

## METHODS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

**SYA 4300**, sections **3U51** (class # 23309) and **414A** (class # 24001)

***4 credits, 100% traditional (in person)***

Fall 2023

**CLASS:** Mon, Wed, Fri, period 4 (10:40 – 11:30 a.m.), Computer Sciences & Engineering (CSE), room # E222

**LABS:** Section 3U51 – Mon, period 6 (12:50 - 1:40 p.m.), Weil Hall, room # 0408E  
Section 414A – Mon, period 7 (1:55 - 2:45 p.m.), Weil Hall, room # 0408E

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**Instructor:** Dr. Alin M. Ceobanu, Department of Sociology and Criminology & Law  
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E-mail: [aceobanu@ufl.edu](mailto: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: 3347 Turlington Hall  
Office Hours: Fri, 8:30-10:30 a.m. (drop in)  
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### **Course Description:**

This *4 credit-hour course, delivered 100% traditionally (in person) for both lectures and labs*, is 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 presupposes 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 (<http://elearning.ufl.edu>). You are responsible for regularly checking e-Learning for updates, instructions, posted lecture notes, and many other resources. The UF Computing Help Desk (<https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>) is available to help troubleshoot technical issues.

We will use IBM SPSS Statistics (<https://www.ibm.com/products/spss-statistics>) during labs, which is already installed on the lab computers and also available via UF Apps (<https://info.apps.ufl.edu/>).

### **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.
- 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 REQUIREMENTS**

### ➤ Class Attendance, Participation and Excused Absences:

Class attendance is expected -- participation in classroom activities is an important component of the learning process. Assigned readings must be completed before class time. Students are strongly encouraged to attend both lectures and labs on a regular basis, given that class participation facilitates understanding of the topics and furthers the ability to conduct research independently (e.g., running analyses in SPSS).

Medical situations must be documented appropriately (e.g., a signed physician's form) to be excused. Consistent with university regulations, make-up work will be allowed in the case of excused absences, as defined by UF attendance policies (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>).

### ➤ Syllabus Quiz:

Students will start the course by taking a quiz on the contents of this syllabus. The quiz must be completed by the due date. If you have never taken a Canvas quiz, you should access the video tutorial located at <https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Video-Guide/Quizzes-Students/ta-p/383506>. Students who answered all questions correctly will receive 10 points (1% of the final grade).

### ➤ In-class Assignments:

Over the course of the semester, we will have 10 in-class assignments (unannounced), which are intended to motivate students to come to class and keep up with the readings. These in-class assignments link theory and practice and each is worth a maximum of 5 points. There are 3 possible grades: 'Absent' (0 points), 'Adequate' (3 points), and "First-class" (5 points).

### ➤ Lab Assignments:

Ms. Louise Villanueva, a Sociology graduate student, will be teaching the labs. Students will complete 11 lab assignments during the semester. These lab assignments will give students the opportunity to learn and

demonstrate skill in some aspect of the research process (e.g., conducting a literature search, managing the data, performing statistical analysis of survey data). Lab assignments must be completed and submitted via Canvas on or before the due date and time (12:50 p.m. on Mondays). 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. 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 2-4 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 (and some extra-credit ones). 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:

<i>Component</i>	<i>Points each</i>	<i>Points total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Syllabus quiz	10	10	1%
In-class assignments (10 total)	5	50	5%
Lab assignments (10 total)	30	300	30%
Tests (4 total)	160	640	64%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

➤ Grading Scale:

<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 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 via UF Apps, a cloud-based service accessible through most computers and mobile devices. Students must use their UF username and password to login to UF Apps (<https://login.apps.ufl.edu/login/LogonPoint/tmindex.html>).

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### ➤ Cell Phones, Laptop Computers and Tablets:

Please silence your cell phones before coming to class. This will avoid the disruption of loud ring tones. The use of electronic devices for taking notes or, on rare occasions, looking up information is allowed; however, students are strongly encouraged to consider taking hand-written notes, if possible. Laptops and tablets can be a source of distraction (for you and your classmates around you), so please be mindful and respectful.

### ➤ Academic Honesty:

All students registered at the University of Florida have agreed to comply with the following statement: *“I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.”*

In addition, on all work submitted for credit the following pledge is either required or implied: *“On my honor I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”*

**All course work, including in-class and lab assignments, must be your original and individual work.**

Any cheating or plagiarism, including copying of online materials without clear attribution or use of AI-based applications, will result in a failing grade and disciplinary action. You are responsible for keeping back-up files of your written assignments, which must be submitted electronically on E-Learning.

### ➤ 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.

➤ 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 (<https://gatorevals.afl.edu/>). Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.afl.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.

➤ 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 (<https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>). 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.

➤ COVID-19:

Students are encouraged to stay informed about current risk levels and the university's and other health recommendations (including wearing masks and being current on vaccinations). If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated. Students with excused absences will have access to the course materials, including lecture presentations, in Canvas, and they will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.

➤ 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](mailto: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 & Wellness Center website (<https://counseling.ufl.edu/>) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis and 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 911 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](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).
- *Career Connections Center* (<https://career.ufl.edu/>): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- *Ask-A-Librarian* (<https://uflib.ufl.edu/find/ask/>): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

- Academic Resources (<https://academicresources.clas.ufl.edu/>): 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010. Tutoring, supplemental instruction, general study.
- Writing Studio (<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers

**Critical Dates:**

Aug 30 (Wed)	Syllabus quiz due
Sep 4 (Mon)	<i>Labor Day, no class &amp; lab</i>
<b>Sep 18 (Mon)</b>	<b>Test 1</b>
Oct 6 (Fri)	<i>Homecoming, no class</i>
<b>Oct 13 (Fri)</b>	<b>Test 2</b>
<b>Nov 6 (Mon)</b>	<b>Test 3</b>
Nov 10 (Fri)	<i>Veterans Day, no class</i>
Nov 22 (Wed)	<i>Thanksgiving, no class</i>
Nov 24 (Fri)	<i>Thanksgiving, no class</i>
<b>Dec 4 (Mon)</b>	<b>Test 4</b>

**Course Schedule:**

Meeting Date	Topic(s)	Readings, Assignments, Due Dates, etc.
<b>Week 1</b>		
Wed, Aug 23	Introduction, Syllabus	NO READINGS
Fri, Aug 25	Ch. 1 – Social world, science, social science	pp. 2-13 (43-64)
<b>Week 2</b>		
Mon, Aug 28	Ch. 1 – Types of social research	pp. 14-23 (65-80)
<i>Mon, Aug 28</i>	<i>Lab 1: Introduction</i>	
Wed, Aug 30	Ch. 2 – Social research questions & theories	pp. 27-35 (89-103)
Fri, Sep 1	Ch. 2 – Foundations of social research	pp. 35-49 (104-122)
<b>Week 3</b>		
<i>**Mon, Sep 4 LABOR DAY, no class</i>		
<i>**Mon, Sep 4 LABOR DAY, no lab</i>		
Wed, Sep 6	Ch. 2 – Social research strategies & standards	pp. 49-62 (123-145)
Fri, Sep 8	Ch. 3 – Ethical principles, hist. background	pp. 67-87 (156-185)
<b>Week 4</b>		
Mon, Sep 11	Ch. 3 – Research ethics, IRB	pp. 87-96 (186-198)
<i>Mon, Sep 11</i>	<i>Lab 2: Sociological Abstracts</i>	<i>Assignment # 1 posted</i>
Wed, Sep 13	Ch. 4 – Conceptualization	pp. 102-109 (209-218)
Fri, Sep 15	Ch. 4 – Operationalization	pp. 109-116 (219-230)

## Week 5

### Mon, Sep 18 **TEST 1**

Mon, Sep 18	Lab 3: Introduction to SPSS	Assignment # 1 due, Assignment # 2 posted
Wed, Sep 20	Ch. 4 – Measurement & measurement levels	pp. 116-131 (231-261)
Fri, Sep 22	Ch. 4 – Reliability & validity	pp. 131-141 (262-277)

## Week 6

Mon, Sep 25	Ch. 6 – Units of analysis, longitudinal designs	pp. 187-200 (351-369)
Mon, Sep 25	Lab 3: Introduction to GSS	Assignment # 2 due, Assignment # 3 posted
Wed, Sep 27	Ch. 6 – Causal explanations, criteria	pp. 200-213 (370-391)
Fri, Sep 29	Ch. 6 – Criteria for causation	pp. 200-213 (370-391)

## Week 7

Mon, Oct 2	Ch. 5 – Sample planning	pp. 147-157 (287-305)
Mon, Oct 2	Lab 4: Working with variables	Assignment # 3 due, Assignment # 4 posted
Wed, Oct 4	Ch. 5 – Probability sampling	pp. 157-168 (306-320)
**Fri, Oct 6	HOMECOMING, no class	

## Week 8

Mon, Oct 9	Ch. 5 – Nonprobability samples, distributions	pp. 168-182 (321-342)
Mon, Oct 9	Lab 5: Level of measurement	Assignment # 4 due, Assignment # 5 posted
Wed, Oct 11	Ch. 8 – Survey research in social sciences	pp. 253-259 (459-469)
Fri, Oct 13	<b>TEST 2</b>	

## Week 9

Mon, Oct 16	Ch. 8 – Writing survey questions	pp. 259-272 (470-491)
Mon, Oct 16	Lab 6: Univariate analysis	Assignment # 5 due, Assignment # 6 posted
Wed, Oct 18	Ch. 8 – Designing questionnaires	pp. 273-281 (492-507)
Fri, Oct 20	Ch. 8 – Organizing surveys	pp. 281-305 (508-543)

## Week 10

Mon, Oct 23	Ch. 7 – The logic of experiments	pp. 220-231 (402-419)
Mon, Oct 23	Lab 7: Correlation	Assignment # 6 due, Assignment # 7 posted
Wed, Oct 25	Ch. 7 – Quasi-experiments, exp. validity	pp. 231-248 (420-450)
Fri, Oct 27	Ch. 10 – Essentials of qualitative methods	pp. 354-376 (640-660)

## Week 11

Mon, Oct 30	Ch. 10 – Participant observation	pp. 376-390 (661-684)
Mon, Oct 30	Lab 8: Comparison of means	Assignment # 7 due, Assignment # 8 posted
Wed, Nov 1	Ch. 10 – In-depth interviewing	pp. 390-407 (685-710)
Fri, Nov 3	<b>TEST 3</b>	

## Week 12

Mon, Nov 6	Ch. 11 – Features, types of qualitative analysis	pp. 413-428	(720-744)
<i>Mon, Nov 6</i>	<i>Lab 9: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square</i>	<i>Assignment # 8 due, Assignment # 9 posted</i>	
Wed, Nov 8	Ch. 11 – Alternatives in qual. data analysis	pp. 428-440	(745-766)
<b>**Fri, Nov 10</b>	<b>VETERANS DAY, no class</b>		

## Week 13

Mon, Nov 13	Ch. 11 – Qualitative analysis approaches	pp. 440-458	(767-791)
<i>Mon, Nov 13</i>	<i>Lab 10: Bivariate regression</i>	<i>Assignment # 9 due, Assignment # 10 posted</i>	
Wed, Nov 15	Ch. 12 – Mixed methods: history & types	pp. 464-476	(801-821)
Fri, Nov 17	Ch. 12 – Mixed methods: yes & no	pp. 476-483	(822-833)

## Week 14

Mon, Nov 20	Ch. 13 – Evaluation & policy research	pp. 487-504	(842-869)
<i>Mon, Nov 20</i>	<i>Lab 11: Multivariate regression</i>	<i>Assignment # 10 due, Assignment # 11 posted</i>	
<b>**Wed, Nov 22</b>	<b>THANKSGIVING, no class</b>		
<b>**Fri, Nov 24</b>	<b>THANKSGIVING, no class</b>		

## Week 15

Mon, Nov 27	Ch. 13 – Evaluation & policy research issues	pp. 504-517	(870-892)
<i>Mon, Nov 27</i>	<i>Lab 12: Regression examples</i>	<i>Assignment #11 due</i>	
Wed, Nov 29	Ch. 15 – Overview of historical & comparative	pp. 551-573	(952-985)
Fri, Dec 1	Ch. 15 – Demographic & content analysis, ethics	pp. 573-585	(986-1004)

## Week 16

<b>Mon, Dec 4</b>	<b>TEST 4</b>		
<i>Mon, Dec 4</i>	<i>Lab 13: Regression examples, wrap-up</i>		
Wed, Dec 6	Wrap-up		