

## **SOC323: Sociological Research Methods**

Spring, 2009

Clifford L. Staples, Ph.D.

Class: TuTh 12:30-1:45, Gillette 101

Office Hours: MW 11:00-3:00 and by appt.

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### **Required Text:**

*The Practice of Social Research 11/e Earl Babbie*. ISBN: 0-495-09325-4

### **Overview:**

The purpose of sociology is to describe, explain, and understand how the social world works. Sociologists develop these descriptions, explanations, and understandings of the social world by investigating it using a variety of research methods, or procedures. This class is an introduction to these research methods. While in most other sociology classes one reads about sociology and the people who have practiced it, in this class we learn how to do sociology. While there is a wide variety of research methods used by sociologists, given this is an introductory class we will focus on the most commonly used methods. By successfully completing this course you should be somewhat familiar with the most popular research methods sociologists use; be prepared to develop these skills on your own; be ready to explore a wider variety of research methods; and take more advanced or specialized courses in data collection and analysis.

### **Requirements:**

*Homework (60%)* You will have to complete a number of assignments outside of class—many of which we will start in class. If you miss class without a good excuse (notify me ahead of time via e-mail) then you won't be getting any help from me on the assignment; instead you will have to rely on a fellow student.

*Exams. (40%)* There are two exams. The exams will consist of a mixture of objective questions, essays, and problems. I will put the objective questions on Blackboard and you will have a few days to complete that portion of the exams on line. The essay/problem portion of the exams will be written in class March 5<sup>th</sup> and May 12<sup>th</sup>. You may use any notes that you have written (or typed) for the in-class portion of the exams, but you may not use the textbook or handouts or anything that you have not written. So be sure to take notes on separate sheets of paper if you plan to use them for the exams.

**Class Organization**

Class meetings will involve lectures, demonstrations, practice, exercises, and activities. I will keep you informed about reading assignments and course activities via e-mail and/or via Blackboard.

**Reminders and Policies**

My office hours are listed above. Unless there is some sort of emergency or meeting I have to attend during those hours I will be there to see students, first come, first served. You are also free to drop in to see me whenever I am in my office. If you want to make an appointment to see me at a specific time, in or out of office hours, we can do that too. The best way to get hold of me and get a quick response is via e-mail (address above). Leaving messages on my voice mail is probably not a good idea. If you attend class, be sure to (a) come on time and (b) turn off your cell phone (c) come prepared to both speak and listen. If you have any sort of learning disabilities that I should be aware of, please let me know ASAP. If you are having any trouble with the class, or if you have any personal problems with anything I or anyone else in the class has done or is doing that disturbs you or impedes your learning in any way, university policy states that you come and talk to me about it first. If, however, you feel you can't approach me, or you have and still feel troubled, your next step should be to see Professor Kathleen Tiemann, Chairperson of the Department of Sociology.