

**CATALOG YEAR 2009-2010**  
**(Please use separate form for each add/change)**

COLLEGE/SCHOOL: Arts & Sciences

Current Catalog Page(s) Affected: Add to College of Arts & Sciences (p. 367 immediately after the entry on SOCI 5312)

Course: Add: X Delete: \_\_\_\_\_

(check all that apply) Change: Number Title \_\_\_\_\_ SCH \_\_\_\_\_

Description: X Prerequisite: X

If new, provide Course Prefix, Number, Title, SCH Value, Description, prerequisite, and lecture/lab hours if applicable. If in current catalog, copy and paste the text and indicate changes in red.

- New Number: SOCI 5321 Social Inquiry (same as PSCI 5321)
- SCH: 3

Course Description: An orientation to the scientific study of social phenomena. Topics include the philosophy of science; ethical considerations in human subjects research; measurement; theory-building; reviewing and integrating existing research; research designs (experiments, quasi-experimental designs, surveys, non-obtrusive methods, observation); and written and oral presentation of research.

Prerequisite: SOCI 3305, PSCI 3301, or similar undergraduate coursework in social scientific research methods, or consent of instructor.

Justification: New course due to restructuring of graduate methods requirements in SOCI, PADM, and PSCI; former course was SOCI/5302/PSCI 5301 "Advanced Methods of Social Research"

Program: Add: X Change: \_\_\_\_\_ Attach new/changed Program of Study description and 4-year plan. If in current catalog, copy and paste the text and indicate changes in red.

Minor: Add: \_\_\_\_\_ Delete: \_\_\_\_\_ Change: \_\_\_\_\_ Attach new/changed minor.  
If in current catalog, copy and paste the text from the and indicate changes in red.

Faculty: Add: \_\_\_\_\_ Delete: \_\_\_\_\_ Change: \_\_\_\_\_ Attach new/changed faculty entry.  
If in current catalog, copy and paste the text from the and indicate changes in red.  
College Introductory Pages: Add information: \_\_\_\_\_ Change information: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach new/changed information. If in current catalog, copy and paste the text from the and indicate changes in red.

Approvals: Signature Date

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Department Curriculum Committee

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## Sociology 5321 – Social Inquiry Syllabus

**Title:** Social Inquiry (same as PSCI 5321)

**Duration:** 2.5 hours at one-day a week

**Room:** In a computer lab with SPSS & ENDNOTE installed

**Consultations:** 6 hours a week

Or by appointment

**Professor:** Marcus Antonius Ynalvez

**Office:** Canseco 313F; tel. no. 326-2621

**Email:** [mynalvez@tamiu.edu](mailto:mynalvez@tamiu.edu)

### **Course Description:**

This course orients students to the scientific (and ethical) investigation of social phenomena. Topics include the philosophy of science, ethical considerations in scientific inquiry involving human subjects, measurement (levels and criteria of good measurement); theory-building (including aspects and parts of social theory); quantitative and qualitative sampling; reviewing and integrating existing research; research designs (experiments, quasi-experimental designs, surveys, non-obtrusive methods, observation, ethnography). Students will also learn written and oral presentation of research. They will also learn to write a research proposal targeted at internal and extramural funding.

**Prerequisites of the Course:** Student enrolling this course should have already taken an undergraduate course in research methods in the social and/or behavioral sciences, such as SOCI 3305 and PSCI 3301, or an equivalent course in another academic area.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- (1) Students will learn the philosophical, scientific, and ethical foundations of social research;
- (2) Students will engage issues and concerns pertaining to measurement and sampling, and will formulate and design appropriate and sound measurement and sampling schemes;
- (3) Students will evaluate and critique social scientific research designs of published reports and articles,
- (4) Students will write a literature review and formulate research questions and hypotheses,
- (5) Students will engage ethical issues and concerns germane to social research,
- (6) Students will learn quantitative (experiments, surveys, name-generators, time-diaries, non-reactive methods, content analysis, and secondary data analysis) and qualitative (participant observation and ethnography) approaches to social research,
- (7) Students will write a research proposal on a topic of their choice and aimed at securing state and federal funding.

### **Course Expectations and Teaching Philosophy:**

Students are expected to attend full seminar sessions, and participate proactively in discussions and activities. Again, this is a seminar-type course and will require intense interaction between students and professor, and discussion among students. In fact, my role will be more of a moderator, or discussant, than an instructor. In other words, the “flow of information and ideas” in our sessions will surely not be one-way (i.e. top-down nor bottom-up) but multi-way, which is in keeping with the realities of contemporary global society wherein voices and sentiments are increasingly heard from almost every place and identity as a result of new communication and information technologies’ ability to alter the temporal and the spatial dimensions of social interaction.

By implication, students should have read the assigned materials, and be prepared for discussion and interaction. I have always given to the idea that students not only learn from their teachers, but teachers also learn from their students; and this is how things ought to be if we are to arrive at a synthesis and generate new knowledge, rather than simply memorizing concepts and “parroted” maxims and principles. Societies and cultures continually change so that the study of research methods should inspire students not to be static but dynamic, not to be passive but proactive, far away from simply “being” but always “becoming” better.

### **Grading and Course Requirements:**

Grades will be based on: [1] a well written *ethical scientific social research proposal* (to be done individually), [2] a group oral critique of a published research article (with the paper version of the MS Power Point presentation to be submitted), [3] the weekly 1-page papers and terminal assessment, [4] short quizzes and/or assignments, and [5] oral reports and participation (which alludes to class attendance).

Approximate weights (subject to change) will be: individual research proposal 25%, group oral critique 25%, weekly 1-page papers and terminal assessment (50-item multiple choice; equivalent to three 1-pagers) 20%, short quizzes/assignments 15%, and oral reports and participation 15%. The grading scale will be as follows: A = 90.00 – 100.00, B = 80.00 - 89.99, C = 70.00 - 79.99, D = 60.00 - 69.99, F = less than 60.00.

### **Honoring Academic Excellence:**

At the end of the course, the student with the highest numeric grade automatically wins ‘The Max Weber In-Class Award for Outstanding Performance in Social Inquiry.’

### **Required Textbooks:**

1. Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches by W. Lawrence Neuman, Allyn & Bacon 2006 (ISBN 0-205-45793-2)
2. Foundations of Behavioral Research by F. Kerlinger and H. Lee, Wadsworth 1999 (ISBN 01-55078976)
3. Spotlight on Social Research by Alexander Thomas and Polly Smith, Allyn & Bacon 2003 (ISBN 0-205-36806-9)

**Reminder:** To succeed in this class, students **should attend all lectures**, keep up with understanding assigned readings, and get their questions answered as they arise. This is a skill-builder course so that the more you immerse yourself into it the greater the returns. As a final reminder, this course gives extremely high premium on (1) hard work, (2) teamwork, and (3) academic honesty. *Lastly, the contents of this course is typically well represented and covered in comprehensive examinations so that my being demanding and my being strict with you should not be construed as “torturing” or “making it hard for you,” but these are to be seen as attempts to maximize your likelihood of passing the comprehensive examination and most importantly becoming a competent professional of the social sciences.*

## **College of Arts and Sciences – Guidelines**

### **Classroom Behavior**

The College of Arts and Sciences encourages classroom discussion and academic debate as an essential intellectual activity. It is essential that students learn to express and defend their beliefs, but it is also essential that they learn to listen and respond respectfully to others whose beliefs they may not share. The College will always tolerate diverse, unorthodox, and unpopular points of view, but it will not tolerate condescending or insulting remarks. When students verbally abuse or ridicule and intimidate others whose views they do not agree with, they subvert the free exchange of ideas that should characterize a university classroom. If their actions are deemed by the professor to be disruptive, they will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include being involuntarily withdrawn from the class.

### **Copyright Restrictions**

The Copyright Act of 1976 grants to copyright owners the exclusive right to reproduce their works and distribute copies of their work. Works that receive copyright protection include published works such as a textbook. Copying a textbook without permission from the owner of the copyright may constitute copyright infringement. Civil and criminal penalties may be assessed for copyright infringement. Civil penalties include damages up to \$100,000; criminal penalties include a fine up to \$250,000 and imprisonment.

*Copyright laws do allow students and professors to make photocopies of copyrighted materials under strict*

*conditions. You may not copy most, much less all, of a work, but you may copy a limited portion of a work, such as an article from a journal or a chapter from a book. These copies must be for your own personal academic use or, in the case of a professor, for personal, limited classroom use. In general, the extent of your copying should not suggest that the purpose or the effect of your copying is to avoid paying for the materials. And, of course, you may not sell these copies for a profit. Thus, students who copy textbooks to avoid buying them or professors who provide photocopies of textbooks to enable students to save money are both violating the law.*

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as one's own. Recently, the Internet has complicated the picture. Getting something from the Internet and presenting it as one's own is still plagiarism. Copying another student's paper or a portion of the paper - is usually called "copying". Neither plagiarism nor copying will be tolerated. Should a faculty member discover that a student has committed plagiarism; the students will receive a grade of 'F' in that course and the matter will be referred to the Executive Director of Student Life for possible disciplinary action.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Texas A&M International University seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal education opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with the Director of Student Counseling and to contact the faculty member in a timely fashion to arrange for suitable accommodations.

### **Incomplete Grade Assignments**

Incompletes are discouraged and are assigned only under extenuating circumstances. In fairness to those students who complete the course as scheduled, under no circumstances will an Incomplete ("I") be changed to an "A" unless the student has experienced a death in the immediate family or has a written medical excuse from a physician.

### **Independent Study Courses**

Independent Study (IS) courses are offered only under exceptional circumstances. Required courses intended to build academic skills may not be taken as IS (e.g., clinical supervision and internships). No student will take more than one IS course per semester. Moreover, IS courses are limited to seniors and graduate students. Summer IS course must continue through both summer sessions.

### **Student Responsibility For Dropping a Course**

"It is the responsibility of the STUDENT to drop the course before the drop date. Members of the Faculty are not responsible for dropping students who suspend class attendance".

### **Final Examination**

Final Examination is comprehensive and is given on the date, time, and location specified by the University.

### **Student E-mail Address**

All students must obtain a TAMIU e-mail address

### **Make up Work**

Except for quizzes and assignments, you will be allowed to make up missed work only with my approval (granted for hospitalization, death with immediate family, doctor's orders or employer's excuse provided on work stationary) and provided you have the necessary and sufficient documentation.

## Generic 15-week Program of Instruction

### Week 1

- Discuss syllabus and course expectations
- Discuss of a real research experiment: learning lessons from the biological sciences and adopting them in the social sciences

### Week 2

- Science and research
- Dimensions of research
- Aspects and parts of social theory
- Scientific research and theory
- Assign: Derivation of theoretical model
- Assign: Constructing a micro theory

### Week 3

- Literature review and research ethics (introduce them to *Endnote*, if possible)
- Classical ethical controversies in social science research (Milgram's Obedience Studies, Humphreys' Tearoom Trade Study, Zimbardo Prison Experiments, Project Camelot)
- Assign: National Institutes of Health On-Line Human Subjects Training
- Assign: ASA/APSA code of ethics of the profession

### Week 4

- What is measurement: conceptualization and operationalization
- Levels of measurement
- Criteria of good measurement
- Assign: Have students come up with a measurement scheme of a concept

### Week 5

- Indices and scales
- Bogardus social distance/Thurstone scale/Likert scale/Guttman scale
- Demonstrate construction of a Likert scale using MS Excel
- Assign: Have students construct a Likert scale

### Week 6

- Sampling, randomness, and non-randomness
- Non-parametric sampling methods and their applications
- Parametric sampling methods and their applications

### Week 7

- Continuation...parametric sampling methods and their applications
- Stratification and clustering
- Sample size determination
- Assign: Have student design the sampling scheme for a given target population

### Week 8

- Experiments
- Threats to internal and external validity of experiments
- Different types of experimental designs
- Assign: Have students design an experiment

### Week 9

- Factorial experiments: main effects and interaction effects
- Analysis of variance (ANOVA)
- Critique of a published research experiment
- Assign: Have students analyze data from an experiment set using SPSS

### Week 10

- Survey research designs
- Criteria for good survey questions
- Types of questions
- Types of surveys (face-to-face, phone, mailed, Internet)
- Introduce the on-line survey software: *SURVEY MONKEY*
- Assign: Have student design a survey questionnaire

Week 11

- Time diaries
- Name generator for ego-centric social network analysis
- Survey data and general regression models
- Introduce the General Social Survey (GSS)
- Have students analyze a subset of the GSS using SPSS
- Assign: Have student analyze data from the GSS and design a 24-hr time diary

Week 12

- Discuss results of GSS analyzed data
- Non-reactive research methods (unobtrusive methods and content analysis)
- Non-reactive research methods (secondary data analysis and existing statistics)

Week 13

- Continuation...non-reactive research methods (secondary data analysis and existing statistics)
- Discussion of published research articles: McKelvie & Schamer (1988) and Cerulo (1989)
- Field research/participant observation
- Types of validity and reliability

Week 14

- Group Oral Presentation with External Reviewers and submission of Group MS Power point presentation/Submission of individual research proposal

Week 15

- Comprehensive Final Exams