

**Research Methods SOC/CCJ 3010**  
Sociology Department, William Paterson University  
Spring 2016

Professor: Dr. Wendy Christensen  
Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 11am-12pm  
                  Tuesdays 3-4pm and by appointment.  
Office: 455 Raubinger Hall  
Email: [christensenw@wpunj.edu](mailto:christensenw@wpunj.edu)  
Gmail: [wendychristensen@gmail.com](mailto:wendychristensen@gmail.com)

MW 9:30am folder: <http://bit.ly/3010-01>

MW 2pm folder: <http://bit.ly/3010-02>

*That is what learning is. You suddenly understand something you've understood all your life,  
but in a new way. – Doris Lessing*

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to familiarize you with the process of social scientific inquiry. You will learn the fundamentals of social science research methods, including the process by which research questions are formulated, relevant literature is reviewed, data are collected and analyzed, and results are written up. As this is a writing intensive course, you will learn methods in part through regular writing assignments. A subset of these assignments will combine to form a research project in which you will review the literature on a particular research question and present the results of basic data analysis. The end product of the course will be a research paper that has been improved through a process of feedback and revision.

**Course Outcomes:** Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify the characteristics of social scientific research questions;
- Define the most commonly used qualitative and quantitative research methods;
- Know how social scientists identify a relevant population and sample from that population.
- Understand the ways that the quality of data are assessed (e.g. validity, reliability, etc.)
- Understand how to use academic databases to search for peer-reviewed journal articles;
- Conduct qualitative data collection by using one or more qualitative methods, which might include participant observation, content analysis, and/or focus groups.
- Conduct quantitative data collection by participating in the implementation of a survey
- Do basic data analysis of qualitative and quantitative data

**Required Text:**

- Gordon, Liana E. (2016) *Real Research: Research Methods Sociology Students Can Use*. SAGE Publications.

**Course Schedule:**

	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>Wednesday 1/20</b>	Introductions	
<i>What is Social Research?</i> <b>Monday 1/25</b>	Pages 1-20	Take the Longitudinal Assessment Test <a href="http://www.tinyurl.com/wpusoc">www.tinyurl.com/wpusoc</a>
<i>Research Ethics</i> <b>Wednesday 1/27</b>		
<i>Interviewing</i> <b>Monday 2/1</b>	Pages 21-43	
<i>Interviewing</i> <b>Wednesday 2/3</b>	Pages 43-61	
<i>Observation and Ethnography</i> <b>Monday 2/8</b>	Pages 62-81	
<i>Observation and Ethnography</i> <b>Wednesday 2/10</b>	Pages 81-90	Research Question Paper Due Friday 2/12
<i>Introduction to Surveys</i> <b>Wednesday 2/17</b>	Pages 91-110	
<b>Thursday 2/18</b>	Film: TBA	
<i>Survey Techniques</i> <b>Monday 2/22</b>	Pages 111-123	
<i>Conducting Surveys</i> <b>Wednesday 2/24</b>	Pages 124-144	
<b>Monday 2/29</b>	Survey Workshop	5 Survey Questions Due in class
<b>Wednesday 3/2</b>	Survey Workshop	
<b>Monday 3/7</b>	Film: TBA	
<b>Wednesday 3/9</b>	Midterm Exam	

	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>Spring Break</b>	Enjoy!	
<i>Secondary Data Analysis</i> <b>Monday 3/21</b>	Pages 145-156	
<i>Existing Statistics Research</i> <b>Wednesday 3/23</b>	Pages 157-168	
<i>Literature Reviews</i> <b>Monday 3/28</b>	Pages 225-242	
<i>Literature Reviews</i> <b>Wednesday 3/30</b>	Workshop	Annotated Bibliography Due Friday 4/1
<i>Research Proposals</i> <b>Monday 4/4</b>	Pages 243-252	
<i>Research Proposals</i> <b>Wednesday 4/6</b>	Workshop	
<i>Content Analysis</i> <b>Monday 4/11</b>	Pages 169-194	
<i>Content Analysis</i> <b>Wednesday 4/13</b>	Workshop	
<i>Analyzing Survey Data</i> <b>Monday 4/18</b>	Survey Results Workshop	
<i>Analyzing Survey Data</i> <b>Wednesday 4/20</b>	Survey Results Workshop	Research Proposal Draft Due Friday 4/22
<i>Evaluation Research</i> <b>Monday 4/25</b>	Pages 195-215	
<i>Evaluation Research</i> <b>Wednesday 4/27</b>	Pages 215-224	
<b>Monday 5/2</b>	Research Proposal Conferences in class	
<b>Wednesday 5/4</b>	Final Exam in class	
<b>Friday 5/15</b>	Final Research Proposal Due	

## Course Policies:

### Attendance:

- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class.
- Regular attendance will help boost your final grade in the course.
- If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the notes from another student.

### Classroom Etiquette:

- Come to each class with your textbook prepared to discuss the reading material.
- Be courteous: do not eat noisy food and refrain from having side conversations.
- Cell phone use (texting) during class **will not be tolerated** and will result in being marked absent for the day.

**Assignments & Grading:** Your final grade will be made up of the following assignments:

<b>Reading Quizzes</b>	Throughout semester.	10 points
<b>Research Question Paper</b>	Friday 2/12	10 points
<b>Draft Survey Questions</b>	Monday 2/29	10 points
<b>Midterm Exam</b>	Wednesday 3/9	15 points
<b>Annotated Bibliography</b>	Friday 4/1	10 points
<b>Draft Research Proposal</b>	Friday 4/22	10 points
<b>Final Exam</b>	Wednesday 5/4	15 points
<b>Final Research Proposal</b>	Friday 5/13	20 points

### Google Drive:

This semester we will use the website Google Drive (<http://drive.google.com>) to organize our data collection, analysis, and writing. You must have a Google account for this class. You will hand in your assignments by sharing them with me ([wendychristensen@gmail.com](mailto:wendychristensen@gmail.com)) on Google Drive, and I will be able to give you detailed feedback online. For those who are not familiar with it, we will go over how to use Google Drive in class.

Course Materials such as assignments, handouts, and Powerpoints will be stored in our class Google Drive folder.

**MW 9:30am folder:** <http://bit.ly/3010-01>

**MW 2pm folder:** <http://bit.ly/3010-02>

### **Late & Missed Assignments:**

- All work must be handed in when it is due. Late assignments will not be accepted.
- This is a class where we build on our work over the course the semester. Do not let yourself get behind.

### **Special Accommodations:**

If you require special accommodations to participate in, or to complete the work in this course, please let me know within the first two weeks of class so that we can make the necessary arrangements.

### **Academic Honesty:**

I expect you to follow the William Paterson University Academic Integrity Policy. Anytime you turn in individual work I expect that what you turn in will be written solely by you and will be unique from that of your classmates. It is the policy of the William Paterson University Sociology Department that, with documented evidence, a student who cheats on an exam or paper for the first time *will fail the course* and record of the occurrence will be sent to the department Chair and the relevant Dean. If a student cheats a second time, they will fail the course *and* be expelled from the sociology major and reported to the relevant Dean. Please ask if you have any questions about what is and is not acceptable. The Academic Integrity Policy can be found here: <http://www.wpunj.edu/cte/wpu-academic-integrity-policy.dot>

### **If You Need Help:**

*Do not hesitate* to contact me if you need assistance during the semester. You are responsible for heading off problems before they turn into emergencies. The sooner you get in touch with me about an issue, the sooner we can work to solve a problem together.

### **Helpful Resources on Campus:**

#### **Academic Success Center:** Raubinger Hall, 720-3324/2563

At the Academic Success Center, students receive one-on-one tutoring assistance, developmental skills for math and reading courses, and workshops to help students develop effective study skills and utilize effective strategies. A computer lab, study groups, and exam review sessions are also available.

#### **Writing Center:** Atrium 128, 720-2633

The Writing Center provides one-on-one tutoring for any WPU student working on any kind of writing in any stage of development. We work with students on writing issues such as outlining, thesis clarification, organization, style, transitions, citing, and grammar, and we help them learn how to edit and proofread their own writing. Students can make an appointment at <https://wpunj.mywconline.com>, or stop by Atrium 128 or VR 3048.

**Office of Veteran's and Military Affairs:** Speert Hall 118, 720-3660

The Office provides support to veterans, active duty service members and their families by administering services that assist with the transition from military service member to college student.

**Counseling, Health & Wellness Center:** Overlook South, 720-2257/2360

The Center provides free primary health care, personal counseling, health education, and prevention services to students.

**The Women's Center:** Student Center Room 313, 720-2578

The Women's Center works to expand the understanding of gender issues, empower students to explore options in their lives, and motivate the campus community toward greater involvement in these issues as leaders, allies, and agents of change. The Center's LGBTQ Programs facilitate the social, psychological, and academic growth of LGBTQ students.