SOC 575 01W- Advanced Research Methods

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2025 (Web-Based)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Nicole Farris, Professor
Office Location: Ferguson Room 218
Office Hours: On Campus: M/W 7:00 am to 9am, 10:00 am to 10:30 am and by appointment
University Email Address: Nicole.Farris@etamu.edu
Preferred Form of Communication**: Email**
Communication Response Time: 24 to 48 Hours, M-F, 8am to 5pm

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required:
Neuman, W. Lawrence. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (8th ed.). Pearson.
Software Required
Optional Texts and/or Materials

This course covers the basic techniques and procedures used in the social research process. Special attention is given to defining research problems, selecting and measuring variables, stating hypotheses, developing sampling designs, and gathering data. Students are exposed to methodological designs such as experimentation, observation, content analysis, evaluation research, and survey research.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Identify and evaluate key research methods used in sociological research.
2. Formulate sociological research questions and corresponding hypotheses.
3. Design appropriate sampling methods and measurement tools for empirical studies.
4. Compare and contrast qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques.
5. Develop a research proposal that integrates ethical considerations and

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

methodological rigor.
6. Critically assess the validity and reliability of existing and proposed studies.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students should be proficient in basic computer skills, including word processing, email communication, navigating online learning platforms (D2L), and the use of video conferencing tools such as Zoom.

This course is delivered fully online. Instructional methods include weekly readings, lectures, discussion forums, application assignments, peer feedback, and the development of a cumulative research proposal.

To succeed in this course, students should keep up with weekly readings, participate actively in discussions, engage with peer feedback, and dedicate time each week to building their final research proposal. Time management and communication with the instructor are key to staying on track.

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GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades

Grade Scale

- **A** = 450–500
- **B** = 400–449
- **C** = 350–399
- **D** = 300–349
- **F** = 299 and below

Assessments

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Total: 500 Points

1. Weekly Assignments (14 × 10 pts each) – 140 points
Short assignments aligned with each week's content (e.g., topic proposal, sampling plan, codebook draft, observation write-up). Each task is worth 10 points.

2. Participation & Discussion (6 × 10 pts each) – 60 points
Selected weeks will include brief discussion prompts or peer feedback posts. These are low-stakes but designed to promote engagement and peer learning.

3. Research Proposal Draft – 50 points
Submitted in Week 15. Should include: intro, research questions, literature outline, and methods.

4. Research Proposal Final – 150 points
Final polished proposal (10–15 pages), submitted in Week 16. Includes all standard research components.

5. Presentation – 50 points
10-minute presentation (video or slide deck with narration), due in Week 16. Includes summary of topic, rationale, methods, and anticipated findings.

6. Feedback on Course – 20 points
Provide constructive feedback on the course using a guided rubric or prompt.

7. Quizzes/Annotated Bibliography (2 × 15 pts) – 30 points
Short quizzes on research paradigms/ethics (Week 2) and submit an annotated bibliography (Week 13) .

Late Work Policy: Late work will be accepted without question for up to one week after the original due date and will be subject to a 10% penalty. Assignments submitted more than one week late will not be accepted unless prior approval has been granted by the instructor. Please reach out as early as possible if you anticipate needing additional time.
However- if you turn in your rough draft late, I will NOT be able to give you feedback before your final paper is due, so please keep this in mind.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:
https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements

LMS Browser Support:
https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

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ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport

Interaction with Instructor Statement

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

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University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the Student Guidebook.
https://inside.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf.

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:
https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the Attendance webpage and Procedures 13.99.99.R0.01
http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03
Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf

Graduate Students Academic Integrity Policy and Form

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10.pdf

A Note about Citation/Style Guides

Please note that while you may be more familiar with APA or MLA citation styles, this is a **graduate-level sociology course**, and we will be using **ASA (American Sociological Association) style** for all written assignments.

A copy of the ASA Style Guide and examples are available in the **Information and Resources** tab of the course shell. If you have questions about formatting or citation, feel free to reach out.

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Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: Student Disability Services

https://www.tamuc.edu/student-disability-services/

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus document and/or consult your event organizer.
Web url:
http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

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A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit **www.tamuc.edu/counsel**

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.

http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html

AI IN DR. FARRIS' CLASSROOM

You're welcome to use AI tools (like ChatGPT), Grammarly, or similar support services in this class—as long as you're using them the way you'd use me: as a resource to support your learning, not as a shortcut to avoid doing the work.

Think of it like this:
Would you ask me to write your discussion post for you?
Would you ask me to complete your final project or reflection?

Probably not—and if you did, I'd (kindly) say no!

But would you ask me to help brainstorm ideas, explain a sociological concept, give feedback on a rough draft, or suggest ways to structure your response?
Absolutely. That's using support in a way that still keeps the work (and the learning) yours.

If you do use any AI tools (including Grammarly or ChatGPT), you must note it at the bottom of your assignment.

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Just a short line is fine—for example:

- "I used Grammarly to check grammar and clarity."
- "ChatGPT helped me outline my initial ideas for this post."
- "I asked ChatGPT to explain symbolic interactionism in simpler terms."

Being transparent helps build trust and keeps our academic work ethical and clear.
If you're ever unsure whether you're using AI appropriately, just ask yourself: *Is this something I would ask my professor to do for me?*
If the answer is yes, you're probably on the right track.

AI use policy [Draft 2, May 25, 2023]

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.
Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).
Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.
13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty
13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

Department or Accrediting Agency Required Content

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

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This course runs from August 25, 2025 to December 12, 2025. Weekly modules open on Mondays and all assignments are due by 11:59 PM Central Time on Sundays unless

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otherwise noted.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Aug 25–31): Introduction to Social Research
- Read: Chapter 1–2
- Assignment: Introductory discussion post & reflection

Week 2 (Sept 1–7): Theory, Ethics, and Research
- Read: Chapters 3 and 5; Esterberg Chapter 3
- Assignment: Mini quiz on paradigms & ethics

Week 3 (Sept 8–14): Research Questions, Concepts, and Variables
- Read: Babbie Chapter
- Assignment: Research topic selection + draft research questions

Week 4 (Sept 15–21): Measurement & Surveys
- Read: Chapter 6 and 7
- Assignment: Survey instrument critique

Week 5 (Sept 22–28): Sampling Techniques
- Read: Chapter 8
- Assignment: Sampling plan outline

Week 6 (Sept 29–Oct 5): Introduction to Qualitative Methods
- Read: Esterberg Chapter 2 and 5
- Assignment: Draft interview guide

Week 7 (Oct 6–12): Ethnographic Methods & Field Research
- Read: Chapter 13, Esterberg Chapter 4
- Assignment: Observation plan write-up

Week 8 (Oct 13–19): Experimental Designs
- Read: Chapter 9
- Assignment: Experimental/quasi-experimental design sketch

Week 9 (Oct 20–26): Survey Implementation
- Read: Chapter 10
- Assignment: Survey draft submission

Week 10 (Oct 27–Nov 2): Qualitative Data Collection & Transcription
- Read: Chapter 8 in Esterberg
- Assignment: Mini transcription or coding task

Week 11 (Nov 3–9): Quantitative Data Analysis
- Read: Chapter 12

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- Assignment: Data analysis plan outline

Week 12 (Nov 10–16): Qualitative Coding & Analysis
- Read: Chapter 15; Esterberg Chapter 8
- Assignment: Draft codebook

Week 13 (Nov 17–23): Mixed Methods
- Read: Babbie Chapter
- Assignment: Integration plan (if applicable), Annotated Bibliography

Week 14 (Nov 24–30): Non-Reactive Research and Secondary Analysis
-Read: Chapter 11
- Assignment: Secondary Data application Exercise

Week 15 (Dec 1–7): Writing Research Proposals
- Read: Chapter 16
- Assignment: Rough draft of research proposal due
-Course Feedback Due

Week 16 (Dec 8–12): Final Presentations
- Assignment: 10-minute recorded presentation
- Final Research Proposal due Dec 12 by 11:59 PM

Note: The schedule is subject to change with prior notice from the instructor.

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