

Sociology 499: Senior Capstone in Sociology

Prerequisites for this class: Students *should have* completed all upper division requirements in the major core: 303, 310, 350, 420 and 421. However, in the event that the student has not completed all major requirements, completion of 303 and 310, the research and skills sequence, are especially important.

Required text: American Sociological Association Style Guide, 3rd edition. (2007). Any additional reading will be distributed via e-Reserves.

Catalog Description: Involves review of the discipline of sociology and focuses on key issues, including review of the tools of the discipline and the role of sociology in the student's future roles as individual, employee, and citizen. [May] incorporate a service learning component.

Learning Outcomes/Objectives: The Capstone course is the culminating experience for senior students in sociology nearing graduation. In the class, students demonstrate their understanding of sociological content, skills, imagination. This semester, the course will focus on the following objectives so that the student will:

- 1) develop an original research project, using either a qualitative or quantitative approach, on a topic of the student's interest, that incorporates a service component of at least 20 hours;
- 2) learn and understand the reasons for the appropriate steps of doing independent research, including proposal and development of a topic and research question, literature review, completion of the steps for research certification and for Institutional Review Board approval, and collection and analysis of data;
- 3) present data in a public forum during and at the end of the term; and
- 4) present the project in a written form appropriate to the project, making a copy available for the instructor and for the service agency.

In addition,

- 5) students will work in conjunction with a local community partner, and be evaluated by that partner on a monthly basis for his/her contribution to the project, responsibility, work skills, etc.
- 6) this term, the following community partners have proposed research projects for which they would like student help:

Ventura County Housing and Homeless Coalition
Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation
Cause
Project Understanding
School on Wheels
...and possibly others...

Grading Summary:

Attendance and Participation	90
Research proposal.....	10
Literature review.....	20
Data analysis.....	30
Presentation of project	25
Final project (written).....	75
Documented Service Hours and supervisor evaluation.....	50
	300

Attendance and Participation in Class. Students are expected to attend class and to arrive in class on time. There may be some Fridays where we will not have formal class meetings, but unless otherwise announced, you need to be in class to stay on top of deadlines and to learn from other students. Attendance and participation points cannot be made up. Some of the points under attendance and participation will come from graded activities, such as working in small groups to critique each other's work against a scoring rubric or writing a short piece. Simply being present in class for an activity (such as the required library presentation) will be scored 5 points; other attendance assignments may be worth up to 10 points.

Research proposal: This is your introduction to the project/paper. What do you plan to do? How do you plan to do it? With what agency will you be working? What will your contribution be?

Literature review: A literature review summarizes what other scholars have had to say about your topic. For this project, you'll need a minimum of 5 scholarly sources, and I would strongly encourage you to rely exclusively on refereed journal articles rather than monographs or books.

Field research: Most projects require more than one student. If appropriate, I'll approve students working in teams or in small groups (no more than 5 to a group). However, all students will need to write a separate paper/project.

Final paper: Your final paper is comprised of your introduction; your literature review; a discussion of your research question(s), design, and data collection experiences; analysis and conclusions. The length of the paper is less important than the time and thought it demonstrates, but at a minimum, the paper itself should be at least 10 pages in length, excluding references, tables, charts and appendices.

Presentation: You will present your research in an open forum in week 15 of the semester. Other sociology students, faculty and community partners may attend. Each student will have 10-15 minutes to present your original work in 75 minute sessions, as you would in an academic conference. The paper is due at this time!

Grading Rubric:

As in all courses, an “A” represents outstanding/exceptional work; a “B” represents good to very good work; a “C” represents adequate work; a “D” represents a borderline effort, and an “F” represents a failing grade. I like the following scoring rubric:

Superior or “A” (100%-90%) performance:

I listen carefully when others speak and I volunteer often. I actively participate with enthusiasm and with a positive attitude. My presence makes a positive impact on what we do in class and what I do in my service site and with my group. I arrive on time, I don't leave early and I keep my service commitments. My work is done on time and well. I meet all assignments.

Above Average to Average “B” or “C” (89%-70%) performance:

I volunteer occasionally and generally listen to the professor and others, but sometimes get distracted. I show interest and participate in all activities, both in and out of class (at my service site) sometimes actively, sometimes passively. I may arrive late to class or leave class early. I do the work of the class to an average standard, that is, satisfactorily.

Unsatisfactory “D” or “F” (69%-0%) performance:

I am not interested in group activities, I participate little, and I am distracting to others. I frequently arrive late to class or I leave class early. I rely on others in the class to let me know what's going on. I don't complete my service hours, or if I do, I don't perform well. I'm unreliable. My work, when turned in, is poor.

COURSE POLICY: (UNIVERSITY)

Students should be familiar with university policies outlined beginning on page 60 (and forward) in the 2009-2010 Catalog. Of particular importance are policies on Academic Dishonesty (pp. 60), Student Conduct (pp. 102), Rights to Privacy (pp. 97), and Nondiscrimination Policy (pp. 94). Students with disabilities needing accommodation should contact the Office of Accommodations at accommodations@csuci.edu or at Extension 3331.

OTHER POLICY (Mine): Please turn off your cell phones or place them on vibrate mode. If you're here, be here – and that means no web surfing, texting, twittering, etc. Simple courtesy will suffice. The same also applies to being here on time for class and not coming and going during the course of the class.

Important Dates** (subject to change):

Week 1: **Mandatory meeting:** Ground rules for the class. Discussion of expectations for the course and for the project, including what constitutes service time to count towards hours. Video from the Center for Community Engagement speaks on service learning guidelines, risk management, and filing your paperwork in a timely fashion.

Writing assignment: In a well-written, typed, proofed essay, I would like to know what your plans are upon graduation. That is, how will you use your sociology degree as you move on in your life? How do you think you might be able to use the Capstone experience as you look ahead to employment, graduate work, etc.? Do some digging: that is, I'd like some specifics about graduate school plans and requirements to get in, or possible employment areas and opportunities projected. 250 word minimum (1 typed page) Due 9/4

Week 2: **Mandatory meeting:** Meet our community partners and hear their research proposals. Additionally, you will be introducing yourself to the community partners based, in part, on last week's writing assignment.

Assignment: Complete the human subjects training (on-line at: <http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/register.php>.) Additionally, read and be prepared to discuss the ASA Code of Ethics at: <http://www.asanet.org/galleries/default-file/Code%20of%20Ethics.pdf>.

Week 3: **Mandatory meeting: Library presentation with Ellie Tayag in Broome 1756 at 9:00 a.m.** . Be prepared to discuss a general topic of interest with the instructor and the research librarian. Locate a minimum of **five** articles that pertain to your topic. Last date to file all paper work (learning plan, risk management, etc.) with the Center for Civic Engagement.

Assignment: Locate and read one of the articles you've found during the library presentation. Write a 1-2 page synopsis of the article for 9/18.

Week 4: **Mandatory meeting:** Human Subjects training should have been completed on-line. By week 4 at the latest you should have committed yourself to a community partner/project and met as a small group with your provider. We will discuss the ethics of

research and the NIH on-line training in class. We will also discuss how your proposed research could impinge on the human subjects' rights of potential subjects.

Assignment: Look at and try to complete as much as you can re: IRB form for 9/25.

Week 5: **Mandatory meeting:** IRB forms should be completed for in-class discussion and exchange. IRB form revision for submission during week 6. Report on first month progress: deciding on a topic, deciding on a community partner project, etc.

Assignment: Write a draft of your research proposal, that is, the introduction and focus of your final project. Bring 3 clean copies to exchange with other students for discussion.

Week 6: By week 6, all students should be in the field, collecting data and providing service. Introduction returned w/ my comments.

Week 7: For week 7, students should bring three copies of a completed, proofed and clean introduction for their paper plus a minimum 4 pages of their literature review. Two copies will be exchanged with other students for in-class editing. The third will be edited by the instructor.

Week 8: **Furlough Day. No class meeting.** Instructor is available M-TH by appointment.

Week 9: **Individual meetings** during class time scheduled with instructor. Midterm assessment: what's working; what isn't. Discussion of reports from community partners. Return introduction and first draft literature review to students.

Week 10: **Mandatory meeting:** Students will report on their progress in completing their hours with the community partner. They will be able to discuss how they are addressing their specific research question. Guest presentation on on-going community research.

Week 11: **Mandatory meeting:** Presentation of the Introduction, Literature Review, and Data description/Analysis in class.

Week 12: **Furlough Day:** No class meeting. Instructor is available M-TH by appointment. Instructor meets with students needing additional help. Feedback from community partners.

Week 13: **Mandatory meeting:** draft run-through of formal presentations.

Week 14: Thanksgiving Holiday: no class

Week 15: **Formal Capstone Presentations. All papers due.**

**** Dates (except furlough dates) are subject to change. It is your responsibility to remain current.**