COURSE OBJECTIVES

The principal objective of this course is to provide sociology seniors an opportunity to apply their training in sociological theories and methods to substantive areas and/or issues in the discipline. A secondary objective is to get same students to begin to think more actively about, and prepare for, post-graduation job interviews and/or graduate school admissions. Achievement of these objectives will be determined by the quality of individual research projects and professional resumes written and presented to the sociology faculty members (Drs. I. Araiza, B. Benibo, P. Meyer and M. Ramirez).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Develop an appropriate and answerable research question.
- Formulate a clear statement of problem.
- Review relevant literature.
- Identify and utilize a defensible research methodology.
- Determine and collect appropriate data.
- Analyze and interpret research data.
- Relate research findings to extant theories.
- Present research findings in professional settings.
- Write a potentially successful resume.

COURSE FORMAT

This course is structured as a seminar. This means that class meetings will involve mostly active discussions among students and between students and all four sociology faculty members in the program. Class attendance and participation are, therefore, very important as is being prepared for each class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. The main requirement for this course is a research paper worthy of acceptance for presentation at an undergraduate session of a major conference in the discipline. Papers must be at least 5000 words, not including title page, abstract, tables, graphs, footnotes and references. Research papers can be quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative research involves the
collection or accessing of primary or secondary numerical data respectively and subjecting such data to statistical analysis. Qualitative research, on the other hand, requires interpretation of written texts, audio, video and/or in-depth interview data collected and/or transcribed in prose. Regardless of the type of research chosen, students are still required to follow traditional procedures of problem formulation, literature review, hypothesis generation, analysis of data, etc.

2. Students are expected to meet deadlines as outlined in the course schedule. This includes (but not limited to) the different stages of the research projects, drafts and final copies of professional resume and other written assignments.

3. Final oral presentation of the research project is a formal affair. This means strict compliance to the 15 minutes allocated for each presentation, using appropriate visual aids such as power-points, a very formal use of the English language and a professional demeanor and appearance.

4. Students are also expected to take the GRE Major field test at the scheduled times and place. This test serves at least two purposes. First, it enables faculty to assess the extent to which students from this program compare to other sociology majors in the U.S. in terms of the various areas of testing. Second, it provides useful information for graduate school application, especially for those who are considering advanced degrees in the discipline.

5. Frivolous cancellations of, or unexcused no-shows to scheduled meetings with faculty advisors will result in the deduction of 3 points from the final grade for each infraction.

6. Class attendance and participation are required. Unless for validly supported medical and/or family emergencies, absence from class will also result in a 3-point deduction for every scheduled class missed.

7. Assignments must be submitted electronically on blackboard. Every submission must have the title of research paper as well as the first and last names of the student.
COURSE GRADE

Your final grade for this course will be determined as follows:

- Research Project..............................45%
- Oral Presentation.............................25%
- Professional Resume...........................10%
- Attendance and Participation..................15%
- GRE Major Field Test.......................... 5%
- Total....................................... 100%

The grading Scheme for this course is as follows:
- 90% and above   - A
- 80-89%          - B
- 70-79%          - C
- 60-69%          - D
- <60%            - F

Each of the four members of the sociology faculty will independently assess each student's performances in the five areas stated above. Each student's grade for the course will be an average of the total of all four grades given by the sociology faculty. An acceptance of a student's research project, for example, by his/her advisor does not necessarily mean, therefore, an "A". It does means, however, that a grade no less than a "C" is due the student. This will be true also for all other criteria of evaluation. Please note that your actual GRE scores are not factored into your course grades. Anyone who takes the test automatically earns the 5% points assigned to this criterion of evaluation.

COURSE OUTLINE

Jan. 29   Introduction and Overview

Feb. 05   - Class discussion on assigned readings:
          "The Promise of Sociology" - C. Wright-Mills
          "Impact of Social Structure ..." - John Zipp
          "Spankers and Non-Spankers"... Wendy Walsh
          "Neither Real Americans nor ..." Mia Tuan

          - Ideas for Research Papers
          - Assignment of Students to Faculty Advisors

Feb. 12   - Statement of Problem and Review of Literature

          - Students to meet with advisors to streamline their research topics.
Feb. 19  - Panel of former students.
- First draft of Literature Review due
- Research Methodology

Feb. 26  - Writing Resume and Interviewing -Guest lecturers
(one hour)
- Faculty feedbacks on first drafts of Literature Review
- First draft of Methodology, including data collection instrument, where applicable

Feb. 18  - Faculty feedbacks on first drafts of Methodology
- First Drafts of Professional Resume

Mar. 05  - Submission of data collection Instrument to IRB for review.

Mar. 12  - Spring Break

Mar. 19  No Class Meeting
Students to meet with advisors on data collection and/or access problems and concerns

Mar. 26  - Faculty final feedback on Methodology
- Faculty feedback on professional resume

Mar. 26  - First Major Field Test.
Please sign UP at the Academic Advising Office
(Room 214 Round Building)
Call 825-2334 to finalize date and time that you can take the test.

Apr. 02  No class meeting
- students to meet with faculty advisors on data organization, analysis and interpretation.

Apr. 09  - Presentation of and feedback on data organization/
analyses and Interpretation (first 12 students.)

Apr. 09/10 - Second and Final Major Field Tests.
Please sign UP at the Academic Advising Office
(Room 214 Round Building)
Call 825-2334 to finalize date and time that you can take the test.
Apr. 16 - Presentation of and feedback on data organization/analyses and Interpretation (second 12 students).
- Ballot on order of presentation.

Apr. 23  No class meeting
- Students to meet with advisors on review of power Point presentation

Apr. 30  - Presentation (Group 1)

May 07 - Presentation (Group 2)
- Final Paper Due

Students with Disabilities
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, at 825-5816 for further instruction and/or guidance.

Academic Advising
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Additionally, students are encouraged to speak to the instructor before dropping the class.

Grade Appeal Process
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he/she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2 Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeals Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING RESEARCH PROJECTS
A: CONTENT

1. **An appropriate topic** (5-points): The topic of your research project is appropriate if it is consistent with the central concerns of the discipline. Where appropriateness is not obvious, it is the responsibility of the student to demonstrate that his/her topic is appropriate. Feasibility and scope must be taken into account. Conferring with your advisor before deciding on your topic is very strongly recommended.

2. **A clearly formulated statement of problem** (15-points). A clear statement of problem should include a purpose (or logically connected purposes), definitions of essential terminologies, and rationalizations of the significance of the issue(s) addressed.

3. **A critical review of relevant literature** (15-points). A good review of the literature should include, not just the conclusions of the studies cited, but an assessment of evidence of their claims. Avoid non-empirically based assertions, and be sure to distinguish between evaluative and factual conclusions. A good review will also concentrate on more recent (2005-2010) studies on the topic. (Journal articles are recommended for review because they are concise, and usually, more current.)

5. **A defensible research methodology** (15 points). This should include the selection of a design that permits an adequate answer of the research question. For example, any study of change should use a longitudinal design. A defensible research methodology should also employ an appropriate and feasible data collection technique. The validity and reliability of such a technique should be carefully considered in terms of variables of interest. A major requirement here is that the methodology is not only clearly described, but that it is logically related to the research problem.

6. **A thoughtful analysis and interpretation of data** (20 points). The choice of analytical techniques must be guided by the nature of the research question and type of data (quantitative or qualitative) collected. Interpretations of results must comply with the standards established in the discipline regarding knowledge claims. Interpretations must not violate the assumptions of the statistical technique used, for example.

4. **A Meaningful conclusion** (10 points). Your conclusion(s)
should derive from your analysis and/or review of the literature. A thoughtful conclusion must also attempt a theoretical understanding of the findings. Finally, there should be suggestions for further research based on some recognized limitations of one’s research.

B. TECHNICAL:
1. Organization: (5-points) Term paper must be well organized. Sub-headings are helpful here.

2. Spelling, grammar etc.: (5-points) Incorrect spelling and poor grammar would cost you some points because they interfere with the instructor's ability to understand your paper.

3. Number of references: (5 points) At least 15 different sources must be cited, 10 of which must be from recent (2005-2010) journal publications.

4. Accurate referencing: (5-points) References must be in ASA (American Sociological Association) style. See attached for guidance.

**This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to accommodate students and/or instructional needs.**
Grading Scheme

Student=s Name___________________

Grader=s Name____________________

A. RESEARCH PROJECT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Content:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevance of topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statement of Problem</td>
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<td>Analysis &amp; Interpretation</td>
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<td>Conclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
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<td>Spelling, Grammar, etc.</td>
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<td>Number of references (min 15)</td>
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TOTAL (Absolute) 100

Relative (Absolute X 0.45) 45
B. ORAL PRESENTATION

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<td>Effectiveness of presentation technology</td>
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<td>Organization of presentation</td>
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<td>Clarity of explanation and discussion</td>
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<td>Responses to questions</td>
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C. PROFESSIONAL RESUME

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D. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

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<td>Participation</td>
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## E:GRE Major Field Test

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**OVERALL TOTAL SCORE__________________________**