

**SOCIAL SCIENCE 470/570:
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH METHODS
COURSE SYLLABUS**

Meeting Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:40–2:55 p.m.
Meeting Place: Kethley Hall 204

Instructor: Dr. Alan Barton **Telephone:** 846-4097
Office: 201A Kethley Hall **E-mail:** abarton@deltastate.edu

Office Hours: The professor holds regular office hours at the following times:

Mon., Wed., Fri.: 9:00 – 10:00 and 11:00 – 12:00
Tue., Thu.: 1:00 – 1:30 and 3:00 – 4:00

If you cannot make one of these times, contact the professor to set up an appointment.

Course Website:

Additional and updated information on the course can be found on the course website:

http://ntweb.deltastate.edu/vp_academic/abarton/SSC470/SSC470Syllabus.htm

Course Overview:

The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with the logic of social science inquiry, strategies of research design, and a variety of research methods. We will compare quantitative and qualitative approaches to social science research in terms of their epistemologies, their research design strategies, and the tools they offer for carrying out social science research. Students engage the course material through readings, lectures, class discussions and activities, quizzes and writing assignments. In addition, students will collaborate with classmates to develop a research proposal, incorporating a logical design that addresses a specific research question.

Readings:

Neuman, W. Lawrence. 2003. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Fifth Edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Articles as assigned.

The textbook is available at the University Bookstore. Students should purchase this book, or otherwise make arrangements to access the course readings.

SSC 470 vs. SSC 570

Students can take this course for undergraduate (SSC 470) or graduate (SSC 570) credit. Students registered for graduate credit must complete a 10-page paper, not required of students registered for undergraduate credit. In addition, students registered for graduate credit will take quizzes and a final exam that are more challenging and that have more questions than the undergraduate versions.

Assignments and Grading:

All students must complete all of the following assignments:

- (1) Attendance and Class Participation
Students are expected to attend class regularly and participate actively in class discussions. Students should come to each session having already read and thought about the assigned material, with questions and points to discuss.
- (2) Quizzes
Five in-class quizzes will be given, designed to take 20-30 minutes to complete. The quizzes will consist of short answer questions (e.g. true/false, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, matching, etc.). The first quiz covers material presented since the beginning of the course, and subsequent quizzes cover material presented since the previous quiz. All students must take all of the quizzes.
- (3) Writing Assignments
Two in-class writing assignments will be given. Students will be given a topic and asked to write a 2-3 page essay on the topic during the class period. All students must complete both assignments.
- (4) Research Proposal and Presentation
Students will pair up with a classmate to complete a project throughout the semester. Each group will prepare a 12-page research proposal, due the last day of classes. In addition, both group members will prepare and give a final presentation to the entire class on their project during the last week of the semester. Both group members will receive the same grade on the proposal; however, each student will receive an individual grade on the final presentation.
- (5) Final Exam
A final exam is given at the regularly scheduled time. The exam will include short answer questions (as in the quizzes) and essay questions.
- (6) Paper (Graduate Students Only)
Students taking the course for graduate credit (SSC 570) must complete a 10-page analytical paper in which you critique the methodological approach of 4 scientific articles.
- (7) Discretionary
The instructor will evaluate each student's performance based on factors such as the motivation, interest, and improvement the student demonstrates.

Assignment	SSC 470	SSC 570
Attendance/Class Participation	10	10
Quizzes (5 points each)	25	25
Writing Assignments (5 points each)	10	10
Research Proposal and Presentation	25	25
Final Exam	20	10
Paper	N/A	15
Discretionary	10	5
Total	100	100

There are a total of 100 points available for the semester. Students that accumulate 90 or more points will get an "A," students with 80 to 89 points will get a "B," 70 to 79 points will get a "C," 60 to 69 points will get a "D," and less than 60 points will get an "F." Note that you start with zero and earn points; you do not start with 100 and lose points.

Students that comply with all course requirements and submit all of the assignments satisfactorily and on time can expect a "C" in this course. To receive a higher grade, students must go beyond the minimum requirements, demonstrating a superior grasp of course material and an ability to apply the material in productive ways, an interest in the course material and in learning, and an achievement-based orientation.

Additional Course Policies:

- (1) Students are **responsible** for learning the course material and for their progress in the course
 - Students are expected to **attend class regularly** and **complete all of the assignments**.
 - Students are expected to know **all** material presented during class sessions, whether the student attended the class or not. Students that miss a class session should check with another student to see what they missed.
 - “I didn’t know” is **NEVER** a valid excuse. If you don’t know something, it is your job to find out.
- (2) Missed assignments **cannot** be made up
 - It is assumed that if a student misses class or an assignment for anything other than documented illness or emergency, he/she is making a choice that prioritizes other activities above the class. For this reason, no work can be made up unless the reason for the absence or missed assignment is documented.
 - Assignments are due at the time specified; **no late assignments will be accepted** without a valid, written excuse from a doctor or previous arrangement with the instructor.
 - Illnesses and emergencies pertain only to the student, not to the student’s family, friends or others.
 - If a student must miss class or an assignment for something other than illness or an emergency, the student should make arrangements with the instructor **BEFORE** the missed class or assignment; any arrangements after the event will require documentation with no exceptions.
 - Appropriate accommodations will be made for students with medical problems or diagnosed disabilities. Have Dr. Richard Houston at the Reily Health Center (846-4690) contact the course instructor to make arrangements.
- (3) Class **discussion** is an important element in this course
 - The purpose of the discussion is to provide students with an opportunity to practice thinking skills in a safe environment.
 - In discussions, students are encouraged to explore ideas presented in the readings and lectures, to think about and apply concepts, and to develop arguments and evaluate evidence.
 - Students must demonstrate **appropriate respect** the opinions and ideas of other students. Students that repeatedly show disrespect for other students will be asked to leave the classroom.
 - Class discussions are **NOT** a time for students to chat with each other about topics not related to the course. Talking privately with other students while the rest of the class is trying to carry on a discussion is disruptive, bothersome, and disrespectful to other students and to the professor. Students that repeatedly talk out of turn will be asked to leave the classroom.
 - It is acceptable (and encouraged) to disagree with the perspectives of other students, but students should phrase this to show disagreement with the idea or opinion, not with the person presenting the idea or opinion.
 - Please make sure that all pagers, cell phones, etc. are **turned off** during class time. Students whose phones or pagers repeatedly interrupt class will be asked to leave the classroom.
 - Students asked to leave the classroom for disruptive or disrespectful behavior **cannot** make up any work they miss as a result.
- (4) Students are expected to **comply with all academic standards and ethics** as defined in the DSU Bulletin and Handbook
 - Students are expected to do their own work in this course. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will **NOT** be tolerated.
 - If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, use the link on the course web page. If it is still unclear, see the instructor. **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO UNDERSTAND THESE GUIDELINES.** If at some point in the semester you are suspected of committing plagiarism, pleas of “I didn’t know what plagiarism was” will not be accepted.
 - The sanctions for plagiarism are outlined on the web page. Make sure you are aware of these **BEFORE** you submit any work in this class.

Course Outline:

Week	Day/ Date	Topic	Assignment	Reading
Course Introduction				
1	Tue. 8/19	Introduction		
	Thu. 8/21	Why Conduct Social Research?		Neuman, Ch. 1
2	Tue. 8/26	Overview of the Research Process		Neuman, Ch. 2
	Thu. 8/28	Data: What Is It? How Do We Get It?		
3	Tue. 9/2	The Role of Theory in Social Research		Neuman, Ch. 3
	Thu. 9/4	Quiz No. 1 Introduction to the Group Project	QUIZ 1	
4	Tue. 9/9	Epistemologies and Research Strategies		Neuman, Ch. 4
	Thu. 9/11	Guest Speaker		
5	Tue. 9/16	Beginning Social Research: The Literature Review		Neuman, Ch. 5
	Thu. 9/18	Developing a Research Question		
6	Tue. 9/23	Designing a Study: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches		Neuman, Ch. 6
	Thu. 9/25	Quiz No. 2 Group Project	QUIZ 2	
Quantitative Research Design				
7	Tue. 9/30	Measurement in Social Research		Neuman, Ch. 7
	Thu. 10/2	Choosing Subjects and Sampling		Neuman, Ch. 8
8	Tue. 10/7	Writing Assignment No. 1	WRITING 1	
	Thu. 10/9	Experimental Design Strategies		Neuman, Ch. 9
9	Tue. 10/14	Surveys and Data Collection		Neuman, Ch. 10
	Thu. 10/16	Quiz No. 3 Group Project	QUIZ 3	
10	Tue. 10/21	Using Secondary Data		Neuman, Ch. 11
	Thu. 10/23	FALL BREAK		
11	Tue. 10/28	Quantitative Analysis		Neuman, Ch. 12
	Thu. 10/30	Summary of Quantitative Approaches		

Week	Day/ Date	Topic	Assignment	Reading
Qualitative Research Design				
12	Tue. 11/4	Field Research		Neuman, Ch. 13
	Thu. 11/6	Quiz No. 4 Group Project	QUIZ 4	
13	Tue. 11/11	Historical and Comparative Research		Neuman, Ch. 14
	Thu. 11/13	Writing Assignment No. 2	WRITING 2	
14	Tue. 11/18	Qualitative Analysis and Summary of Qualitative Approaches		Neuman, Ch. 15
	Thu. 11/20	Presenting Research Results		Neuman, Ch. 16
15	Tue. 11/25	Quiz No. 5 Group Project	QUIZ 5	
	Thu. 11/27	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY		
Dead Week				
16	Tue. 12/2	Presentation of Group Projects	GRAD PAPERS DUE	
	Thu. 12/4	Presentation of Group Projects	PROPOSAL DUE	
Final Exam				
	Thu. 12/11	Final Exam, 3:00 – 6:00 pm	FINAL EXAM	