If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?
- Albert Einstein

Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought.
- Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

Instructor: Scott Vandehey, PhD
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Office Hours: email for on-line chat appointment

Course Description:
This course will be very similar to a guided study course. Its sole purpose is to help facilitate the completion of your senior project. However, at this point, you are all graduates of SOAN 308, and each of you has an approved research proposal. So unlike other on-line courses, this one is largely self-guided and self-motivated – it's about you following the steps toward completion of the project.

Given the nature of this course – which, unlike other courses, is more about mobilizing what you already know than learning a whole new discipline – this course site is necessarily a project that will gradually evolve (much like your senior project at this point), and will do so at least partially in response to what you would find most helpful to move toward completion of your project. The discussion board will be our primary forum. More on that further on in the syllabus (in the section “How we should proceed” below).

Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes:
This course is designed to aid you in the application of both practical and theoretical social research methods. By the end of the course, you should have first-hand knowledge of:

• differences between quantitative and qualitative methods and be able to give examples of the kinds of research questions each of these methods are most likely to answer, and discuss how the two might be combined;
• ethical issues raised by social research;
• how particular theoretical traditions inform research methods and research design;
• problems and promises of social research in terms of both policy decision-making and social change;
• see how individual lives are connected with wider social and cultural processes and forces;
• access, organize, critically analyze, and produce knowledge about humans as social and cultural beings;
• communicate effectively orally and written both inside and outside academic contexts;
• work both independently and cooperatively in application of sociological and anthropological ideas.

Texts:
(NOTE: The required text for this course is the same as assigned for SOAN 308.)


Requirements:
There are only three course requirements:

1) If deemed necessary by Professor Vandehey, you get IRB permission to begin your research. You should have already begun this process, as I first announced it in SOAN 308, but I will post the steps involved again for those that need them.

2) If you plan to graduate at the end of Spring, you complete and mail your finished and polished senior project to me, postmarked no later than May 10 (see "Submitting the Final Project" document for more details). Those graduating later can make other arrangements with me.

3) You will be asked to post on the discussion board at least once a week, and let us all know, even briefly, how you’re progressing in your research. This keeps us all on track; I’ll get a sense of how folks are faring; and the discussion board will be more lively and thus a better tool for everyone. It’s an obvious antidote to isolation. Therefore, I ask that you treat this as a serious weekly requirement of the course (more about this below). Post once a week, and read everyone else’s posting – you never know what might help your own project along, and again, it will keep you from feeling alone in the process.

Grading:

**Senior Project / Thesis:**
The senior project is intended to be one of your crowning achievements as you graduate from Linfield College, and a culmination of your learning at this stage. Your final project should be at least 30 pages long, but may very well be longer. Potentially, your project may be read not only by me, but also by other students and faculty. Accordingly, the final grade on your senior project will be a consideration of two grades - one for content as a social research project -- 80% of the grade; and the other for
format and style (grammar, spelling, correct citation, etc.) -- 20% of the grade. Those projects which I consider outstanding in both areas (and have gone through IRB approval) will be submitted to the Linfield Library for archiving.

I will post a succinct style guide, which is probably all you will need in terms of formatting and style.

Weekly Discussion Board Participation:
Each week you are expected to make a discussion post describing what you have done over the past week, how you think your research is progressing, exciting finds you’re making, problems you are having, frustrations you are facing, etc, etc. Consider it a type of research journal. In addition to your own posts, you should make a point to respond to fellow students’ posts.

There will be no formal grade for the discussion participation. If, however, I am wavering, for example, between a “B” or a B+” for a student’s final grade for the course, I’ll review the student’s weekly participation online. In such cases, full weekly participation merits the higher grade, and spotty or little participation merits the lower.

Getting Started:

Aside from reviewing the syllabus, you should familiarize yourself with the various other documents that have been uploaded to the site for your benefit. Some of them you will not need in detail until much later in the semester, but it is a good idea to get a feel for everything initially. Here is a brief summary of the documents you should be looking for:

Syllabus - This document, describes course objectives and requirements.

IRB Resources - Instructions, guidelines, sample templates and application form for Linfield's Institutional Review Board.

Getting Started - A guide to help you situate yourself at the beginning of the research process.

Style Guide - A basic guide of stylistic elements to which your final project should conform.

How to Guides - A set of guidelines to help direct you through each section of writing the paper.

Submitting the Final Project - Instructions describing how to submit your final project.
Academic Honesty:
Please see the college policy on academic honesty, as published in the Linfield College Course Catalog. This course adheres to all policies as explained in the Catalog.

Disability Statement:
Students with disabilities are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you are a student with a disability and feel you may require academic accommodations contact Cheri White, Assistant Director of Learning Support Services (LSS), within the first two weeks of the semester to request accommodations. LSS is located in Walker 126 (503-883-2444). We also recommend students communicate with their faculty about their accommodations and any special needs an instructor should be aware of.