SOCI 311
RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE
SYLLABUS

Metropolitan State University, Spring Semester 2005
Wednesdays 6:00-9:20, St. Paul Campus

Instructor: Janet Enke
Office: 308B St. John’s Hall, St. Paul Campus
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 4:30-5:30 and by appointment
Office Phone: 651.793.1438
e-mail: janet.enke@metrostate.edu

I will make a concerted effort to answer e-mails and voice mails within 48 hours. Please note that I do not respond to emails or voicemails on weekends.

Mail Address: Janet Enke, Social Science Department, Metropolitan State University, 700 E. Seventh St., St. Paul, MN 55106-5000

COURSE DESCRIPTION

There are many ways of acquiring knowledge about the social world including authority, tradition, social research, common sense, personal experience, and the media. This course focuses on social scientific representations of social life and thus examines the philosophical traditions, methodologies, and methods used by social researchers. We will study both qualitative and quantitative approaches to social research, and their unique contributions to our understanding of social life. Classroom learning is enhanced by experiential activities.

COMPETENCE STATEMENT

Knows and understands the philosophical underpinnings and methodologies of qualitative and quantitative research paradigms well enough to interpret, critique, and conduct social research.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

Knowledge of key concepts, epistemologies, methodologies, and methods in social science research as measured by an exam and experiential exercises.

Ability to apply knowledge of key concepts, epistemologies, methodologies, and methods to the process of social research as measured by experiential exercises.

Development of skills needed to conduct social science research as measured by experiential exercises.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- The prerequisite for the course is Writing 131 or the equivalent.

- The last day to withdraw from spring semester classes is April 10, 2005 (a W will appear on your transcript). If you do not finish the class or fail to withdraw from the class, you will receive a grade of F.

- You are welcome to use email to ask questions about assignments or course materials. I will not accept assignments that are emailed or faxed.

- All written assignments must be submitted according to the guidelines on the Social Science Department Style Sheet. The last day to submit written assignments is April 27, 2005.

- Please turn off cell phones during class; they are disruptive to the class environment.

COURSE LOGISTICS

Class Attendance

This class is designed so that each session erects a bridge from one week to the next. Moreover, classroom participation is an essential component of an active learning environment. Therefore, regular class attendance is extremely important in this course. Nevertheless, it is understood that working adults have obligations that may occasionally result in a missed class. I make no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. You will be allowed up to two absences without penalty. However, your final grade will be docked one half letter grade for each absence after two. For example, if you earned a B in the course and you missed a third class period, your final grade would be a B-.
Evaluation Criteria

Course evaluations are based on an exam, experiential exercises, and class participation. I will make a concerted effort to return the exam and written assignments one week after they are submitted for evaluation. A numeric score and constructive comments will be provided on all written work. If you wish to translate the numeric score into a letter grade, divide the numeric score by the total number of points for the exam or assignment and multiple by 100 to receive a percentage. Locate the percentage and corresponding grade on the scale on page three.

Exam and Experiential Exercises

- A make-up exam will be given in extenuating circumstances (e.g. illness, death, work or family conflict) if you contact me prior to the start of the class period.

- All assignments are due on the date given in the course outline. Late assignments will be accepted without penalty in extenuating circumstances (e.g. illness, death, work or family conflict) if you contact me prior to the start of the class period. Otherwise, I deduct 10% of an assignment's points, as a penalty for each week the assignment is late. For example, an assignment that is 1 to 7 days late will be docked 10% of the total points received on the assignment. An assignment that is 8 to 14 days late will be docked 20% of the total points received on the assignment.

- If you miss class on the day an assignment is due, mail the assignment to the address provided on the first page of the syllabus. The envelope must be postmarked by the due date to avoid a late penalty.

- You may collaborate with others on assignments; however, I expect individually submitted written work. If an individual's work looks too similar to a classmate's work, both students will be asked to redo the assignment.

Class Participation

- Your evaluation will consider how well you demonstrate your familiarity with the course material during group work and class discussions.
Grades

For those of you requesting a final grade, the percentage break down and scale are as follows:

**Percentage Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Exam</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Experiential Exercise #1</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>25 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Experiential Exercise #2</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>65 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Experiential Exercise #3</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>65 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Class Participation</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>20 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>200 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92-100%</td>
<td>184-200</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79%</td>
<td>156-159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-91%</td>
<td>180-183</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>72-77%</td>
<td>144-155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89%</td>
<td>176-179</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-71%</td>
<td>140-143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82-87%</td>
<td>164-175</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
<td>120-139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-81%</td>
<td>160-163</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Required Texts**


  This book is also a required text for SSci 451 Social Science Capstone Seminar.

- Reader: Available at the bookstore under the course name and instructor.
COURSE POLICIES

Class Environment

We must all work together to create a supportive and collaborative learning environment. I expect students to be prepared for class, to actively participate in class discussions and exercises, and to show respect for others. You choose your attitude towards the class. However, if you decide course materials are irrelevant for any reason, you have no right to impose your negativity on other students.

My role in the class is to provide instruction, facilitate learning, and moderate discussions.

- As the instructor, I have established ground rules for the class. One, students may assert or refute any position they wish, but must do it respectfully using examples, analyses, and arguments. Two, students can critique a person's position and methods, but not make personal attacks.

- As a facilitator, it is my responsibility to engage students in course materials. Thus, I will call on individuals by name during class. You have the option to pass, but do not make a habit of passing when your name is called.

- As a moderator, it is my responsibility to monitor class discussions. If individuals stray from the topic during discussions, I will ask students to limit their remarks to the subject matter. Do not be offended by my request. I am interested in students' questions, comments, and insights about course materials. However, tangents can be counterproductive to the learning process. Also, if an individual is dominating class discussions, I will address the issue in class or speak to the person one-on-one.

If you have a particular concern with the class environment, please feel free to speak with me.

Students with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must register with the Disability and Special Services Office, 651.793.1540, as early as possible. TTY users can call 651.772.7687. If you have a documented learning disability, or if you suspect you have a learning disability which may impact your opportunity to succeed in this course, call the Disability and Special Services Office right away so that you can explore possible ways to reasonably accommodate your learning style. Please identify yourself to me by the second class, as well.
Language Skills

Oral and written English language skills of students are expected to be strong. Competency, in part, is based on the student's ability to successfully demonstrate mastery of assigned course materials. This means you should have successfully completed Writing 131 or the equivalent. If you are uncertain whether your skills are sufficient for this course, you should speak with the instructor for referral to resources to evaluate and strengthen your skills. The Metropolitan State Writing Center, 651.793.1460, is a great resource. Consultants offer free individualized help to students.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is knowingly handing in the work of others as though you did the work yourself. This includes copying the language from other writers and/or using the ideas of others without acknowledging your sources. This is a very serious offense. The consequence of a plagiarized assignment is a grade of F for the course. See the Student Handbook for more information on Metropolitan State academic policies.
COURSE OUTLINE

NOTE: I will refer to assigned readings during class. Therefore, I encourage you to bring your textbook and Reader to class each week.

CLASS 1 1/12/2005
Topic: Introduction
Film: Chore Wars

CLASS 2 1/19/2005
Topic: Epistemology, Methodology, and Method
Readings: Neuman, Chapter 1
Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Chapter 4 (Reader)

CLASS 3 1/26/2005
Topic: The Research Process
Readings: Neuman, Chapter 2 and p.100
Ragin, *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*, Chapter 2 (Reader)
Scott, “Drudges, Helpers and Team Players: Oral Historical Accounts of Farm Work in Appalachian Kentucky” (Reader)

CLASS 4 2/2/2005
Topic: Literature Reviews; References
Readings: Neuman, pp. 67-86 and 339-340
Assignment: Exam
CLASS 5  2/9/2005

Topic: Introduction to Quantitative Research

Readings: Neuman, pp. 89-104, 106-118 (skip the section on Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research), 162-176

Assignment: Experiential Exercise #1: See exercise handout

CLASS 6  2/16/2005

Topic: Survey Research

Readings: Neuman, pp. 119-135, 176-190

Assignment: Experiential Exercise #1: See exercise handout

CLASS 7  2/23/2005

Topic: Analysis of Quantitative Data

Readings: Neuman, Chapter 10
Handout: Quantitative Data Analysis

Assignment: Experiential Exercise #2; See exercise handout

Note: Bring a calculator to this class period if you have one

CLASS 8  3/2/2005

Topic: Quantitative Sampling; Reading a Quantitative Journal Article

Readings: Neuman, Chapter 6
Lennon and Rosenfield, “Relative Fairness and the Division of Housework: The Importance of Options” (Reader)

Note: Bring a calculator to this class period if you have one

It is very important that you read the article by Lennon and Rosenfield before class
CLASS 9  3/9/2005

Topic: Ethical Issues in Social Research; Nonreactive Research and Secondary Analysis

Readings: Neuman, Chapters 3 and 9

Assignment: Experiential Exercise #2: See exercise handout

NOTE  There is no class on 03/16/05 (Spring Break)

CLASS 10  3/23/2005

Topic: Introduction to Qualitative Research

Readings: Neuman, pp. 86-89, 103, 111-112; 116-117, 137-141, 278-283
Taylor and Bogdan, Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods, “Field Notes: Study of Institutional Attendants” (Reader)

CLASS 11  3/30/2005

Topic: Field Research

Readings: Neuman, Chapter 11
Deloria, Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto, Chapter 4 (Reader)

Assignment: Experiential Exercise #3: See exercise handout

CLASS 12  4/6/2005

Topic: Depth Interviewing

Readings: Miller and Crabtree, Approaches to Qualitative Research: A Reader on Theory and Practice, “Depth Interviewing” (Reader)

Assignment: Experiential Exercise #3: See exercise handout
CLASS 13  4/13/2005
Topic:  Reading a Qualitative Journal Article; Historical-Comparative Research
Readings:  Beoku-Betts, “We Got Our Way of Cooking Things: Women, Food, and Preservation of Cultural Identity Among the Gullah” (Reader)
          Neuman, Chapter 12
Note:  It is very important that you read the article by Beoku-Betts before class

CLASS 14  4/20/2005
Topic:  Analysis of Qualitative Data
Readings:  Neuman, Chapter 13
Assignment:  Experiential Exercise #3: See exercise handout

CLASS 15  4/27/2005
Topic:  Review; Action Research and Community Based Research
Assignment:  Experiential Exercise #3: See exercise handout
Note:  Class will meet from 6-9:20 p.m