

SOC 301: Sociological Research Methods

Fall 2009, T-Th 1:30-2:20, 46 McCosh Hall

Professor: Scott M. Lynch

Office: 159 Wallace Hall (Hours: T-Th 2:30-3:30 pm, or by appt.)

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Objectives

This course is the second course in the SOC 300-SOC 301 sequence. The overall goal of the sequence is to help you in the process of developing an acceptable senior thesis that follows a standard scientific research format. SOC 300 introduces you to the process of constructing an answerable sociological research question that is grounded in substantive theory, writing a literature review to situate your research in a broader body of literature and theory and justify your choice of question, and developing a basic analysis plan for answering the question. SOC 301 is geared toward teaching you how to conduct the analysis using statistics. In other words, SOC 301 is an applied statistics course.

Format and Requirements

This course has two components: the lecture and the precept. The lecture will involve introducing statistical concepts and developing statistical methods, while the precept will involve the application of these concepts to real data by hand and by using statistical software (specifically, Stata and MS Excel). Precept attendance is mandatory and constitutes part of your grade (see below). Once you have been assigned to a particular precept, switching precepts—permanently or temporarily—will not be allowed without prior approval.

A collection of notes for the course is available on my website in book format. You should print a copy of these notes and bring them to class; lecture will follow the structure of the notes. In addition to the notes, there are two books suggested for the course. Coolidge can be considered a supplement to the notes. Hamilton will serve as a reference book for the precept and for your own work outside of class involving Stata.

Books (available from amazon.com)

Coolidge, Frederick L. (2002). *Statistics: A Gentle Introduction*. London: Sage.

Hamilton, Lawrence C. (2003). *Statistics with STATA*. Belmont, CA: Duxbury. [note: either version 7 or 8 is fine]

Grades

Grades will be determined by attendance and participation in precept exercises and your performance on four exams (a mid-term, a final, and two others). Your final grade will follow a typical, 10-point A-F format. See the table below for grade allocation and cut-points:

Item	Grade Allocation		Cut-points for Final Grades	
		% of grade	Final Grade	%-Point Range
Precept		10%	A+	100
Test 1		10%	A	92-99
Midterm (Test 2)		30%	A-	90-91
Test 3		15%	B+	88-89
Final (Test 4)		35%	B	82-87
			B-	80-81
			C+	78-79
			C	72-77
			C-	70-71
			D	60-69
			F	0-59

Homework will be provided and will be discussed in precept, but it will not be graded. The purpose of the homework is to give you practice in working through the type of questions that will be on the exams. It is up to you to do it and ask questions in precept and/or class when they arise.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
Sep 17	Overview of course. The research process	Notes C1
Sep 22	Types of Data and their Acquisition	Notes C2
Sep 24	Continued	
Sep 29	Statistics and summarizing data	Notes C3; Book C1-3
Oct 1	Continued	
Oct 6	Test 1	
Oct 8	Probability Theory	Notes C4; Book C4
Oct 13	The Central Limit Theorem	Book C4-5
Oct 15	Continued	
Oct 20	One sample z and t tests	Notes C5 (1st half)
Oct 22	Continued	
Oct 27	Review for Midterm	
Oct 29	Mid-Term (Test 2)	
Nov 3	Fall Break (no class)	
Nov 5	Fall Break (no class)	
Nov 10	Confidence Intervals	Notes C5 (2nd half)
Nov 12	Additional z and t tests	
Nov 17	Chi-Square	Notes C6; Book C14
Nov 19	Analysis of Variance	Notes C7; Book C9
Nov 24	continued	
Nov 26	Thanksgiving Holiday (no class)	
Dec 1	Correlation and Simple Linear Regression	Notes C8; Book C6
Dec 3	Test 3	
Dec 8	Multiple Regression	Notes C9
Dec 10	Multiple Regression	
Dec 15	Multiple Regression	
Dec 17	Making Figures and Tables	Notes C10