SOCIOLOGY 4000: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Fall 2016
Monday & Wednesday, 3:30-4:45pm, TLC 1116

Instructor: Celeste Lee  Office: Pafford 205B
Email: celestel@westga.edu  Phone: 678-839-6325
Office Hours: Monday 5pm-6pm, Wednesday 11am-12pm, or by appointment

Course Description:
This course is a general introduction to social science research methods. Over the course of the semester, we will cover a range of topics including, but not limited to, the relationship between theory and research, the nature of causality, reliability & validity, research design, sampling, measurement, survey and interview construction, quantitative and qualitative research techniques, basic data management and data analysis, and ethical issues in social research.

This course focuses on equipping students with the necessary tools for conducting and consuming social research. Students will gain direct experience in conducting social research by engaging in a semester-long, group research project. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Formulate good research questions and design appropriate research.
2. Collect their own data using a variety of methods.
3. Analyze both qualitative and quantitative data using computer-based skills.
4. Critically evaluate their own research and that of other social scientists.

Learning Outcomes:
- LO1: Communicate in writing how sociology contributes to an understanding of social reality
- LO2: Demonstrate an understanding of sociological theories
- LO3: Demonstrate an understanding of methodological approaches within sociology
- LO4: Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity in society

Required Text:
** (Labeled TPSR on reading schedule).

Princeton University
** (Labeled WS on Syllabus; located on CourseDen)
Additional required readings are available electronically on CourseDen, under the “readings” module, and are labeled (CD).

**Course Requirements:**
Grades for the course will be computed based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Assignments</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
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**Attendance & Participation** – Class attendance and participation are essential to your success in the course; and thus, highly are highly encouraged. Attendance and participation will count for 200pts towards your overall grade.

- Regular *attendance* will help your academic standing. Approximately 50% of the exam questions will be directly from in-class materials. Furthermore, excellent attendance and participation can result in up to 40 extra credit points towards your overall grade.
- Active *participation* in class includes being prepared, attentive, and participating in class discussions. Throughout the semester, there will be 11 unannounced attendance/participation checks over the course of the semester. The “checks” include a wide range of activities (reading quizzes, brain-storming activities, simulations, discussion questions, in class assignments, etc.). **THERE WILL BE NO MAKEUPS FOR MISSED ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION CHECKS, NOT FOR ANY REASON.** You must be present on the day AND time of the attendance check to receive credit. Each “check” is worth a maximum of 20pts towards your overall grade; as a result, you are allowed to miss one attendance/participation checks without penalty. Students who complete all 11 attendance/participation can earn up to 20 extra credit points (i.e., 220pts for attendance/participation).
- If you know in advance that you will miss a class, please talk to me beforehand.
- Please note that in the event that *you do miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you “missed,” with regard to materials and notes, from one of your classmates; I will not provide you with lecture notes or annotated PowerPoint slides.* I will, however, meet with you during office hours to discuss whatever questions you may have after reviewing the notes.

**Quizzes** - There will be 3 in-class, open note quizzes over the course of the semester. Notes must be printed out and in your possession at the start of each exam. You will not be allowed to use notes saved on laptops or phones. Additionally, you will not be able to share notes during the quiz. Each quiz will cover 3-4 chapters of material. Quizzes consist of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. Each quiz will be weighted equally; each contributes 100pts towards your final grade. **There will be no makeup quizzes unless there is a valid excuse for having missed the exam.** Personal illness and family emergencies are valid excuses but must have proper documentation. I will utilize my own judgment in determining what a valid excuse is but typically, oversleeping, traveling out of town, interviews, car trouble, and work-related absences are not valid excuses. If you know that you have a
conflict with a scheduled date on the syllabus, please see me so that we can make other arrangements prior to the quiz date.

**Group Assignments (GA):** One of the primary aims of this course is to offer students the opportunity to understand what is involved in imagining, designing, researching, reviewing, revising and presenting a comprehensive social research project. Students will be assigned to a research group; each group is required to complete a research project that utilizes survey research methods. Throughout the course of the semester, you will engage in group assignments that will focus on one aspect of the research process. The group assignments will serve as a guide while students work towards conducting their group research project and completing the final project. There will be FIVE group assignments over the course of the semester. Each assignment will be worth 20 points; in total, group assignments will contribute 100 points towards your overall grade. I will offer more information about the assignments and instructions in separate handouts.

**Final Project:** The Final Project will consist of three components that will form the culmination of a semester’s worth of work in learning research methods as well as designing, researching and presenting a research project. These components include:

- 6-8 page Group Research Paper – a synthesis of the group assignments; page count excludes title page, figures, tables, survey instruments, references, appendices, etc. (150pts)
- 15-20 min. group presentation during the final exam block for this class. (150pts)
- Group Member Evaluations: Students will individually grade each group member’s participation and contribution to the group’s final project. The scores will be averaged to create a composite “group evaluation” grade. (100pts)

**Grading Scale** (grades will be rounded up for fractions of 0.5 and above)

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>895-1000 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>795-894 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>695-794 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>595-694 pts</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>594 pts</td>
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**Course Policies:**

**Communication** – I check my email (celestel@westga.edu) daily, between 7am - 9am. Make sure you use my westga.edu address, not CourseDen, to ensure a prompt response. Please allow 48hrs for a response; keep in mind that the responses may take a little longer during breaks (i.e., winter break, spring break, Easter, etc.) Additionally, please turn your “notifications” on under your CourseDen settings. Throughout the semester I will use the announcements and notification features to alert you of action items related to the class.

**Late Policy** – Each day that your work is late results in the deduction of 10 points. *I will not accept assignments that are more than 3 days late.* Assignments turned into my office, placed in my box or under my door; by snail mail or emails are considered late. Be sure to give yourself plenty of time to complete the assignments. Only assignments turned in to me, in class/online, on their due dates are
considered on time. If you know that you have a conflict with a scheduled date on the syllabus please contact me BEFORE the assignment due date.

Class Conduct – Please come to class prepared!! The readings are listed in the syllabus on the day that they are due. Also, please turn off your cell phones and other electronic devices BEFORE entering class. The first time that the class is interrupted by a cell phone, the entire class will be warned; the second time, will result in the perpetrator being asked to leave class. Laptops will be allowed unless they become a distraction to me and/or your fellow classmates. Please **do not** bring food to class. Please refrain from engaging in tangential conversations, note passing, entering late, and leaving early. Please try to be on time. In the event that you are late, try not to disrupt the class upon entry. If you know that you must leave class early make sure you inform me in advance, sit near the door, and leave as quietly as possible. Additionally, **please do not gather your belongings/ pack up prior to the end of class – I will dismiss the class when it is over.** Finally, there will be numerous opportunities to engage in group work, class discussions, and debate throughout the semester; **it is imperative that students remain respectful of one another and the instructor at all times.** I welcome and encourage input from a wide range of viewpoints; additionally, I recognize that there are times when certain personalities may not get along. I will NOT, however, tolerate disruptive behavior or discourteous manners and speech.

**Procedure for disputing a grade** - If you disagree with a grade you’ve received, you may submit a written request, via email, to me for a review of the test question or assignment. Written requests must indicate the question(s) or assignment elements that you would like to dispute AND include your argument for why you think you should have received a different grade. These requests must be made within 3-days of receiving the grade; please title your email “Grade Dispute.” I reserve the right to agree or disagree with your dispute.

**Disabilities** - If you have a condition that requires special accommodations, please inform me as soon as possible in addition to informing the UWG Accessibility Services. In order to receive special accommodations, you will need to provide a Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. I cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given. For more information, please contact [http://www.westga.edu/counseling/4486.php](http://www.westga.edu/counseling/4486.php).

**Academic Dishonesty** Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person’s work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. I take academic dishonesty very seriously. Academic dishonesty can result in probation or expulsion, even if the act was not intentionally dishonest. If you are unclear about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, please consult me. For additional information please consult [http://www.westga.edu/assetsSA/handbook/2015-2016_Student-Code-of-Conduct_Rev062415.pdf](http://www.westga.edu/assetsSA/handbook/2015-2016_Student-Code-of-Conduct_Rev062415.pdf)

**UWG Email Policy** - University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. The University considers this account to be an official means of communication between the University and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student’s responsibility to check his or her email.

**Sexual Harassment Policy** The University of West Georgia is committed to providing a positive discrimination-free environment. Hence, it is the policy of the University of the University of West
Georgia, in accord with federal and state law, Board of Regents’ policy, and Title IX, that sexual harassment in the workplace or the educational environment is unacceptable conduct. Sexual harassment is subject to discipline, up to and including separation from the institution.

For additional information on these and other University policies, go to: http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf

PREPARING FOR CLASS:
For each hour spent in class, you will probably need to set aside at least two hours and a half for work outside of the class session such as reading, reviewing your notes, and completing your assignments.

I will provide you with a reading schedule that details reading assignments for each class period. It is your responsibility to prepare for class each day. I recommend doing the reading for the each day before our class meeting, and then reviewing them again briefly afterwards. Your readings are an important resource to succeeding in this course. You will need to be familiar with the terms and concepts we discuss, and periodically reviewing your readings AND class notes are the best way to stay familiar with important ideas. In addition, you will find our discussions much more meaningful if you spend some time before class to make some notes listing what you think are the main points of the author’s argument, as well as any questions you have about the reading.

Important Dates:
- 8/29 – GA #1 Due: Preliminary Questions and Significance
- 9/14 – QUIZ ONE
- 9/19 – GA #2 Due: Annotated Bibliography
- 10/3 – GA #3 Due: Methodology
- 10/12 – QUIZ TWO
- 10/24 – GA #4 Due: Data Collection Update
- 11/9 – QUIZ THREE
- 11/16 – GA #5 Due: Preliminary Analysis
- 12/2 – Final Paper Due via Dropbox by 11:59pm
- 12/7 – Final Presentation, 2-4pm

>>> I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CHANGE THE SYLLABUS, INCLUDING QUIZ/ASSIGNMENT DATES. PLEASE STAY TUNED <<<

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READING / ASSIGNMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>8/10/16</td>
<td>Class Introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>8/15/16</td>
<td>What is Sociology? What Do Sociologists Do?</td>
<td>READ: (1) The Sociological Imagination – Ch.1 “The Promise”; (2) 21st Century Careers, pgs.1 -17 (CD)</td>
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