors and when it may be difficult for you to stay six feet apart from people who don't live with you.
- Wear a mask correctly for maximum protection.
- Wear your mask under your scarf, ski mask, or balaclava in cold weather
- Keep a spare mask to replace one that becomes wet from moisture in your breath, snow, or rain.
- Store wet reusable masks in a plastic bag until they can be [washed](#).



## Don'ts

- Put the mask around your neck or up on your forehead.
- Touch the mask, and, if you do, [wash your hands](#) or use hand sanitizer.

How to Put on a Surgical Mask the RIGHT Way:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VbojLOQe94>

When and How to Wash Your Hands:

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

If you have a medical condition that limits your ability to wear a face covering as required by University policy, you must contact the office of Disability Resources and Services (DRS). DRS will work with you to determine whether and to what extent such limitations can be accommodated.

**Following the CDC guidelines, and to the extent possible, please keep your desk or chair three feet apart from your classmates. The CDC also continues to recommend at least 6 feet of distance between adults in school buildings.**

Covid Signs and Symptoms:

- Fever
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Muscle aches
- Headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion or rhinorrhea
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Skin Rashes

**If you show any of these symptoms, individually or in combination, or if you have been exposed to anyone who shows any of these symptoms, please do not come to class. If in doubt, please play it safe and please do not come to class.**

If you are experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19 or believe you may have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, please contact Student Health Service at 412-383-1800 for information on testing and treatment.

Note that there is also a symptom checker tool available through the CDC at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/coronavirus-self-checker.html>

Additional information and University policies regarding face masks can be found at:

<https://www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/frequently-asked-questions-about-face-coverings>

## Sources

University of Pittsburgh. <https://www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/>

CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/resources/coronavirus-information/15260>

CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2020/health/coronavirus-questions-answers/>

Cleveland Clinic. <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/can-vaccinated-people-transmit-covid-19-to-others/>

CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>

CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p0319-new-evidence-classroom-physical-distance.html>

(Sources retrieved 7/9/21)

## Course Goals

- Distinguish and critically evaluate the basic elements of research design
- Collect and analyze empirical data
- Report research findings

## Course Materials

Required:

Reading this course syllabus from beginning to end is **required** reading.

Babbie, Earl. 2016. The Practice of Social Research, 14th Edition. CENGAGE Learning. (ISBN: 978-1-305-10494-5)

Additional readings will be posted.

Optional, but useful:

Adler, Mortimer J. and Charles Van Doren. 1972. *How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading*. New York, NY: Touchstone.

These books can be obtained through the university bookstore or online through websites like [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com), or [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com). Please be sure when ordering online to allow for shipping times, which may vary considerably and may pose unexpected delays (e.g., a shipping time of “standard” usually means it will be shipped “book rate,” which may take three to four weeks or more).

## **CLASS POLICIES**

### ***Our Class is a Safe Space***

Everyone will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of disability, age, race, ethnicity/culture, gender identity and expression, sex, social class, religion, politics, and sexual orientation. People of all backgrounds are invited and encouraged to participate in class activities and discussions. Please show your colleagues the utmost respect that you’d want shown for yourself.

### ***Indigenous Lands Acknowledgement***

The land upon which the University of Pittsburgh sits was originally inhabited by sovereign and independent indigenous nations including the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Osage, Shawnee, Adena, Hopewell, Monongahela, and Delaware. Land ownership itself is a culturally based concept and part of an ongoing imperial and colonial project. This acknowledgment serves as a reminder that indigenous lives, views, and cultures matter and before this site was called the University of Pittsburgh it was called home to indigenous peoples. Many people from these tribes and other indigenous nations continue to live here today and are a vital part of our community. More information about indigenous peoples and cultures in this area today can be found at [www.cotraic.org](http://www.cotraic.org). To learn more about indigenous peoples, indigenous scholarship, and indigenous contributions to our society, please see the following (list not comprehensive):

- American Indian Culture and Research Journal: <https://bit.ly/3g1TNSB>
- ASA section on the Sociology of Indigenous Peoples and Native Nations: <https://bit.ly/3cp2X9c>
- Wicazo Sa Review: <https://bit.ly/3uUrnOw>
- Indian Country Today: <https://indiancountrytoday.com/>
- NAISA: <https://www.naisa.org/>

### ***Gender and Sexual Inclusion***

Every aspect of our society is and has been substantially benefitted by the often-marginalized contributions of women and LGBT people. Gender and sexuality are themselves social constructs built on institutionalized patriarchal and heteronormative values, practices, and assumptions that often mask the diversity of human identities and human experiences. This note

serves as a reminder that the lives, views, and experiences of women and LGBT people matter and are a vital part of who we are as a society. To learn more about the scholarship of gender and sexuality, and the myriad contributions made by women and LGBT people to scholarship and our society, please see the following (list not comprehensive):

- Section on Sociology of Sex and Gender: <https://bit.ly/3v2Ga9T>
- Gender and Society: <https://bit.ly/3w4OQxG>
- Signs: <http://signsjournal.org/>
- Journal of Homosexuality: <https://bit.ly/3iotzeD>
- Sexualities: <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/sex>

### ***Race and Ethnic Inclusion***

Our university and our world are and have been immeasurably improved by the neglected and marginalized contributions of racial and ethnic minorities from all around the world. Race and ethnicity are socially constructed concepts formed in racializing imperial and colonial projects that continue today. This note serves as a reminder that the lives, views, and experiences of people of color matter and are a vital part of who we are. To learn more about scholarship on race and ethnicity and the contributions of people of color to scholarship, our communities, and our world beyond, please see the following (list not comprehensive):

- Sociology of Race and Ethnicity: <https://bit.ly/3w2WRTR>
- Ethnic and Racial Studies: <https://bit.ly/3v6KUvm>
- ABS: <https://www.associationofblacksociologists.org/>
- ASA Section on Asia and Asian America: <https://bit.ly/3fZQmM3>
- ASA Section on Latino/a Sociology: <https://bit.ly/3iovKyP>
- ASA Section on Race, Gender, and Class: <https://bit.ly/3g1v11C>

### ***Attendance and Participation***

Following proven best practices, your lectures are not meant to provide exhaustive or complete coverage of every topic we explore together, but instead to cover key content and to provide a wider context in which to deepen your understanding and develop your ability to think with research and to examine the world around you. **Attendance will be recorded** but is not graded. I reserve the right, however, to change this policy if attendance and participation become problematic.

Just like working at a job, if you skip things that are required (i.e., attendance, participation, lectures, readings, assignments, graded materials, etc.) you should expect a negative result. You will only get out of this class as much as you put in; I therefore encourage you to participate because active participation is one of the best ways to help you learn the material and generate the kind of grades you may desire.

As you would for a regular job, you should schedule your personal and professional activities around your required course work.

### ***Note on Class Meetings***

I realize and completely empathize that early morning classes are not for everyone, but we will get through this together! In order to have the most enjoyable and engaging class possible, it is imperative and your responsibility to give yourself ample time to arrive at class fully alert and ready to participate in class every morning. This means getting to bed the night before and getting your day started not at the last minute and with more than the bare minimum time you need to get a full night's rest, wake up, eat, get your coffee, and travel to class on time. You will only get out of our time together as much as you put in. Therefore, please do not come to class half-asleep and expect the course to be nearly as interesting or as engaging and useful without you being alert and actively participating.

### ***Readings***

You are expected to read the week's lecture readings before lecture that week. I strongly recommend you take notes on the readings. All content from readings and lectures and course materials may appear on your graded work even if they are not explicitly covered during lectures. As with most courses, the majority of your learning will take place *outside* the classroom as you study, complete assignments, work with your peers, and critically engage the activities, assigned readings, and lecture materials.

### ***Notes***

I encourage you to take notes not just for general content, but to guide your thinking. A good method is called "double-entry" note taking. For this, you divide each notebook page in half with a vertical line (if you are working on a laptop or PDA, create a table with two columns). In the left column, summarize or give the main argument or point. Always include a reference to a page or range of pages as this will help you with studying and any follow-up you may need later. In the right-hand column, respond with your questions, problems, comments, etc. This will help you learn the material more effectively and make your notes much more meaningful and useful to you.

### ***Office Hours and Open-Door Policy***

My goal as is to help you; therefore I maintain an open door policy. I encourage and welcome you to email me to say hello, to ask questions, to make comments or suggestions, learn about research opportunities, or to discuss your work, general direction, or plan of study. I enjoy getting to know students of all backgrounds and look at visits as an opportunity to learn, have fun, and be of service. If you are unable to attend my regular virtual office hours, please email me to make arrangements.

Please email me at least three business days ahead of time to schedule a meeting during office hours or other times by appointment. In your email, please include a telephone number where I can reach you. If you are not able to make my regular office hours, please give as many alternative days and times when you may be able to meet that are during normal business hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST).



### ***Workload***

Many universities view 2-3 hours of study time for every hour of lecture time as a good rule of thumb in determining how much time to invest in studying. This does not include time you need to complete readings, activities, discussions, graded work, exams, etc. This is a guide; you may need to spend more time during some weeks when working on assignments, preparing for exams, or digesting particularly taxing or mind-expanding readings or if life or other circumstances pop up. Be sure to allot enough time to go through each reading BEFORE class and to take notes.

### ***Preparation***

Preparation in this class is critically important. To meet the learning goals of this course, and to participate at the level required and get the most out of the time and money you're investing in this course, you will need to read the materials for every class session carefully, thoughtfully, and critically. As you may be exposed to new concepts, new ideas, and new ways of thinking and seeing the world, it can take some practice to digest the assigned readings and their main points and arguments. This is a natural part of learning, and even the most talented scholars need time to digest and make sense of new ideas and concepts. Additionally, if there are words whose definitions you don't know, this should not be a roadblock or cause of frustration as it happens to us all. In the event you don't understand a word's meaning, you should make use of a dictionary and look it up (Merriam Webster has a great online dictionary at [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)). Looking things up, taking time to digest, etc., are all necessary steps in the learning and empowerment process that you're here for.

### ***Academic Integrity***

To be fair to the class, the work you submit should represent your own original thinking and your own original work. Review, critique, editing, or other contributions from others to your work on exams, quizzes, weekly homework, etc. is not permitted in any form. Work demonstrating suggestions, comments, contributions, edits, changes, etc. to exams or quizzes will not be accepted.

It is permissible, however, to have a friend or colleague review your final paper, and only this final paper, with the sole purpose and outcome of providing minor editorial suggestions limited to grammar, spelling, word choice, and readability. To ensure that the grade you receive is based on your work and not the work of others, work demonstrating substantive suggestions, comments, contributions, edits, changes, etc. beyond this scope will not be accepted. As should go without saying, any and all work completed by or with the help of professional editing or writing services will not be accepted.

Cheating, plagiarism, etc. will not be tolerated and infractions will be coordinated with the academic honesty office. Students are expected to comply with the policy on academic honesty.

### ***Students with Disabilities and Students in Need of Academic Assistance***

If there are ways I can support your learning, please contact me, the sooner the better. Disability Services also offers additional resources and learning specialists who can help you. If you have a disability and would be helped with certain accommodations, please register with Disability Services (412-648-7890, 140 William Pitt Union, <https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/>). If you need a special accommodation, you should let me know immediately so that we can make any necessary arrangements ahead of time during the first week of class (or during the first week you are enrolled, if you enroll after class has already begun).

*\*\*Special note:* After consulting with student disability services, and to better help students with special needs, I purposefully design exams, assignments, and all work with an overabundance of extra time built in. For this reason, no additional extra time will be given on any graded work because this extra time and extra accommodations have already been built in. (Example: If you have an accommodation that allows twice the amount of time to complete, this extra time, and usually more, have already been built into the assignment/exam/etc.). This means that there will be no additional extensions, and all posted due dates remain in effect for all students, unless there are additional extenuating circumstances that will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If you have any questions, please contact me. I'm happy to help!

### ***Communication and Email***

We have many students in our class, but you shouldn't feel nameless or anonymous. Please communicate with me via email and with your class colleagues. I am here to help you any way I can. I will send class announcements via email or post announcements online that should be checked and monitored daily. Direct email should be used only after class resources have been referenced or for personal concerns.

Each student has a University e-mail address and all students taking the course for credit have access to Canvas, the university online system. Your e-mail and the Canvas system will be used for official communications, updates, and announcements. Students are expected to read e-mail and announcements, etc., posted to Canvas in a timely manner and on regular daily basis. Failure to read and react to these University communications does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of communications. It is your responsibility to set up e-mail forwarding to access your email via other services if you choose, though forwarding is at your own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications via email and/or announcements posted on Canvas.

I will do my very best to reply to emails as quickly as possible. Please understand, however, that teaching is only one portion of my job requirements and I am required to spend a large amount of time on research and administrative activities. Please also be aware that there is only one of me and I am unable to work twenty-four hours a day or seven days a week. Quality instruction and giving you my very best requires a reasonable work-life balance; therefore my response to emails will be very limited and sporadic on evenings, weekends, breaks, and holidays. Please be sure to take this into consideration when planning your schedule and activities or contacting me with questions (e.g., start early and work to finish ahead of time to manage unforeseeable delays life may throw at you). Please also contact me with any questions you have well before due dates,

exams, quizzes, etc. (especially not the night before) so that I can best help you. If you don't hear back from me after three business days, please feel free to give me a nudge.

Please be sure to add my email address to your "safe" list so that it is not lost. Please also be sure to regularly check your "junk" folder as emails can sometimes get routed to such folders and students are not exempt from the content of emails due to their being routed to junk folders.

Significant personal or course issues are best resolved through conversation in-person, by phone, or by Zoom. For this reason, if there are significant issues that arise, you should contact me as soon as possible to arrange an in-person conversation, telephone conversation, or Zoom meeting so that I can best help you.

Additionally, many, if not most, questions that require explanation will generally necessitate us to speak by phone or Zoom rather than email, which in turn will require some time to plan and arrange. Please take this into consideration when approaching me with questions so that we can speak during my office hours or by phone or Zoom as needed.

### ***Late Work and Make-Up Policy***

You should contact me ahead of time, or as soon as possible, if you encounter or foresee encountering circumstances that might impede or prevent you from completing required work by the posted due dates and times. This includes unforeseeable events as well as ongoing or short, medium and long-term circumstances. Also note that it is your responsibility to pay attention to posted due dates and times to not confuse the dates and times by which assignments are due (e.g., confusing a.m. and p.m., confusing dates or days of the week, etc.).

**PARTIAL CREDIT:** Late work, including but not limited to any exams, papers, essays, quizzes, or other assignments or graded work will be accepted for grading for *possible* partial credit if submitted late and will be assessed a penalty. The penalty for late work is discussed below. Late work can be submitted late without prior discussion and approval following the guidelines shown here.

For those submitting late work, as described above, a two-letter grade penalty rounded to the nearest whole point (not percentage) will be assessed for each twenty-four-hour time increment by which the work is late, beginning one minute after the posted/announced due date and time. This penalty will be in addition to any deductions the work submitted would otherwise have received had it been submitted on time.

Example: If a student submits something that is between one minute to up to twenty-four hours late, the work will receive a one-day penalty amounting to a two-letter grade reduction. If, for example, the work is worth 100 points, the maximum score possible for the student would be 80 points. If the work is worth 25 points, then the maximum score the student could earn would be 20 points. If the work is worth 10 points, the maximum possible for the student is 8 points. If the work is submitted between 24 hours and one minute up to 48 hours late, the work will be treated as two days late and assessed a two-day penalty, and the corresponding maximum points possible for the student would be 60 points (out of 100), 15 points (out of 25), and 6 points (out of 10), respectively, following the pattern above. The same progression of additional penalties per twenty-four hours will follow this same pattern for each additional 24-hour time increment

late. Note that at five days late, following this pattern, no credit will be given and late work after five days late will not be accepted. Note that late penalties are assessed in addition to any penalties that the work would otherwise normally incur, such as for incorrect or incomplete work.

**FULL CREDIT:** Late work and make-up work, including but not limited to any exams, papers, essays, quizzes, or other assignments or graded work will be accepted for grading for consideration for *possible* full credit if and only if there are university approved, documented, and verifiable extenuating circumstances. Late work and make-up work with extenuating circumstances will be accepted and graded for full credit as if the work were submitted on time. Work will only be accepted, however, if it has been **discussed with me ahead of time, in a timely fashion**, as described in this syllabus, and a timetable for completion and submission has been negotiated and **explicitly approved ahead of time**. Work not falling under these guidelines will not be accepted.

For students who face university approved extenuating circumstances that cannot be foreseen ahead of time and which require or unavoidably lead to the student's absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact me to request and make special arrangements for any needed late work submissions or makeups **within four calendar days** after the student returns. No exceptions.

**Any and all late work, makeups, or extensions, whether for partial credit or full credit, must be completed and submitted no more than seven (7) calendar days** from the date the work/exam/etc. was originally administered or due or from the date when a student returns from a university approved extenuating circumstance. Students failing to meet this requirement will receive a score of zero. No exceptions.

If you have special needs or extenuating circumstances, whether short-term, medium-term, or long-term, you should notify me immediately so that I can work with you and determine any extensions, adjustments, etc., that may be needed to best help you. Note that, in order to be fair to the rest of the class, I reserve the right to adjust assignments, exams, quizzes, and other graded work if I believe it necessary to compensate for additional time studying and preparing that is not otherwise available to students who submitted their work on time. All extenuating circumstances are judged on a case-by-case basis.

University approved "extenuating circumstances" include things such as documented medical or mental health reasons, death of an immediate family member, major family difficulties, being the victim of a crime, life-changing events, and/or circumstances outside of your control.

\*\*\*\*\*In order to maintain fairness for other students and guard against known and student-reported instances of abuse, **extenuating circumstances cannot be considered or approved without valid documentation.**\*\*\*\*\*

Documentation can include, for example, a letter from a medical doctor or therapist on official stationery and bearing an original ink signature. The documentation need not divulge particular diagnoses or sensitive personal information, but should indicate the student has extenuating circumstances that warrants consideration as extenuating circumstances and should give some indication as to the general nature and severity of the circumstances. This must include description of limits on abilities or adverse impact on student performance imposed by the extenuating circumstances. Documentation not containing this information needed to judge

whether there are valid extenuating circumstances, the nature of the impact on the student's ability to complete work, and how I can best help the student will not be accepted. It is the student's responsibility to secure documentation of extenuating circumstances in a timely manner.

Generally speaking, it is always best to notify me and work with me from the moment a problem arises--and ideally before something has the chance to become a problem--so that I can work with you and help you. I am happy to help you however I can.

### ***No Extra Credit, No Curves***

I find that my students generally do very well in my courses and that extra credit or curving grades is not necessary. I make it a point to closely monitor class performance, so there is no need to ask about curves as I will make curves if necessary. I will not consider curving any graded work for the class unless the class average is below 70%. I also do not give extra credit or extra work, so please don't ask because this would not be fair to the rest of the class.

### ***Your Duty to Monitor Grades***

It is your responsibility to closely monitor your grades and your responsibility to immediately notify me of any questions, concerns, or problems you have with your grades or if you believe your work has been missed or entered incorrectly. Students may challenge or request a re-grade of written graded work only with a documented, compelling, and valid reason and must make their request within seven calendar days of class work/exams/assignments/etc. originally being graded. NOTE: A request for a re-grade of written work is not guaranteed, and if I find something was missed that should have resulted in a lower grade, the lower grade will be issued and no further regrades will be considered. Requesting a re-grade also requires much more than a "feeling" (or hope) that you "should" have done better (or wanted to have done better) and it also requires more than coming to me near or at the end of the semester in a last-minute attempt to boost your grade. This applies to all students, including those with extenuating circumstances and disabilities. After seven calendar days have passed since grades for a quiz/assignment/exam/etc. have been posted, any challenges and requests for a re-grade or claims that work somehow went "missing" will not be considered. Your request for a regrade of written work indicates an explicit understanding of an agreement to these terms. NO EXCEPTIONS.

### ***Computer and Internet Access is Required***

Because course communications, materials, activities, and assignments are often posted, administered, and delivered online, it is expected and required that you maintain a good working computer and uninterrupted internet service and a good working internet connection throughout the duration of the course. This means, for example, that you maintain subscription or enrollment with an internet service provider and take action to ensure your bills are kept up to date or, if you rely on someone else for internet, to make sure they keep bills up to date and help them if needed.

If you foresee or encounter any problems with your internet service or computer or other hardware or software issues, such as but not limited to difficulty of access due to financial concerns, internet or hardware or computer issues, etc., it is your responsibility to remedy the problem or find workable alternatives in a timely fashion to ensure as best as possible your uninterrupted internet service and to ensure your ability to complete assignments, quizzes, exams, etc., as scheduled. There are many options if you only look. You may, for example, visit a library, visit a friend, relative, coffee house, or other location with internet access, use your cell phone internet service, seek technical support, borrow a laptop or computer or cell phone with internet access, sit in your car or otherwise outside the house of someone who has wifi that you are allowed to use if the pandemic is an issue, etc.

### ***Technology Issues***

Please note that I am not able to provide any technical support. If you encounter any technology issues, such as with email, using Canvas, etc., it is your responsibility to report these issues to me and to our university technology services and work to resolve these issues immediately. You can find tech support here: <https://www.technology.pitt.edu/247-it-help-desk>

## **WHERE TO FIND AND SUBMIT EVERYTHING**

Delivery of course content, assignments, exams, announcements, etc., will be administered and delivered using a combination of Canvas as well as Google Docs.

- **Class announcements** will be posted on Canvas. You can find these by clicking the “Announcements” tab on the left side of the screen after log-in.
- **Readings** are found in our assigned textbook. Additional readings, when appropriate, will be posted on Canvas. You can find links to any posted readings by logging into Canvas, clicking the “Files” tab on the left side of the screen after log-in, then clicking to open the “Readings” folder.
- **Lecture notes** can be found by logging into Canvas, clicking the “Files” tab on the left side of the screen after log-in, and then by clicking the “Class Notes” folder. Lecture notes are shared as a courtesy and will be posted every week for material covered that week as soon as possible. Notes may be updated in the event of any changes or additions made.
- The **course syllabus** will be posted as a MS Word file on Canvas and can be found by clicking the “Files” tab on Canvas, on the left side of the screen after log-in.
- **Assignment prompts** can be found by clicking the “Files” tab on Canvas, on the left side of the screen after log-in, and then clicking the folder “Assignments.”

- **Assignment submission** (for all assignments) is done by logging into Canvas, clicking the “Assignments” tab in the left menu, scrolling down, clicking on the appropriate assignment, and then submitting your work.

### CLASS CONTACTS (REQUIRED)

The space below is provided for you to write down the contact information of two fellow classmates. If you are unsure whom to ask, simply check the class roster or discussion boards. These are people to whom you may turn for help, such as to ask questions about textbook materials, to obtain lecture notes or announcements, to form study groups, etc. The names you place below do not have to be friends or people you already know (though you may well find in them a new friend or study partner). Please obtain names and e-mail addresses for *at least two* fellow classmates by the end of the first week of class. There will be an “ungraded discussion board” on Canvas that you can use to get names and contacts from your colleagues.

Name	E-mail address
Classmate One: _____	_____
Classmate Two: _____	_____

Note that these class contacts are not required for submission and are not graded.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### When Should I Start My Work?

Students sometimes wonder how soon they should start their readings, exams, projects, and other assignments, and my recommendation is always to start the moment your work is assigned or as soon as possible. You may not need all of the time available, but I encourage you to start all work as soon as possible because in my experience this approach best minimizes stress and gives you the best opportunity to take maximum advantage of the time available to you. You never know when unexpected circumstances might pop up, and it is extremely easy to underestimate the amount of time that might be required for a given task, so it is always best to start as soon as possible.

#### Weekly Assignments

Weekly assignments are carefully crafted to gradually build your skill as a researcher and to help you become a more critical consumer of research. Instructions for these assignments can be found on the assignments themselves. These assignments are worth 20 points each. These assignments **must be submitted in MS Word format** or they will not receive a grade.

## Class Research Project

Students will also learn research methods by practicing them in a collective research project. The class project will investigate media coverage of a pressing contemporary issue. This project will be scaffolded into a series of three assignments (numbered 1, 2, and 3 below) that build on each other and culminate in the final paper (number 4 below). Each student will complete these assignments individually and receive grades individually, but students will share their results with each other and incorporate their collective findings into their final papers. These assignments **must be submitted in MS Word format** or they will not receive a grade. The requirements of each assignment is provided on the assignments themselves. These assignments include:

1. Data Collection Assignment 40 points
2. Data Coding Assignment 50 points
3. Data Analysis Assignment 50 points
4. Final Paper 100 points

## Grading

Each graded item is worth a set number of points that count towards your final grade.

Item	Points Possible
Weekly Assignments	160 points, 20 points each
Data Collection Assignment	40 points
Data Coding Assignment	50 points
Data Analysis Assignment	50 points
Final Paper	100 points
<i>Total</i>	400 points

Based on the above point system, your grade will be determined by the total points you earn as follows:

<i>Total Points</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Total Points</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>
372-400	A	292-311	C
360-371	A-	280-291	C-
352-359	B+	272-279	D+
332-351	B	252-271	D
320-331	B-	240-251	D-
312-319	C+	0-239	F

Please be sure to note that grades in the course are not determined by percentages, as is the case



in some courses, but rather by **total whole points**. This is to add clarity, reduce anxieties, and remove the need for rounding. If you want to know your grade, add up your total points. Please also be aware that we use total points with the grade levels assigned above and not any partial points or any grades or percentages shown on Canvas or any other university record system.

Students sometimes inquire about the possibility of earning extra points or credit by taking on additional work, projects, or assignments in order to raise their individual grades. Please note that extra credit will not be permitted because it would not be fair to the rest of the class.

Please understand that grades are arrived at dispassionately and are determined by the quality of the work submitted. To be fair to everyone, I cannot consider the amount of time invested, performance in other classes or on other assignments, or what a student wants or feels they deserve. I have to go strictly by the quality of the work on the page. I also grade work relative to others in class to help ensure fairness.

In arriving at a grade, please understand, too, that I have to go not just by what is explicitly noted in any provided grading rubrics, but also the overall quality of the work and any issues not foreseeable that may not be mentioned explicitly in rubrics that speak to the core requirements of an assignment. This is because rubrics simply can't foresee every possible problem or be comprehensive of every possible outcome and would overlook the overall quality of the work that is more than just the sum of its parts. This policy is designed to foster a holistic approach that ensures fairness, transparency, and equal treatment for everyone.

**\*\*Special note on grading:** I will do my absolute best to grade your work as quickly as possible, but please understand that I am only one person. Please understand that I, too, have to deal with uncertainties, difficulties, and chaos due to the pandemic. Please also understand that I do not have teaching assistants to help me get through the many hundreds of assignments, exams, and essays I must grade this semester in addition to my other research, teaching, and administrative duties. Such a large workload requires me to balance multiple competing priorities and therefore I must be very concise in commentaries on other written work or no one will get their grades and comments in time for them to be useful. Your patience and understanding is appreciated.

## **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS**

Your learning is my principal concern, so I may modify the schedule, assignments, readings, etc., if it will facilitate your learning. We may also discover that we want to spend more time on certain topics and less time on others. I'll consider changing our schedule if it will help most students in the class. Changes will be announced. As with changes in policy or procedures at any job, it is the student's responsibility to keep track of any announced changes.

Readings should be completed BEFORE the week they will be discussed in class lecture.

### **Week One (8/30 – 9/3)**

- Read Ch. 1 Human Inquiry and Science in Babbie (2014)
- Course introduction, review of syllabus
- Review broad outlines of class paper research project

### **Week Two (9/6 – 9/10)**

- Read Ch. 2 Paradigms, Theory, Research in Babbie (2014)
- Assignment 1 due 9/12 by 11:59 p.m. (midnight)

### **Week Three (9/13 – 9/17)**

- Read Ch. 4 Research Design in Babbie
- Assignment 2 due 9/19 by 11:59 p.m. (midnight)

### **Week Four (9/20 – 9/24)**

- Read Elo and Erlingsson articles on content analysis (see also p. 323-334 in Babbie on content analysis, but this will be covered later)
- Data Collection assignment due 9/26 by 11:59 p.m. (midnight)

### **Week Five (9/27 – 10/1)**

- Read Ch. 7 The Logic of Sampling in Babbie (2014)
- Assignment 3 due 10/3 by 11:59 p.m. (midnight)

### **Week Six (10/4 – 10/8)**

- Read Ch. 9 Survey Research in Babbie (2014)
- Assignment 4 due 10/10 by 11:59 p.m. (midnight)

### **Week Seven (10/11 – 10/15)**

- Read Ch. 10 Qualitative Field Research in Babbie (2014)
- Data Coding assignment due 10/17 by 11:59 p.m. (midnight)

### **Week Eight (10/18 – 10/22)**

- Read Ch.11 Unobtrusive Research in Babbie (2014)
- Assignment 5 due 10/24 by 11:59 p.m. (midnight)

### **Week Nine (10/25 – 10/29)**

- Read Ch. 13 Qualitative Data Analysis
- Assignment 6 due 10/31 by 11:59 p.m. (midnight)

**Week Ten (11/1 – 11/5)**

- Read Ch. 14 Quantitative Analysis
- Data Analysis assignment due 11/7 by 11:59 p.m. (midnight)

**Week Eleven (11/8 – 11/12)**

- Read Ch. 17: Reading and Writing Social Science
- Read “How to Write and Publish an Academic Research Paper”
- Assignment 7 due 11/14 by 11:59 p.m. (midnight)

**Week Twelve (11/15 – 11/19)**

- Read Ch. 16 Statistical Analysis
- Assignment 8 due 11/21 by 11:59 p.m. (midnight)

**Week Thirteen (11/22 – 11/26)**

- Thanksgiving Recess

**Week fourteen (11/29 – 12/3)**

- Presenting and publishing research
- Papers due 12/5 by 11:59 p.m. (midnight)

**Week fifteen (12/6 to 12/10)**

- Read Chapter 3, Ethics
- Film/discussion/activity/TBA