



SOC 331 01W, Intro to Social Research

COURSE SYLLABUS: Summer 1 2026 6/1 to 7/2

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: (Name & Title) Dr. Nicole Farris, Professor
Office Location: Ferguson 218
Office Hours: By appointment
Office Fax: 903-886-5330
University Email Address: Nicole.Farris@tamuc.edu
Preferred Form of Communication: **Email**
Communication Response Time: **24-48 Hours**

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required: Babbie, Earl. 2010. *The Basics of Social Research*, 5th edition. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth Publishing. ISBN: 0495812242. ANY EDITION should work

Course Description

An introduction to the process, logic, and skills of social science research inquiry. The range of research designs, their strengths and weaknesses, the specific research tools needed for the collection of sociological data, and introductory analytical techniques are examined. Required of all majors and a prerequisite for Sociology 332.

Student Learning Outcomes (Should be measurable; observable; use action verbs)

1. Students will be able to conduct ethical research within the bounds of the ethical expectations set forth by the Institutional Review Board. They will complete IRB training at TAMUC online and then file an exempt IRB as part of their course assessment.
2. Students will be able to define and explain the fundamental concepts of the methods used in social science research. This SLO will be assessed through the two exams for the course.

3. Students will be to critically read and evaluate research reports and publications. This SLO will be assessed in weekly in class assignments and projects.
4. Student will be able to apply different research methods to a research question. This SLO will be assessed by their final project and weekly in class assignments and projects.

Classroom Expectations:

1. Students must be prepared to participate in group work and be prepared to take notes and complete work with their peers.
2. Students must come prepared to learn. That's why it is essential to participate in class discussions online and by reading the chapter ahead of time.
3. Please treat everyone with respect. Disrespectful behavior towards anyone in the classroom will not be tolerated. You will be asked to leave the course if disrespectful behavior persists.

Assessments:

This is a **fast-paced 5-week course**. Each week builds toward a final **Research Portfolio**, which replaces the traditional research paper.

- Modules open: **Mondays at 12:01 AM**
 - Assignments due: **Sundays at 11:59 PM**
 - Expect to log in multiple times per week
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MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

1. CITI / IRB Training (75 pts)

Completion of human subjects research training.

2. Weekly Applied Activities (200 pts total)

Hands-on exercises (sampling, surveys, coding, etc.).
Students will select their **best 2–3 artifacts** for their final portfolio.

3. Research Idea Snapshot (75 pts)

A concise overview of your research topic, significance, and research questions.

4. Literature Map (125 pts)

Annotated sources + visual map of key ideas and gaps in the literature.

5. Methods Blueprint (125 pts)

A structured plan outlining how your study would be conducted.

6. Final Research Portfolio (200 pts)

A polished collection of:

- Research idea
 - Literature map
 - Methods blueprint
 - Selected applied work
 - Reflection
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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To be successful in the course you must be able to use D2L, and using Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. Attendance will also be crucial in order to complete in-class assignments.

Instructional Methods

This course will be delivered partially online. You must have access to D2L in order to complete the requirements for this course.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

You must log into D2L multiple times a week in order to be successful in this course. All course communications and assignments will be completed through D2L. If you have questions regarding access to D2L or technical requirements, information to reach out to Campus IT is provided below.

Grade Policies: For incompletes, you must speak with me ahead of time and have completed most of the course work. **I do not round grades**, and I do not change grades after they have been submitted. Grades are available on D2L so you can track your up to date progress in the course.

Late Work:

Assignments may be submitted up to one week late (no questions asked) with a 10% penalty (excluding final portfolio/presentation).

GRADING

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

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

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

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

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.

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](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

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 Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

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 Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

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: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

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.

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

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.

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.

However, I want to see your knowledge and effort. If I find that a submitted assignment used AI in an unapproved way, penalties will range based on severity of academic dishonesty. For this course, the use of AI is NOT allowed aside from the aforementioned uses. The unauthorized use of AI will result in a grade of 0 for the assignment for the first offense. The second offense will result in a grade of F for the course and submission to the academic dishonesty committee.

A Note on AI/ChatGPT Use

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

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

WEEK 1: Introduction to Inquiry + Research Design

June 1 – June 7

Chapters:

- Chapter 1: Human Inquiry and Science
- Chapter 2: Paradigms, Theory, and Research
- Chapter 3: Ethics and Politics of Social Research
- Chapter 4: Research Design

Focus:

- What is research?
- How theory connects to research
- Ethics + IRB process
- Types of research design

Assignments:

- CITI Training (start + submit certificate)
 - Mini Activity: Strong vs Weak Research Questions
 - **Research Idea Snapshot DUE (Sunday)**
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WEEK 2: Measurement, Concepts, and Sampling

June 8 – June 14

Chapters:

- Chapter 5: Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement
- Chapter 6: Indexes, Scales, and Typologies
- Chapter 7: The Logic of Sampling

Focus:

- Turning ideas into variables
- Measurement strategies
- Sampling methods and bias

Assignments:

- Applied Activity #1: Build a Variable
- Applied Activity #2: Sampling Exercise

Students keep ONE for portfolio

WEEK 3: Research Methods (Quant + Qual)

June 15 – June 21

Chapters:

- Chapter 8: Experiments
- Chapter 9: Survey Research
- Chapter 10: Qualitative Field Research

Focus:

- Major research methods
- Strengths and weaknesses of each
- Designing data collection tools

Assignments:

- Applied Activity 3: Survey OR Interview Guide Activity
 - **Literature Map DUE (Sunday)**
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WEEK 4: Data Collection & Analysis

June 22 – June 28

Chapters:

- Chapter 11: Unobtrusive Measures
- Chapter 12: Qualitative Data Analysis
- Chapter 13: Quantitative Data Analysis

Focus:

- Alternative data collection methods
- Intro to coding qualitative data
- Interpreting quantitative results

Assignments:

- Applied Activity 4: Coding or Data Interpretation
- Methods Blueprint
- Continue Portfolio Development

Students keep ONE artifact

WEEK 5: Writing & Presenting Research

June 29 – July 2

Chapters:

- Chapter 14: Reading and Writing Social Research

Focus:

- Bringing research together
- Translating ideas into a research plan
- Communicating findings

Assignments:

- ♦ **Final Research Portfolio DUE (July 2)**