

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

Meeting Time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30–3:45 p.m.
Meeting Place: Kethley Hall 206

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

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

Mondays 1:00–2:30 pm, Wednesdays 1:15–2:30 pm and 3:45–6:00 pm

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 you 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. You will engage the course material through readings, lectures, class discussions and activities, quizzes and writing assignments. In addition, you will collaborate with classmates to develop a research proposal, incorporating a logical design that addresses a specific research question.

Readings:

Neuman, W. Lawrence. 2004. *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Boston: Pearson Education Inc.

Articles as assigned.

The textbook is available at the university bookstore. You 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 research 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:

There are a total of 100 points available for the semester. Your final score is simply the sum of all points earned over the semester. If you accumulate 90 or more points over the course of the semester, you will get an "A" in the course. If you accumulate 80 to 89 points, you will get a "B," for 70 to 79 points you will get a "C," and for 60 to 69 points will get a "D." If you get less than 60 points, your final grade will be an "F." Note that you start with zero and earn points; you do not start with 100 and lose points.

If you comply with all course requirements and submit all of the assignments satisfactorily and on time, you can expect a "C" in this course. To receive a higher grade, you must demonstrate a superior grasp of course material and an ability to apply the material in productive ways. It is also helpful to show an interest in the course material and in learning, and an achievement-based orientation.

Assignments and Grading, SSC 470:

You must complete the following assignments:

- (1) Attendance and Class Participation (15 points)
You are expected to attend class regularly and participate actively in class discussions. You should come to each session having already read and thought about the assigned material, with questions and points to discuss.
- (2) Quizzes (15 points)
Four 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. The quizzes are worth 5 points each. The lowest grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.
- (3) Writing Assignments (10 points)
Three in-class writing assignments will be given. You will be given a topic and asked to write a 2-3 page essay on the topic during the class period. Each essay is worth 5 points. The lowest grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.
- (4) Research Proposal (15 points)
You 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. Both group members will receive the same grade on the proposal.
- (5) Presentation of Research Proposal (10 points)
With your group partner, you will prepare and give a final presentation to the entire class on your project at the end of the semester. The presentation is as a group, but each member will receive an individual grade on the final presentation.
- (6) In-Class Work (10 points)
Assignments pertaining to the final project are assigned throughout the semester. You will be asked to hand in a research topic (1 point), an annotated bibliography (3 points), a concise research question (1 point), a summary of your methodological approach (3 points), and a critique of another group's approach (2 points).
- (7) Final Exam (15 points)
A final exam is given at the regularly scheduled time. The exam will include short answer questions (as in the quizzes) and essay questions.
- (8) Discretionary (10 points)
The instructor will evaluate each student's performance based on factors such as the motivation, interest, and improvement the student demonstrates.

See the course website for links that will help you complete these assignments.

Assignments and Grading, SSC 570:

You must complete the following assignments:

- (1) Attendance and Class Participation (10 points)
You are expected to attend class regularly and participate actively in class discussions. Bring questions and points to discuss on the readings to class.
- (2) Quizzes (15 points)
Four in-class quizzes will be given, consisting 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. The quizzes are worth 5 points each; the lowest grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.
- (3) Writing Assignments (10 points)
Three in-class writing assignments will be given. You will be given a topic and asked to write a 2-3 page essay on the topic during the class period. Each essay is worth 5 points; the lowest grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.
- (4) Research Proposal (15 points)
You will pair up with a classmate to prepare a 12-page research proposal, due the last day of classes. Both group members will receive the same grade on the proposal.
- (5) Presentation of Research Proposal (10 points)
With your group partner, you will prepare and give a final presentation to the entire class on your project at the end of the semester. The presentation is as a group, but each member will receive an individual grade on the final presentation.
- (6) In-Class Work (10 points)
Assignments pertaining to the final project are assigned throughout the semester, including a research topic, an annotated bibliography, a research question, a summary of your methodological approach, and a critique of another group's approach.
- (7) Research Paper (10 points)
You will research and prepare a 10-page analytical paper in which you critique the methodological approaches of four research articles.
- (8) Final Exam (10 points)
A final exam is given at the regularly scheduled time. The exam will include short answer questions (as in the quizzes) and essay questions.
- (9) Discretionary (10 points)
The instructor will evaluate each student's performance based on factors such as the motivation, interest, and improvement the student demonstrates.

See the course website for links that will help you complete these assignments.

Summary of Grading:

Assignment	SSC 470	SSC 570
Attendance/Class Participation	15	10
Quizzes	15	15
Writing Assignments	10	10
Research Proposal	15	15
Presentation on Proposal	10	10
In-Class Work	10	10
Final Exam	15	10
Research Paper	N/A	10
Discretionary	10	10
Total	100	100

Additional Course Policies:

- (1) **YOU are responsible** for learning the course material and for your progress in the course
 - You are expected to **attend class regularly** and **complete all of the assignments**.
 - You are expected to know **all** material presented during class sessions, whether you attended the class or not. If you miss a class session, you should check with another student to see what you 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 you miss class or an assignment, you are making a choice that prioritizes other activities above the class. For this reason, none of the assignments or coursework can be made up.
 - Assignments are due at the time specified; **no late assignments will be accepted**.
 - If you miss a quiz or writing assignment, you will receive a grade of zero for that assignment. In the first instance, this will count as your lowest grade and will be dropped. Subsequent instances will be scored as zero.
 - If you must miss a presentation or other in-class activity, it is up to you to arrange to trade with another student before the event. Please notify the instructor of such changes.

- (3) Illnesses and emergencies **MUST** be documented
 - If you must miss a class due to illness or another personal emergency, notify the instructor **BEFORE** the missed class period either by e-mail or telephone.
 - If you cannot notify the instructor in advance, bring a note from a doctor or other professional to the next class meeting.
 - Illnesses and emergencies pertain **only** to the student, not to the student’s family, friends or others.
 - If you must miss class for an official university activity, you should make arrangements with the instructor **BEFORE** the missed class. Appropriate documentation is required.
 - Notified absences (i.e. you notify the instructor before the event) count as one-half absence. Excused absences (i.e. you bring a note from a doctor or other professional) will not count against you for the first two; after that, each excused absence counts as one-half absence.
 - You are responsible for all material presented in the class, even during an excused absence. You should get class notes from another student for all class sessions you miss.
 - It is in your interest to provide the instructor with **written** notification (e.g. note or e-mail) or documentation for any missed class. It is risky to simply tell the instructor and expect him to remember.

- (4) 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.

- (5) Class **discussion** is an important element in this course
 - The purpose of the discussion is to provide you with an opportunity to practice thinking skills in a safe environment.
 - In discussions, you are encouraged to explore ideas presented in the readings and lectures, to think about and apply concepts, and to develop arguments and evaluate evidence.
 - You must demonstrate **appropriate respect** the opinions and ideas of other students. If you repeatedly show disrespect for other students, you will be asked to leave the classroom.
 - Class discussions are **NOT** a time to chat with other students 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. If you repeatedly talk out of turn, you will be asked to leave the classroom.

- It is acceptable (and encouraged) to disagree with the perspectives of other students, but you 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. If your phone or pager repeatedly interrupts class, you will be asked to leave the classroom.
 - Any work missed by a student that was asked to leave the classroom **cannot** be made up under any circumstances.
- (6) You are expected to **comply with all academic standards and ethics** as defined in the DSU Bulletin and Handbook
- You are expected to do their own work in this course. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will **NOT** be tolerated.
 - See the course web page if you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism. 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	Mon. 1/12	Registration		
	Wed. 1/14	Introduction: Why Conduct Social Research?		
2	Mon. 1/19	M.L. KING HOLIDAY		
	Wed. 1/21	Overview of the Research Process; Data: What Is It? How Do We Get It?		Neuman, Ch. 1
3	Mon. 1/26	The Role of Theory in Social Research		Neuman, Ch. 2
	Wed. 1/28	Reading a Journal Article		TBA
4	Mon. 2/2	Beginning Social Research: The Literature Review		Neuman, Ch. 4
	Wed. 2/4	Quiz No. 1 Introduction to the Group Project	QUIZ 1	
5	Mon. 2/9	Capturing Social Phenomena: Measurement in Social Research		Neuman, Ch. 5
	Wed. 2/11	Designing a Study and Developing a Research Question		
6	Mon. 2/16	Choosing Subjects and Sampling	RESEARCH TOPIC	Neuman, Ch. 6
	Wed. 2/18	Writing Assignment No. 1	WRITING 1	
Quantitative Research Design				
7	Mon. 2/23	Collecting Quantitative Data		Neuman, Ch. 7
	Wed. 2/25	Conducting Surveys	ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY	
8	Mon. 3/1	Quiz No. 2 Group Projects	QUIZ 2	Neuman, Ch. 8
	Wed. 3/3	Experimental Design Strategies		
9	Mon. 3/8	Gathering and Using Secondary Data		Neuman, Ch. 9
	Wed. 3/10	Quantitative Case Study	RESEARCH QUESTION	TBA
SPRING HOLIDAYS, MARCH 15–19				

Week	Day/ Date	Topic	Assignment	Reading
10	Mon. 3/22	Quantitative Analysis		Neuman, Ch. 10
	Wed. 3/24	Writing Assignment No. 2	WRITING 2	
Qualitative Research Design				
11	Mon. 3/29	Collecting Qualitative Data		Neuman, Ch. 11
	Wed. 3/31	Field Research Quiz No. 3	QUIZ 3	
12	Mon. 4/5	Historical and Comparative Research		Neuman, Ch. 12
	Wed. 4/7	Constructing a Table		
13	Mon. 4/12	Qualitative Analysis	METHODO- LOGICAL APPROACH	Neuman, Ch. 13
	Wed. 4/14	Writing Assignment No. 3	WRITING 3	
14	Mon. 4/19	Presenting Research Results	CRITIQUE	Neuman, Ch. 14
	Wed. 4/21	Qualitative Case Study		TBA
15	Mon. 4/26	Quiz No. 4	QUIZ 4	Neuman, Ch. 3
	Wed. 4/28	Course Evaluation; Presentation of Group Projects		
Dead Week				
16	Mon. 5/3	Presentation of Group Projects	GRAD PAPERS DUE	
	Wed. 5/5	Presentation of Group Projects	PROPOSAL DUE	
Final Exam				
	Wed. 5/12	Final Exam, 12:00 – 3:00 pm	FINAL EXAM	