

## Capstone Research Practicum (M)

SOC 497 (CAPS, 3 credits)

Prereqs: SOC 317 or concurrent enrollment, junior standing, certified major in sociology  
Spring 2020

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| <i>Instructor:</i>   | Alair MacLean<br>VMMC 202H<br>360-546-9177<br>alair.maclean@wsu.edu   |
| <i>Class times:</i>  | M,W 9.10-10   |
| <i>Class room:</i>   | VMMC 202Q, Wilson-Short 201   |
| <i>Office hours:</i> | M,W 10.15-11.15, in VMMC 202H or by phone, sign up for office hours<br>at <a href="https://wejoinin.com/sheets/vxvxm">https://wejoinin.com/sheets/vxvxm</a> (or by appointment) |

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**I. Course Overview:** This course is designed to introduce undergraduate Sociology majors to the process of advanced research and, in the process, to draw upon their courses in theory, statistics, and research methods in the discipline. During the semester, students will produce a substantial piece of research related to an area within the discipline of sociology, such as inequality, the environment, or criminology. The research area will vary depending on the instructor. During this semester, we will examine the general area of inequality, focusing on change over time and across place in the United States.

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**II. Course Readings:** Required readings are drawn from the following books and articles. Note that the books are on reserve at the library and the articles are available through the library.

- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008. *The Craft of Research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. The University of Chicago Press.
- Cooper, Marianne. 2014. *Cut Adrift: Families in Insecure Times*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Designated as **Adrift**.)
- Frey, William H. 2018. *Diversity Explosion: How New Racial Demographics Are Remaking America*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press. (Designated as **Diversity**.)
- Glaser, Joseph. 2016. *Understanding Style: Practical Ways to Improve Your Writing*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Marsden, Peter V. 2012. *Social Trends in American Life: Findings from the General Social Survey since 1972*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Designated as **GSS**.)
- Reardon, S. F. and K. Bischoff. 2011. "Income Inequality and Income Segregation." *American Journal of Sociology* 116(4):1092-1153.
- Silva, Jennifer M. 2019. *We're Still Here: Pain and Politics in the Heart of America*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. (Designated as **Heart**.)
- Western, Bruce, Deirdre Bloome, and Christine Percheski. 2008. "Inequality among American Families with Children, 1975 to 2005." *American Sociological Review* 73(6):903-920.

| <b>WSU Learning Goals of the Baccalaureate</b>    | <b>Student Learning Outcomes: At the end of this course, students should be able to:</b>  | <b>Course Topics/Dates The following topic(s)/dates(s) will address this outcome:</b> | <b>Evaluation of Outcome: This outcome will be evaluated primarily by:</b>    |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Diversity</b>                                  | Understand, analyze, critique inequality along the dimensions of class, race, and/or gender   | All substantive course sessions will advance this goal                                | Class participation, the assignments contributing to the final research paper |
| <b>Information Literacy</b>                       | Locate, categorize, critique, and evaluate sources of information   | Introduction (1/14); Century (1/19; 1/21); and Research (3/22; 3/24)                  | All assignments, but especially proposal and bibliography                     |
| <b>Critical and Creative Thinking</b>             | Contextualize, discuss, and compare key scholars, findings, and theories in sociology   | History (1/19; 1/21); and Trends (2/2; 2/4; 2/9; 2/11; 2/16; 2/18)                    | Weekly response cards, paper final draft                                      |
| <b>Communication</b>                              | Create, tailor, and present scientifically based messages to the proper audience  | Introduction (1/11); and Research (4/5; 4/7)  | Weekly response cards, class participation                                    |
| <b>Writing</b>                                    | Communicate through writing comprehension of assigned reading materials   | Writing (4/19; 4/21; 4/26; 4/28)  | Final paper   |
| <b>Quantitative Reasoning</b>                     | Draw appropriate conclusions based on the quantitative analysis and presentation of social science data                               | Introduction (1/14); and Research (3/22; 3/24; 3/29; 3/31)                            | Proposal, rough, final draft paper  |
| <b>Depth, Breadth and Integration of Learning</b> | Demonstrate the ability to integrate history, methods, and concepts of sociology to produce theoretically grounded empirical research | All class sessions  | Weekly response cards, class participation, final paper                       |

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### **III. Assignments:**

The focus of this course is a 15-20 page research paper. Before handing in the final draft of the paper, students will be responsible for handing in interim assignments. See below for points awarded for each type of assignment. (Deadlines are on the schedule on the last page of the syllabus.)

Students will also be responsible for reading responses due at the beginning of each class session, i.e., 9.10, on Monday and Wednesday. They will also be responsible for participating in the discussion sections for each week that will be open between the end of class on Wednesday and Friday at 5pm.

**Grading Policy**

These are the standards for your overall grade: A 93-100; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 67-69; D 60-66; F 0-59.

Late assignments: Assignments will be considered late if they are submitted after the start of class (after 9.10), and will be marked down 10 percent for each calendar day they are late.

I calculate overall grades twice: at mid-term and after finals. If you are interested in your grade, I will calculate mid-term grades for the entire class, which are to be submitted to the registrar’s office. If you come after the midterm period, I will only be able to tell you the grade that you were earning at the midterm. If you are concerned about your grade, it is better to figure out where you stand in the middle than at the end of the semester. Otherwise, you are responsible for keeping track of your assignments and grade. If you wish, you may track your progress toward your final grade using the following table:

|                     | Total percent | Total points | Your points |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| Reading responses   | 10%           | 110          |             |
| Summary of findings | 30%           |              |             |
| first draft         |               | 110          |             |
| second draft        |               | 220          |             |
| Bibliography        | 20%           |              |             |
| first annotation    |               | 55           |             |
| formatted           |               | 55           |             |
| annotated           |               | 110          |             |
| Literature review   | 20%           |              |             |
| outline             |               | 110          |             |
| first draft         |               | 110          |             |
| Final paper         | 20%           | 220          |             |
| Total               | 100%          | 1100         |             |

**Blackboard:** I will post the syllabus and some assignment guidelines on Blackboard. As this is a hybrid class, students are also expected to check Blackboard between the class on Wednesday and Friday afternoon. Discussion items and reading responses will be posted in a weekly file folder (directory).

**Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend all seminars and are responsible for all material and announcements presented there. If you miss a seminar for any reason, you are responsible for contacting first your classmates and then the professor to find out what was discussed (including announcements of or changes to assignments or due dates). You should first check with a classmate before contacting your professor with specific questions for clarification.

There are no make-ups for the reading responses. I will, however, drop the 2 lowest grades of the reading responses for the calculation of your grade. Do NOT write the reading responses unless you are prepared for class (i.e., unless you have done the required reading).

### **WSU Reasonable Accommodation Statement**

“Students with disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities or chronic medical conditions. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Access Center website to follow published procedures to request accommodations:

<https://studentaffairs.vancouver.wsu.edu/access-center>. Students may also either contact or visit the Access Center in-person to schedule an appointment with our Access Center Coordinator.

Location: Classroom Building, Room 160; Phone: 360-546-9238; Email:

[van.access.center@wsu.edu](mailto:van.access.center@wsu.edu). Pullman contact information is available at:

<https://accesscenter.wsu.edu/contact-us/>. All disability related accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center. Students with approved accommodations are strongly encouraged to visit with instructors early in the semester during office hours to discuss logistics.”

### **WSU academic integrity statement:**

“Academic integrity is the cornerstone of higher education. As such, all members of the university community share responsibility for maintaining and promoting the principles of integrity in all activities, including academic integrity and honest scholarship. Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course. Students who violate WSU’s Academic Integrity Policy (identified in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 504-26-010(3) and -404) on any assignment will receive an F grade on the assignment or for the course, will not have the option to withdraw from the course pending an appeal, and will be reported to the Center for Community Standards. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration as defined in the Standards of Conduct for Students, WAC 504-26-010(3). You need to read and understand all of the definitions of cheating:

<http://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=504-26-010>. If you have any questions about what is and is not allowed in this course, you should ask course instructors before proceeding. If you have questions or wish to appeal a faculty member's decision relating to academic integrity, please see the resources available at <https://communitystandards.wsu.edu/home/>. If you have any questions about the process on the Vancouver campus, please call Eric Scott at 360-546-9530; or on the Pullman campus, please call Karen Metzner, Director of Center for Community Standards, 509-335-4532, or email: [kmetzner@wsu.edu](mailto:kmetzner@wsu.edu).”

### **Other random concerns**

If you have a concern about this class, rule 104 of the WSU Academic regulations states:

“Students having complaints about instruction or grading should refer them first to the instructor.”

### **Technology policy**

Research has shown that high levels of multi-tasking are bad for focus and concentration. In addition, students who use keyboards during class have been shown to learn less than those who do not. More recent work has shown that even the presence of gadgets is distracting for both the

owners and the people around them. My own experience has been that the classroom environment is greatly improved by removing individual keyboards and screens.

For a recent review of the research, as well as experimental demonstration of these issues, read: Mueller, Pam A. and Daniel M. Oppenheimer. 2014. "The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking." *Psychological Science* 25 (6):1159-1168.

For the distractions posed by cell-phones to yourself and others, read: Ward, Adrian F., Kristen Duke, Ayelet Gneezy, and Maarten W. Bos. 2017. "Brain Drain: The Mere Presence of One's Own Smartphone Reduces Available Cognitive Capacity." *Journal of the Association of Consumer Research* 2 (2): 140-154.

For these reasons, we will have a no technology policy (unless you have a documented disability) for this class. This policy means no cell-phones or computers are to be used during class-time. These items should be put away and not left out on the desk unless you are expecting to be contacted in case of an emergency or are using the device to access the textbook.

**Emergency notification system:** "WSU has made an emergency notification system available for faculty, students, and staff. Please register at myWSU with emergency contact information (cell, email, text, etc.). You may have been prompted to complete emergency contact information when registering for classes at myWSU. In the event of a building evacuation, a map at each classroom entrance shows the evacuation point for each building. Please refer to it. Finally, in case of class cancellation campus-wide, please check local media, the WSU Vancouver web page (<https://www.vancouver.wsu.edu>) and/or <http://www.flashalert.net/>. Individual class cancellations may be made at the discretion of the instructor."

**Inclement weather policy:** "In the event that an adverse weather event (e.g., snow or ice) or natural hazard that poses a safety risk occurs, you should take personal safety into account when deciding whether you can travel safely to and from campus, taking local conditions into account. If campus remains open and your instructor decides to cancel the face-to-face meeting and substitute an alternative learning activity, you will be notified by your instructor via email or through Blackboard within a reasonable time after the decision to open or close campus has been made. Instructions regarding any alternative learning options or assignments will be communicated in a timely manner. If travel to campus is not possible due to adverse regional conditions, allowances to course attendance policy and scheduled assignments, including exams and quizzes, will be made. Students who attempt to gain advantage through abuse of this policy (e.g., by providing an instructor with false information) may be referred to the Center for Community Standards for disciplinary action. If a student encounters an issue with an instructor, the student should first talk with the instructor. If the issue cannot be resolved, the student should follow the reporting violations of policies outlined on the student affairs website."

Note: The assigned readings average 100 pages per week.

| Week | Dates         | Topic                 | Reading  | Assignments  |
|------|---------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| 1    | 13-Jan 15-Jan | Introduction to class | <b>Diversity:</b> Ch. 1-3  |  |
| 2    | 20-Jan 22-Jan | History               | <b>Diversity:</b> Ch. 4-8  | Computer lab: start looking at data and resources. |
| 3    | 27-Jan 29-Jan | History               | <b>Diversity:</b> Ch. 9-12   | Computer lab, working on findings                  |
| 4    | 3-Feb 5-Feb   | Trends                | <b>GSS:</b> chs 1-4  | First draft summary of findings                    |
| 5    | 10-Feb 12-Feb | Trends                | <b>GSS:</b> chs 5-7  |  |
| 6    | 17-Feb 19-Feb | Reading               | (Reardon and Bischoff 2011; Western, Bloome, and Percheski 2008)   | Second draft summary of findings                   |
| 7    | 24-Feb 26-Feb | Trends                | <b>GSS:</b> chs 8-11   |  |
| 8    | 2-Mar 4-Mar   | Research              | Student annotation presentations   | First annotation                                   |
| 9    | 9-Mar 11-Mar  | Research              | Student annotation presentations   | Formatted bibliography                             |
|      | 16-Mar 18-Mar | <i>Spring break</i>   |  |  |
| 10   | 23-Mar 25-Mar | Research              | Student annotation presentations   | Annotated bibliography                             |
| 11   | 30-Mar 1-Apr  | Research              | Student annotation presentations   |  |
| 12   | 6-Apr 8-Apr   | Economic context      | <b>Adrift:</b> Intro, ch. 1-3; and pp. 177-179 of <i>Craft of Research</i> (on reserve).   | Literature review outline                          |
| 13   | 13-Apr 15-Apr | Economic context      | <b>Adrift:</b> ch. 4-5, and conclusion; Chapter 5 and 7 of <i>Understanding Style</i> (on reserve) and 191-199 of <i>Craft of Research</i> (on reserve). |  |
| 14   | 20-Apr 22-Apr | Geography             | <b>Heart:</b> Intro, ch. 1-3   | First draft literature review                      |
| 15   | 27-Apr 29-Apr | Geography             | <b>Heart:</b> Chapter 4-6, conclusion  |  |
| 16   | 6-May         | Finals week           |  | Final papers                                       |