

SOC690 – Quantitative Methods

Spring 2015, Mondays 6-845 pm @ SH391

Ellis Godard – egodard@csun.edu – x4050

www.csun.edu/~egodard/690 & Moodle

Goals of the Course:

This course will provide...

- the necessary academic background for graduate-level research
- intermediate training in the practice of research design, writing, and implementation
- fulfillment of 3 units of the M.A. core requirements in methods
- the skills necessary to complete the quantitative portion of the comprehensive methods exam
- familiarity (in conjunction w/ SOC 691) with the steps needed to complete a thesis

Required Texts:

- There is but one required text, H. Russell Bernard's *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. This is a great introduction to methods of research, particularly as they are used in the social sciences. We will draw primarily from the quantitative oriented material in the text, but the qualitative sections will get some attention as well, and will be a useful resource in other classes and beyond.
- Students are expected to do the readings in advance – important in any class, but critical for a methodology course. Some lectures won't make any sense if you don't do the readings in advance!

Course Requirements:

A full schedule of readings and assignments will be available via a Moodle course site. (For the second meeting, you should have read and reviewed chapter 1 of the text.)

To complete this course satisfactorily, you must do the following:

- Reading Notes:** You may or may not already be in the habit of taking "reading notes" for the material you read in graduate school, a practice you should be in (or get in) for every reading in every class. These should be as long and/or as complete as you need to help you summarize and remember the material. Bring them to class, beginning with the 3rd meeting. They will not be submitted and will be ungraded, but will assist you in learning and retaining the material.
- Attend and participate (10%):** These are necessary parts of any course, particularly a graduate seminar, and are crucial for your development, whether as a scholar or practitioner. Attendance will be taken by the instructor, by sight or submissions.
 - Your attendance grade will be the percentage of the classes you attend, and will count for 5% of your overall grade. Note that we will not meet Tuesday May 6th (poster sessions), and that the session on Tuesday May 8th will be abbreviated (6-7pm) to permit time for student conferences.
 - An additional 5% will, by the instructor's discretion, assess each student's participation in the course. In order to encourage and generate participation, there will be a set of Discussion Questions related to most class meetings. Although these are not graded, you are expected to prepare answers to at least two questions from each set, and to be prepared to talk about (*not just read*) your reactions during lecture.

- **Final Paper, Research Poster, and Presentation (40%):** By the end of the term, you should submit two items that summarize a research project, and that would be viable for submission to a professional conference.
 - One of these will be a final paper, complete with all of the sections that you would normally see in a journal article. This paper, which will count for 25% of your grade, should be *no more than 20 pages*, including all tables and appendices, should be proofread and properly cited, and should indicate throughout how the work contributes to a particular theoretical, empirical, and/or methodological area.
 - The other will be a poster presentation that you will display and conduct at a department event near the end of the semester (tentatively May 4, 6-8pm) which will count 10% of your grade.
 - Finally, you will present and summarize your research to the class during the last class meeting, in a 10-15 minute presentation, including questions and comments from the instructor and other students, for 5% of your grade.
- **Research Abstracts (10%):** You will submit two double-spaced abstracts of approximately four pages each, critically reviewing a published work of research related to your topic. These will be discussed and assigned during the second class meeting. Lecture time may be allotted for (ungraded) presentations of these abstracts; you should be prepared to orally summarize the methods, data, and findings, and then respond to questions and comments from the class and instructor. Each abstract will comprise 5% of your overall grade, for 10% total.
- **Homework Assignments (30%):** There will be a series of short-ish assignments designed to help you build your final paper and research poster, by reviewing statistical procedures, methodological options, and related choices and materials. These build from the research abstracts noted above, and will include a statement of your topic, a literature review, a statement of your hypotheses, and drafts of your methods section, analysis section, and paper *in toto*. Most will relate directly to your project; others will be brush-ups on potentially relevant skills. All are noted in and available through the Moodle site. Grading for each varies, and will be explained with each assignment.
- **Final Exam (10%):** There will be an online, open-book/open-note, multiple-choice final exam to reviews basics from the course, with particular attention to issues and elements that you may encounter on the methods comprehensive exam, for 10% of your grade. Due at 10pm 5/13/14.

Except where noted otherwise, each of these is an *individual* assignment. Any team work on assignments not specifically assigned *as* a team or class assignment will result in a zero for that assignment.

General Administrative Requirements

Standard guidelines that apply to all of my courses are detailed in a separate document online at www.csun.edu/~egodard/sop.html. You are expected to review these materials, and to promptly alert me to any questions or concerns about them, as well as any special circumstances that may apply to you (including but not limited to disabilities, schedule conflicts, and religious holidays.) You will need to acknowledge that you have reviewed and accepted them via an intake form which you must complete by the 2nd meeting.