

Tompkins Cortland Community College
Master Course Syllabus

Course Discipline and Number: SOCI 290
Course Title: Social Science Capstone Course

Year: 2021-2022
Credit Hours: 3

Attendance Policy: *To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.*

Services for Students with Disabilities: *It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for accommodations. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.*

Course Description

Provides students with an opportunity to draw on a variety of disciplines, perspectives and methods from the social sciences in application to a specific research problem of local and/or global importance. In consultation with the course instructor(s), students will choose a relevant research topic to explore for the class. The course is conducted as a research and discussion seminar and is used as the outcomes assessment course for the program. Students will conduct both primary and secondary research on their topic. Prerequisites: RDNG 116 if required by placement testing; MATH 095 if required by placement testing; ENGL 101; C or better grade in PSYC 103; SOCI 101; and a HSTY course. 3 Cr. (3 Lec.) Fall and spring semesters.

Course Context/Audience

As an outcomes assessment course, it is meant to be taken during the final semester before graduation. This course assesses program specific skills and is required of all social science program majors. Through individual research projects, students will be asked to demonstrate the following social science program outcomes:

- 1) effective and appropriate written and oral communication skills that reflect social scientific reasoning;
- 2) the ability to locate, critically evaluate, and effectively use social scientific research;
- 3) knowledge of social science research, methods, and theoretical principles; and
- 4) an understanding of global issues and diverse cultural perspectives.

Basic Skills/Entry Level Expectations

Writing: WC College level writing skills are required. See course co-requisites or pre-requisites.

Math: M4 MATH 095 if required by placement testing.

Reading: R4 RDNG 116 if required by placement testing.

Course Goals

While participating in the Social Science Capstone course students will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of social science research, methods, and theoretical principles. Student research will illustrate understanding of at least one of the following: a) the difference between qualitative and quantitative methods; b) the difference between primary and secondary research; c) the scientific method, d) the role of theory, schools of thought, or historiography in social science inquiry, and/or e) the difference between inductive and deductive reasoning.

2. Demonstrate information literacy skills, such as the ability to efficiently locate, access and use resources that are credible and relevant to the student's research questions and hypotheses.
3. Demonstrate clear recognition of when sources need to be documented and provide complete and accurate documentation of all sources within the text and on the works cited page/bibliography.
4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills, such as the abilities to: a) formulate a research question, hypothesis or thesis statement that is clear, focused, and substantive; b) reorganize and combine ideas of others effectively; c) evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of research, and d) draw conclusions based on credible evidence.
5. Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively, both in oral and written format.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of how the social sciences relate to social/global awareness.

Course Objectives/Topics

Objective/Topic	% Course
Overview: Each semester, one or two faculty from the Social Sciences department will act as the course coordinator(s). In consultation with the course instructor(s), students will select their own research topics based in their disciplinary interest.	
First Five Weeks: During the first five weeks of course content, the course coordinator(s) will introduce the theoretical models and research methodologies that students might use to systematically study the relevant course theme materials. Attention should be given to ways in which relevant theoretical and methodological approaches correspond to and depart from one another. By the third week students should have selected a topic for their individual research and they should be actively pursuing information sources.	33%
Final Ten Weeks: The final five weeks should be devoted to the students' individual research projects. Class time should be devoted to locating, assessing, and reviewing appropriate sources, individual conferences with the instructor(s), and student presentations of their research.	67%

General Education Goals - Critical Thinking & Social/Global Awareness

CRITICAL THINKING OUTCOMES	HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
<p>Students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ develop meaningful questions to address problems or issues. ➤ gather, interpret, and evaluate relevant sources of information. ➤ reach informed conclusions and solutions. ➤ consider analytically the viewpoints of self and others. 	<p>The core objective of this capstone course is to allow students to demonstrate their skill set by posing, researching, and presenting a focused research paper. Faculty will assist in crafting a thesis, reviewing annotations and bibliographies and reading and commenting on written drafts support the final research paper.</p> <p>The process of creating a written research project demands each student demonstrate competency in obtaining, reviewing, and critiquing research materials. Annotated bibliographies required for the research paper, as well as the reasoning and presentation of line of argument are central features of the course.</p> <p>The research paper and discussions sessions with students and faculty demand students have read and thought critically and formulated substantive explanations. Student research, as presented in the final paper, will be closely critiqued by fellow students as well as the instructor(s) to challenge or support the central theses. Social science faculty read and assess the final papers.</p> <p>Student research on any topic will expose them to ideas and sources, some in conflict, some in agreement. Students must inject themselves into the fray and make sense of lines of argument and evidence. Categorizing debates and sources, students will deploy this knowledge in their paper. Close referral with each student during the process of developing, researching and writing the final paper will directly support this goal. The research process demands students assess not only their own conclusions, but those of others.</p>

SOCIAL/GLOBAL AWARENESS OUTCOMES	HOW DOES THE COURSE ADDRESS THE OUTCOMES (Include required or recommended instructional resources, strategies, learning activities, assignments, etc., that must or could be used to address the goal/outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students will begin to understand how their lives are shaped by the complex world in which they live. ➤ Students will understand that their actions have social, economic and environmental consequences. 	<p>The research paper, class discussions, and interviews all will address the place of each student in the world. They investigate relevant information that impact local, regional, and global trends. The discussions, interviews and research sessions will work to support the student in addressing their role and that of their research topic on global developments.</p> <p>Depending on the research topic a better understanding of the social, economic, and environmental consequences of human actions will be addressed in a variety of ways.</p>

Instructional Methods

Lecture, discussion, hands on research and performance rubrics (see below) are used for this course. Students will work with the instructors through the process of paper rough drafts which will lead to a final paper.

SOCIAL SCIENCE PERFORMANCE RUBRICS:

Graduates of the Social Science Program should be able to:

1. Demonstrate appropriate and effective written and oral communication skills that reflect social scientific reasoning.
2. Demonstrate the ability to locate, critically evaluate and effectively use social science research.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of social science research methods and theoretical principles.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of global issues and diverse cultural perspectives.

Written Communication: Mechanics and Structure

This rubric, in support of #1 above, focuses on writing mechanics and organization.

A. MECHANICS

MEETS EXPECTATIONS

Grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure are accurate and rarely impede meaning. Evidence of careful proof-reading.

APPROACHES EXPECTATIONS

Grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure sometimes obscure meaning. Insufficient attention to proof-reading.

DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS

Grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure errors are pervasive, disrupt reading and often obscure meaning. Little or no evidence of proof-reading.

B. PARAGRAPHS

MEETS EXPECTATIONS

Developed and organized paragraphs exhibiting both unity and coherence.

APPROACHES EXPECTATIONS

Several paragraphs lack unity and/or coherence.

DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS

Most paragraphs lack unity and /or coherence.

C. STRUCTURE/ORGANIZATION

MEETS EXPECTATIONS

Product as a whole is unified and well-organized with clear and effective focus and transitions.

APPROACHES EXPECTATIONS

Product as a whole is generally unified but has distinct lapses in focus and transitions.

DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS

Product as a whole is unfocused and disorganized; transitions are ineffective or non-existent.

Information Literacy/Critical Analysis

This rubric, in support of #2 above, focuses on research skills, critical evaluation, and synthesis of scholarship.

A. FRAMING/FORMULATING/FOLLOWING THROUGH

MEETS EXPECTATIONS

Research question, hypothesis or thesis statement is obvious, complex and meaningful and anchors the paper as a whole.

APPROACHES EXPECTATIONS

Research question, hypothesis, or thesis statement is obvious, but lacks meaning and complexity.

DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS

Research question, hypothesis, or thesis statement is non-existent, or simplistic and unclear.

B. EVALUATION (RELEVANCE AND CREDIBILITY)

MEETS EXPECTATIONS

Sources are credible and are used in a clear and effective way to support the research question, thesis or hypothesis AND/OR literature to support this topic is meager; student effectively crafted an analysis given this constraint.

APPROACHES EXPECTATIONS

Some sources are credible and are used in a clear and effective way to support the research question, thesis or hypothesis.

DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS

Few sources are credible and clearly and directly related to the research question, thesis or hypothesis.

C. SYNTHESIS/INTEGRATION

MEETS EXPECTATIONS

Reorganizes and combines ideas of others effectively; overall analysis is based on the use of multiple sources.

APPROACHES EXPECTATIONS

Occasionally reorganizes and combines ideas of others effectively; analysis relies on the use of a few select sources.

DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS

Simply restates the ideas of others.

Theory and Methods

This rubric, in support of #3 above, focuses on the ability of students to understand and deploy theories and principles of social science appropriately as regards to their individual research topic.

MEETS EXPECTATIONS

Demonstrates solid comprehension of one of the following types of knowledge:

1) the difference between qualitative and quantitative methods;

- 2) the difference between primary and secondary research;
- 3) the scientific method,
- 4) the role of theory or schools of thought in social science inquiry, or
- 5) the difference between inductive and deductive reasoning.

APPROACHES EXPECTATIONS

Demonstrates limited comprehension of one of the following types of knowledge:

- 1) the difference between qualitative and quantitative methods;
- 2) the difference between primary and secondary research;
- 3) the scientific method,
- 4) the role of theory or schools of thought in social science inquiry, or
- 5) the difference between inductive and deductive reasoning.

DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS

Demonstrates no comprehension or use of any of the following types of knowledge:

- 1) the difference between qualitative and quantitative methods;
- 2) the difference between primary and secondary research;
- 3) the scientific method,
- 4) the role of theory or schools of thought in social science inquiry, or
- 5) the difference between inductive and deductive reasoning.

Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

Method	% Course Grade
Individual research paper with mandatory draft(s)	25-50%
Final research oral presentation	5-15%
Research annotations, bibliography, and/or outline	15-25%
Attendance/participation, additional assignments	10-25%
Exploratory research article oral reports and classroom discussion	0-20%

Text(s)

Any texts should be assigned at the discretion of the faculty coordinator(s) of the course each semester.

Bibliography

With a department faculty whose areas of expertise spans the disciplines from anthropology to education, history to political science, sociology to psychology and to women and gender studies –realistically, no set master list of suggested texts is possible. Resources for this capstone course are constantly expanding and no attempt here could adequately assess the breadth and depth of source materials. Each semester the faculty leading the course should assist students in creating a research plan, annotations, and bibliography as well as encourage each student to consult a research librarian. This approach will allow the best individualized focus on each student project.

Other Learning Resources

<p>Audiovisual The TC3 library has an impressive list of resources for social science students to consult. This collection is constantly expanding and should be checked for the most recent information.</p>
<p>Electronic The TC3 library has subscribed to several digital retrieval systems as well as being able to access to traditional printed media.</p>
<p>Other Students should consult with the social science program faculty for assistance in all facets of the research process.</p>