

CJS 492 / HUS 499 / SOC 470  
SYLLABUS

Section 2: T/R at 9:55 in B 10

Section 1: R at 6:40 in B 17

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Course Description

The purpose of this course is to round off the student's undergraduate education by exploring a series of current topics relevant to their field and by looking at the theoretical and research implications of those topics. The course has four major focuses: 1. A knowledge of basic research and statistical methods employed in the social science; 2. Knowledge of how to access and apply current research literature; 3. Application of relevant theories and research to current issues in one's field; and 4. Development of a Portfolio of knowledge, skills, and abilities attained by the student in the course of their education in their academic major and supportive courses.

Specific topics to be covered in the Research Methods component include: identifying professional literature; distinguishing types of research designs; threats to the internal and external validity of research; types of variables; hypothesis formation; measures of statistical association; p values and hypothesis testing.

The above abstract methodological issues will be encountered and applied in examining a series of current issues in the behavioral sciences. The students are expected to apply their knowledge from other courses to the discussion of these issues; in the process, a core of key knowledge in the behavioral sciences will be identified.

Textbooks

Adler, E. S., & Clark, R. (2003). How It's Done. Belmont, CA: Thompson.

Fintersbusch, K. (Ed.) (2005). Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Social Issues (13<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin.

Course Requirements

1. Regular attendance and participation is expected.
2. Issues will be selected from Taking Sides based on student input.
3. Each student will be responsible for at least one in-class presentation (see below). This will also be submitted as a written term paper.
4. Exams: three quizzes and a final. Quizzes will cover assigned readings, class presentation, and material from previous quizzes.

5. Portfolio presentation: students will be responsible for filling out questionnaires, taking general knowledge tests, and submitting course papers to be used as part of program evaluation.

### Presentation/Paper Requirement

The paper/presentation involve picking one of the class topics from the Taking Sides textbook, finding one professional journal article relevant to the topic, reviewing the findings from that article and indicating how it does (or does not help with understanding or taking a position on the issue. The article selected must be primarily a “research study”: that is it must have a Method section and a Results section in which new data are presented. The classroom presentation is to be a less formal presentation of what is in the paper.

The paper/presentation should contain the following elements: 1) an introduction that indicates the issue being dealt with and the scope or theme of the paper; 2) an introduction and description of the professional article being used, a summary and critique of the article, and a conclusion that tells what the article contributed to our understanding of the issue involved. Finally, there should be a Reference section in which the article itself and all other cites are completely referenced. The entire paper should be from 5 to 8 pages.

### Due dates for paper/presentations

In-class presentations may begin as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> week of class. Dates for any given student’s presentation will be at the discretion of the professor. An effort will be made to take volunteers for the early dates, but there are no guarantees here. Failure to be ready to present on one’s due date will result in a 10% reduction in the score for this segment. A student missing a class on which they are scheduled to present due to unforeseen circumstances must submit a typed outline of what they would have presented as soon as possible (email or FAX can be used here). The papers themselves have a common due date for all: April 7. This date holds even if one’s presentation is not scheduled until after that date.

### Key dates

January 11/13: 1<sup>st</sup> class.  
February 1/3: presentations (may) start  
March 7 to 12: spring break  
April 7: term paper due  
April 18: portfolio material due  
April 25 to 30: Finals week

## Grading

Quizzes: two to four quizzes (three expected): these will be announced one week in advance. All combined quiz scores will count 45% of course grade.

Final exam: 25% of course grade; also, the final exam score will be substituted for the student's lowest quiz grade if that is to their advantage.

Term paper/presentation: 20% of grade. This grade will primarily be based on the written work; deductions possible, however, for late or unprepared presentations.

Portfolio submission: 10% of grade. The portfolio per se is not graded, so this is an automatic 10 points if submitted on time. Points may be deducted for late submission.

## Other

No copying, plagiarism, death threats, or other behaviors not in keeping with the UDM mission statement.