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**Sociology 4900: Senior Capstone
Weber State University, Fall 2015**

**Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 1:30–2:20 pm
SS 113**

Course overview and objectives

What is sociology? How do people do sociology? This course has two main aims. The first is to introduce you to the fundamentals of how research projects are built and executed. A main part of this is giving you hands

Assignments – In order for you to build up to a final thesis paper in the course, I have developed a series of small “scaffolding” assignments. These are designed to keep you on track and focus your research project. There are also additional assignments that involve professional experience, funding, and submitting your work to a wider audience. **See instructions on page 6-8. (12 assignments X 5% each = 60%)**

Final paper – Your final paper is the final write-up of your research project. It will be mostly assembling and streamlining elements of your scaffolding assignments. **Follow the outline on page 9. Due on Wednesday, December 16th at 2 pm** in the Sociology Department office. **(25%)**

Project presentation – In order to give you further experience clarifying and presenting your work, I am asking everyone to give a twenty minute presentation – based on their final project – to the class. Presentations will be held the final two weeks of classes. They will be graded on the quality of your preparation and performance. **(5%)**

Participation – As this class requires you to stay on track and focused, it is important that you regularly come to class and participate. I take role at the beginning of each class. Unless I have excused you beforehand, your attendance is also required at each “Workshop” (October 12-16, 19-21, 26-30, and November 23 and 25). You have three “free” days to be late or absent. After that, each time you are late or absent, you will lose 2 points from your participation grade.

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WEEK FIVE: Measurement, and operationalization, continued
(September 28 – October 2)

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WEEK ELEVEN: Job searches continued

(November 9 – 13)

- “Decreasing the Leak from the Sociology Pipeline” (Spalter-Roth, Van Vooren, and Senter, ONLINE)
- “How To Ace The 50 Most Common Interview Questions” (Smith, ONLINE)

Assignment #10 due on Friday, November 13th.

WEEK TWELVE: Graduate school

(November 16 – 20)

Assignment #8 (rough draft of research project) due on Friday, November 20th.

WEEK THIRTEEN: Workshops, prepare for presentations

(November 23, 25)

Assignment #11 due on Wednesday, November 25th.

No class – Friday, November 27th.

WEEK FOURTEEN: Project presentations

(November 30 – December 4)

Assignment #12 due on Friday, December 4th.

WEEK FIFTEEN: Project presentations, continued

(December 7 – 11)

Final paper due Wednesday, December 16th at 2 pm in the Sociology Department office.

Assignments

Scaffolding assignments:

Additional assignments:

Final paper outline

The final write-up of your research project should follow this outline, with **separate sections for an abstract, introduction, literature review, methods, findings, discussion, and**
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Methods

- Explain how you are answering your question through data. This should include most or all of the following, depending on your project: a) the setting of your study, b) your population, c) your sample, d) how you operationalized the concepts, e) your instrumentation (survey, census records, observation, interviews, experiment, etc.), f) your data collection methods, and g) your data analysis methods. While doing this, be sure to explain *why* you made these choices in methodology (A popular justification of researchers is “because earlier research did it this way too”).
- Include any problems or difficulties you encountered, ethical or otherwise. Also, explain what your methods are NOT doing very well, or what they do downright badly (In academic language, researchers often call these screw-ups the “limitations of the study”). Do not try to hide this – no research is perfect.