

METHODS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

SYA 4300, sections ACL3 (class # 16389) and ACL4 (class # 16388)

4 credits, 100% traditional (face-to-face)

Spring 2024

CLASSES: Tuesdays, period 4 (10:40 – 11:30 a.m.) & Thursdays, periods 4 – 5 (10:40 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. & 11:45 a.m. – 12:35 p.m.), Pugh Hall, room # 120

LABS: Section ACL3 – Wednesdays, period 3 (9:35 – 10:25 a.m.), ARCH, room # 0120

Section ACL4 – Wednesdays, period 4 (10:40 – 11:30 a.m.), ARCH, room # 0120

Instructor: *Dr. Alin M. Ceobanu*, Assoc. Prof., Department of Sociology and Criminology & Law
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Office Phone: (352) 294-7170
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:30-10:30 a.m. & 1:45-2:15 p.m. (**drop-in**) & by appointment
E-mail: aceobanu@ufl.edu (**PLEASE USE THIS E-MAIL TO CONTACT ME DIRECTLY RATHER THAN THE CANVAS SYSTEM**)

Teaching Assistant: *Louise Villanueva*, Department of Sociology and Criminology & Law
Office: 3349 Turlington Hall
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 5:00-6:00 p.m. (drop-in)
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Course Description:

This *4 credit-hour course, delivered 100% traditionally (face-to-face) for both lectures and labs*, is a capstone course for Sociology majors and minor, as well as a thorough introduction to the fundamentals of scientific research used in sociology and related social science disciplines. As such, it provides the tools necessary for practicing good social research. *Methods* covers a variety of topics, such as the nature and process of social research, social research strategies and design, formulating research questions and deriving testable hypotheses, reviewing the literature, conceptualization and measurement, sampling, creating survey questions, doing quantitative analysis, qualitative data analysis, mixed methods or using secondary data.

Knowledge in this course is acquired via a mix of lectures and labs (students will learn about the basic principles of research design and then apply them in practice). The active learning component in this class requires spending substantial time on both theoretical and practical issues. With an honest effort, you will acquire a set of skills that will serve you well (in the labor market, for instance), for many years to come.

This class makes extensive use of Canvas/[e-Learning](#). You are responsible for regularly checking e-Learning for updates, discussions, instructions, posted lecture notes, and many other resources. The [UF Computing Help Desk](#) is available to help troubleshoot technical issues.

We will be using IBM [SPSS Statistics](#) during labs, which, if is already installed on the lab computers and also available to all UF students via [UF Apps](#).

Prerequisites:

Students **MUST** have taken SYG 2000, *Principles of Sociology* (or equivalent), and have at least 60 credit hours. It is recommended that you have already taken a statistics course (such as *Introduction to Statistics*, STA 2023).

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Identify, explain, and apply the basic concepts of social science research.
- Acquire critical skills to interpret social science research outcomes.
- Recognize the ethical issues involving social science research and ensuring ethical standards.
- Describe basic research designs commonly used in sociology.
- Critically interpret and explain the differences (strengths and limitations) between quantitative and qualitative methods.
- Develop the ability to independently design and conduct own research projects involving analysis of original or secondary data.

Required Text:

Schutt, Russell K. 2019. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*, 9th edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (e-ISBN: 9781544308845).

Lecture and lab notes (in PDF, from the instructor) will be made available in the course's Canvas shell.

COURSE POLICIES

➤ Class Attendance, Participation, and Excused Absences:

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Class participation is an important component of the learning process for this course. Students must attend classes (lectures and labs) on a regular basis (**attendance is not optional**), given that participation in both lectures and labs facilitates understanding of the topics and furthers the ability to conduct research independently (e.g., running analyses in SPSS). *Readings must be done before class time.* **Students who skip classes habitually for unexcused reasons will not be permitted to take the tests, which will result in a failing final grade.**

Over the course of the semester, there will be several in-class assignments (linking theory with practice), that are intended to motivate students to keep up with the readings. **Class attendance and participation counts as 6% towards the final grade.** Try not to be late; if you are late, enter the classroom without disrupting the educational process. Please be respectful in your comments to the instructor and/or your fellow classmates.

If you are sick (e.g., flu, COVID, RSV), please stay home. If you need immediate assistance, call your primary care provider or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161. Students who miss classes for reasons of excused absences need to email the instructor(s) to arrange for any make-up work as soon as their condition permits this. Medical conditions should be documented appropriately (such as a signed physician's form). Students with excused absences will be given a reasonable amount of time to make-up for missed exams, assignments, or other coursework.

➤ Cellular Phone and Laptop Policy:

To prevent any kind of disruptions during class time, students are required to turn their cell phones off, place them in their bags/backpacks **before coming to class**, and strictly adhere to this policy (Thank you!).

Sending or receiving e-mail, texting, and internet browsing during class time is not allowed. Laptops or tablets may be used to take notes or to complete in-class assignments.

➤ Labs and Lab Assignments:

Ms. Louise Villanueva, doctoral student in Sociology, will be teaching the labs. Students will complete 11 lab assignments during the semester, which will give students the opportunity to learn and demonstrate skill in some aspect of the research process (e.g., conducting a literature search, data management, statistical analysis of survey data). **Lab assignments must be completed and submitted via Canvas on or before the due date and time (9:35 a.m. on Wednesdays).** Typically, students will have one week to complete a lab assignment. Only lab assignments submitted via Canvas will be accepted; do not send them as attachments to the UF email addresses of the instructor and/or TA unless advised to do so. Late lab assignments will not be accepted. This portion of your final grade counts as 30% and will be based on the 10 highest scores (the lowest score will be dropped).

➤ Tests:

Students will be tested periodically on their knowledge of information from the textbook and lectures. Each of the 4 in-class tests corresponds to the knowledge learned specifically in the assigned chapters. Although none of the tests 2 to 4 is cumulative, it should be stressed that new information and skills are built around what has been previously learned. As such, retention of the material already covered may be necessary to establish knowledge of the newer information. All tests are closed-book (no assistance), in paper format, and consist of 40 multiple-choice questions. Students will have the entire class time to complete their tests (although many will likely finish early). **Each test score counts as 16% towards the final grade.**

➤ Grading Distribution:

The course grades are based on individual performance and are determined by each student's ranking in the class. The following grading scheme will be used in this course:

<i>Component</i>	<i>Points each</i>	<i>Points total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Attendance and participation		60	6%
Lab assignments (10 total)	30	300	30%
Tests (4 total)	160	640	64%
TOTAL		1,000	100%

➤ Grading Scale:

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

As this is a capstone course for Sociology majors, a minimum grade of C+ (2.5 points) is needed to earn credit.

The following grading scale will be used:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>
A	≥ 920	C	720 – 779
A-	900 – 919	C-	700 – 719
B+	880 – 899	D+	680 – 699
B	820 – 879	D	620 – 679
B-	800 – 819	D-	600 – 619
C+	780 – 799	E	< 599

➤ Technology:

The lab portion of this course requires the use of a personal laptop or desktop computer with a good (stable and fast) internet connection. Students will need access to UF Library's e-resources, which can be done via a UF-networked computer or some type of software that will enable establishing a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection. See the UF Library's Connecting from Off-Campus website (<http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/ufproxy.html>).

In addition, this course will require students to use the [IBM SPSS Statistics](#) software available to all students via [UF Apps](#), a cloud-based suit of commonly used software applications accessible through most computers and mobile devices. Students must use their UF username and password to [login to UF Apps](#).

UF POLICIES

➤ In-Class Recording:

Per UF policies, students are permitted to record video or audio of class lectures, although the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

➤ Academic Honesty:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Conduct Code](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

➤ Online Evaluation Policy:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>.

➤ Classroom Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

➤ Health and Wellness Resources:

For students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of health care or other support:

- *U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website (<https://umatter.ufl.edu/>) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Counseling and Wellness Center*: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website (<https://counseling.ufl.edu/>) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- *Student Health Care Center*: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website (<https://shcc.ufl.edu/>).
- *University Police Department*: Visit UF Police Department website (<https://police.ufl.edu/>) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center*: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website (<https://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center>).

➤ Academic Resources:

- *E-learning technical support*: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk online (<https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>), by phone at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- *Career Connections Center* (<https://career.ufl.edu/>): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- *UF Library Support* (<https://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- *Teaching Center* (<https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>): Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- *Writing Studio* (<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers

Critical Dates:

Jan 30 (Tue)	Test 1
Feb 27 (Tue)	Test 2
Mar 11-15	Spring Break
Mar 28 (Thu)	Test 3
Apr 23 (Tue)	Test 4

Course Schedule:

Meeting Date Topic(s) Readings, Assignments, Due Dates, etc.

Week 1

Tue, Jan 9	Introduction, Syllabus	NO READINGS
<i>Wed, Jan 10</i>	<i>Lab 1: Introduction to labs, UF Apps</i>	
Thu, Jan 11	Ch. 1 – Social world, science, social science	pp. 2-13 (43-64)
	Ch. 1 – Types of social research	pp. 14-23 (65-80)

Week 2

Tue, Jan 16	Ch. 2 – Social research questions & theories	pp. 27-35 (89-103)
<i>Wed, Jan 17</i>	<i>Lab 2: Sociological Abstracts</i>	<i>Assignment # 1 posted</i>
Thu, Jan 18	Ch. 2 – Foundations of social research	pp. 35-49 (104-122)
	Ch. 2 – Social research strategies & standards	pp. 49-62 (123-145)

Week 3

Tue, Jan 23	Ch. 3 – Research ethics, hist. background, IRB	pp. 67-96 (156-198)
<i>Wed, Jan 24</i>	<i>Lab 3: Fundamentals of SPSS</i>	<i>Assignment # 1 due, Assignment # 2 posted</i>
Thu, Jan 25	Ch. 4 – Conceptualization	pp. 102-109 (209-218)
	Ch. 4 – Operationalization	pp. 109-116 (219-230)

Week 4

Tue, Jan 30	TEST 1	
<i>Wed, Jan 31</i>	<i>Lab 4: Overview of GSS</i>	<i>Assignment # 2 due, Assignment # 3 posted</i>
Thu, Feb 1	Ch. 4 – Measurement & measurement levels	pp. 116-131 (231-261)
	Ch. 4 – Reliability & validity	pp. 131-141 (262-277)

Week 5

Tue, Feb 6	Ch. 6 – Units of analysis, longitudinal designs	pp. 187-200	(351-369)
<i>Wed, Feb 7</i>	<i>Lab 5: Working with variables I</i>	<i>Assignment # 3 due</i>	
Thu, Feb 8	Ch. 6 – Causal explanations	pp. 200-213	(370-391)
	Ch. 6 – Criteria for causation	pp. 200-213	(370-391)

Week 6

Tue, Feb 13	Ch. 5 – Sample planning	pp. 147-157	(287-305)
<i>Wed, Feb 14</i>	<i>Lab 6: Working with variables II</i>	<i>Assignment # 4 posted</i>	
Thu, Feb 15	Ch. 5 – Probability sampling	pp. 157-168	(306-320)
	Ch. 5 – Nonprobability samples, distributions	pp. 168-182	(321-342)

Week 7

Tue, Feb 20	Ch. 8 – Survey research in social sciences	pp. 253-259	(459-469)
<i>Wed, Feb 21</i>	<i>Lab 7: Representing and displaying data</i>	<i>Assignment # 4 due, Assignment # 5 posted</i>	
Thu, Feb 22	Ch. 8 – Writing survey questions	pp. 259-272	(470-491)
	Ch. 8 – Designing questionnaires	pp. 273-281	(492-507)

Week 8

Tue, Feb 27 TEST 2

<i>Wed, Feb 28</i>	<i>Lab 8: Univariate analysis</i>	<i>Assignment # 5 due, Assignment # 6 posted</i>	
Thu, Feb 29	Ch. 8 – Organizing surveys	pp. 281-305	(508-543)
	Ch. 7 – The logic of experiments	pp. 220-231	(402-419)

Week 9

Tue Mar 5	Ch. 7 – Quasi-experiments, exp. validity	pp. 231-248	(420-450)
<i>Wed, Mar 6</i>	<i>Lab 9: Correlation</i>	<i>Assignment # 6 due, Assignment # 7 posted</i>	
Wed, Mar 7	Ch. 10 – Essentials of qualitative methods	pp. 354-376	(640-660)
	Ch. 10 – Participant observation	pp. 376-390	(661-684)

Week 10

Mar 11 – 15 SPRING BREAK

Week 11

Thu, Mar 19	Ch. 10 – In-depth interviewing	pp. 390-407	(685-710)
<i>Wed, Mar 20</i>	<i>Lab 10: Comparison of means</i>	<i>Assignment # 7 due, Assignment # 8 posted</i>	
Thu, Mar 21	Ch. 11 – Features, types of qualitative analysis	pp. 413-428	(720-744)
	Ch. 11 – Alternatives in qual. data analysis	pp. 428-440	(745-766)

Week 12

Tue, Mar 26	Ch. 11 – Qualitative analysis approaches	pp. 440-458	(767-791)
<i>Wed, Mar 27</i>	<i>Lab 11: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square</i>	<i>Assignment # 8 due, Assignment # 9 posted</i>	
Thu, Mar 28	TEST 3		
Thu, Mar 28	Ch. 12 – Mixed methods: history & types	pp. 464-476	(801-821)

Week 13

Tue, Apr 2	Ch. 12 – Mixed methods: yes & no	pp. 476-483	(822-833)
<i>Wed, Apr 3</i>	<i>Lab 12: Bivariate regression</i>	<i>Assignment # 9 due, Assignment # 10 posted</i>	
Thu, Apr 4	Ch. 13 – Evaluation & policy research	pp. 487-504	(842-869)
	Ch. 13 – Evaluation & policy research issues	pp. 504-517	(870-892)

Week 14

Tue, Apr 9	Ch. 14 – Secondary data sources	pp. 522-534	
<i>Wed, Apr 10</i>	<i>Lab 13: Multivariate regression</i>	<i>Assignment # 10 due, Assignment # 11 posted</i>	
Thu, Apr 11	Ch. 14 – Secondary data analysis; big data	pp. 534-548	

Week 15

Tue, Apr 16	Ch. 15 – Overview of historical & comparative	pp. 551-573	(952-985)
<i>Wed, Apr 17</i>	<i>Lab 14: Regression examples, wrap-up</i>	<i>Assignment 11 due</i>	
Thu, Apr 18	Ch. 15 – Demographic & content analysis, ethics	pp. 573-585	(986-1004)

Week 15

Tue, Apr 23 TEST 4