SOC 499 Senior Capstone
Final project

Course Description
All students are expected to complete a senior research project under the direction of a faculty mentor. This capstone project will expand upon and integrate work completed in previous courses and provide students with an opportunity to apply methods of scholarly and/or action research to issues and problems of their own choosing. The final results of this study will be shared through ePortfolios on a virtual "commons" used for publication/presentation and critique open to all.

Final Project
In SOC 499 01, students will create and execute a research project. While the intention was for students to revise an existing paper from a prior course, all current students have new projects. These instructions should assist you in the completion of your project in stages. Final research reports conforming to the style of the American Sociological Association must be written individually and submitted on an ePortfolio. The project is to be completed in stages throughout the semester and requires use and integration of what you have learned in the sociology program.

A number of data sources are available on the course site along with Quick Guides for their use. These include:
* GSS and the SDA: http://sda.berkeley.edu/archive.htm (see Quick Guide)
* Social Explorer (see Quick Guide)
* United Nations Millennial Goals: (see Quick Guide) http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview/
* Human Development Reports Toolkit: http://hdr.undp.org/en/nhdresources/
* World Values Survey: (see Quick Guide): http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/
* TheARDA: (see Quick Guide): http://www.thearda.com/

Stages and Timetables:

This project is to be completed in stages. Failure to complete stages on time will result in a loss of points and, perhaps, a failed project.

* Define research problem and develop hypotheses. Deadline: October 6.
* Create annotated working bibliography. Begin work in Week # 6.
* Draft literature review. Deadline: October 20.
* Select data source and tools. Deadline: November 3.
* Power Point presentation to classmates. Deadline: November 10.
* Execute data analysis. Deadline: November 27.
* Describe results; draft conclusions. Deadline: November 27.
* Draft a full version of the Final Project. Deadline: December 8.
* Peer and Instructor review and comments. Deadline: December 15.
* Final Draft of Final Projects. Deadline: December 18.

Required Sections

- Abstract
- Introduction (Literature Review)
- Research hypothesis
- Research Methods
  - Description of data source
  - Independent and dependent variables
  - Tables and Graphs
  - Text explaining the results
- Summary and Conclusions
- References in ASA Format

Research Hypothesis: October 6

In Week #5 we will work together as a class to develop and frame meaningful research questions and hypotheses.

Annotated Bibliographies: October 13

As part of the assignment for Week #6, each student will begin an annotated bibliography. The goal is to develop knowledge of prior research on this topic. While the first assignment requires different types of sources (a general, secondary, and primary source), as we move forward, most of the articles should be journal articles. Each student will need to fashion the bibliographic material into a literature review that provides a context for the research.

Draft Introduction (Literature Review) and References: October 27

Each student must write a well-developed literature review that places the research in the context of current theories and earlier research. The literature review must cite all sources using ASA format. Read the ASA Style Guide, the material in Writing Matters, the rubric for the Final Project and the material on the course site pertaining to literature reviews. Students who expect to earn an "A" in the course should plan on developing a literature review using a minimum of 25 sources. These sources may include sources from the general class discussions and/or from your research methods courses. The literature review needs to incorporate mostly journal articles reporting prior **research** on the topic. You should develop the literature review and the throughout the semester.

Select Data Sources: November 3

You must select a data source that allows you to evaluate – confirm or reject – your research hypothesis. A number of data sources are available on the course site along with Quick Guides for their use. These include:
- GSS and the SDA: http://sda.berkeley.edu/archive.htm (see Quick Guide)
- Social Explorer (see Quick Guide)
- United Nations Millennial Goals: (see Quick Guide) http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview/
- Human Development Reports Toolkit: http://hdr.undp.org/en/nhdresources/
- World Values Survey: (see Quick Guide): http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/
- TheARDA: (see Quick Guide): http://www.thearda.com/

Data Analysis with Tables and Graphs: November 27

You must execute a data analysis using one of the data sources and tools provided or another approved site. Under special circumstances (with advance permission) students with IRB approval may use their own data. The data analysis must examine the relationships between at least three variables. The analysis must be presented in tabular form accompanied by graphic representations.

Write-Up, Summary and Conclusions: November 27

A brief summary and conclusions section should draw together the work on the project, discussing the findings, the weaknesses and strengths of the research, as well as possible future directions.

First Draft: December 8

Each student must submit a full report of the research project through Safe Assign and on his or her ePortfolio. Mostly, this will consist of going back to earlier drafts of sections, editing and synthesizing to create a coherent and well written description of the project. You may present your first draft to classmates in your journal. Your draft must include an Abstract of approximately 150 words, succinctly summarizing your entire project.

Peer and Instructor Reviews: December 12

Students will comment on the work of peers using the comment feature of the Digication ePortfolio or the journal, praising the positive and making constructive suggestions for how to improve the project (specific questions will be provided). You will also receive private comments from the instructor.

Final Draft on Digication ePortfolio: December 18

A final polished version of your project should be presented on your ePortfolio no later than midnight May 19. Read and study the rubric carefully.

TEMPLATE

Abstract
Introduction (Literature Review)
Research Hypothesis
Research Methods
- **Description of data source**
- **Independent and dependent variables**
- **Tables and Graphs**
- **Text explaining the results**

Summary and Conclusions
References in ASA Format

SOC 499 FINAL PROJECT CHECKLIST		
Project Section and "To Do"	**Deadline**	**Checklist**
Project Topic	Week #5 10/6	
Project Thesis Annotated Bibliography	Week #6 10/13	
Draft abbreviated literature review	Weeks #7-8 10/27	
Select and describe your data base or tools for the research and analysis: independent variables, dependent variables, other moderator or control variables	Weeks #9-10 11/10	
Execute data analysis: content analysis, GSS data analysis, World Values Survey, other data bank; create tables and graphs	Weeks #11 -12 11/27	
Describe research findings Draft Conclusions section	Week #13 12/8	
Draft research report with all sections	Week #13 12/8	
Review and comment on the work of a peer	Week #14 12/12	
Final version of project on ePortfolio	Final 12/18	