



Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Family Sciences

SWF 3006: Research Basics

3 Units

Fall 2026

"The function of sociology, as of every science, is to reveal that which is hidden."

~Pierre Bourdieu

Course Information

Class Days & Times: Thursdays, 1:30 PM to 2:45 PM

Mode of Delivery: Hybrid

Course Location: Rohr 108

Final Due: Thursday, Dec. 17, by 11:59 PM on Canvas

Instructor: Dr. Daniel Davis

Phone: Please request phone appointments via email first

Email: ddavil@pointloma.edu

Website: www.danieldavis.net

Office Hours: Immediately after class or by appointment

PLNU Mission

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

General Education Mission

PLNU provides a foundational course of study in the liberal arts informed by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In keeping with the Wesleyan tradition, the curriculum equips students with a broad range of knowledge and skills within and across disciplines to enrich major study, lifelong learning, and vocational service as Christ-like participants in the world's diverse societies and culture.

Course Description

Learn the basics behind the design and development of a research project. From conception to feasibility to proposal. Even if you do not intend to pursue graduate work in the social sciences, understanding social research methodology is vital for almost any career or service position that interacts with statistics, studies, reports, etc. Developing these skills will serve you in becoming a more discriminating consumer of media as well, as media outlets report on studies, polls, and more. At its essence, a methodology course is a sub-division of epistemology ("how do we know what we know"), methodology seeks to answer the related question, "how do we find out?" Students will design and write a research proposal.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Exhibit knowledge of major themes, theories, and debates in social research.
- Successfully design ethical research as determined by PLNU's Institutional Review Board.
- Hone the ability to identify, read, and cite scholarly literature.
- Compare how social scientists choose among qualitative and quantitative social research methods to create and disseminate knowledge.
- Understand and articulate the importance of applied and theoretical research in the social sciences.

Course Materials

All course materials will be provided for free on Canvas.

Course Credit Hour Information

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 3 unit class delivered over 16 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. For this

course, students will spend an estimated 112.5 total hours meeting the course learning outcomes. The time estimations are provided in the Canvas modules.

Assignments Point Outlay

Note: All assignments are turned in on Canvas.

Attendance	1pt x 10 sessions	10pts
Discussion Leader	5pts x 4 times	20pts
Weekly Discussion Posts & Quizzes	5pts x 12 times	60pts
Final: Research Proposal	10pts x 1 time	<u>10pts</u>
	Total:	100pts

Late Work Policy

- Up to one week late -10%, with an additional 10% for each subsequent week late.

Grading System

Final grades will be determined according to the following scale. Fractional points ending right on the line between grades will be rounded up only for those with strong discussion participation.

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	63-66
D-	60-62
F	00-59

Assignment Descriptions

Attendance

Each time you attend class without coming late or leaving early you receive one point towards attendance. You achieve maximum attendance points by attending 10 live Thursday class sessions. A sign-in sheet will be passed in class, sometimes at the beginning and sometimes at the end of class.

Discussion Leader

Four times over the semester you will lead or co-lead a 15 minute discussion with your small group about the key ideas from the content in the Canvas modules, as well as summarizing an academic journal article that you found interesting. You will either present on A weeks, B weeks, or C weeks. Detailed instructions can be found on the “Discussion Leader Template” on Canvas under “Course Documents.”

Weekly Discussion Posts or Quizzes

There are 12 small exercises across the semester. They are linked to the week’s topic and are either a discussion post or quiz. Specific instructions for each will be posted on Canvas several weeks in advance of when it is due.

Final: Research Proposal

You will propose a research project that is feasible and well-designed. This is the culmination of the skills you learned throughout the course. It will be either a quantitative or qualitative project. You will follow a worksheet posted on Canvas describing exact requirements.

Course Calendar

Notes:

- All assignments are due weekly on Canvas by Thursdays at 11:59 PM
- Letter refers to which group members are discussion leaders that day

Wk/Day	Lecture Topics	Discussion	Assignments Due Saturdays by 11:59 PM
1. Thurs 9/03	Introduction & Key Concepts		
2. Thurs 9/10	Principles of Scientific Inquiry: Research Design (Methods, Variables, & Core Concepts)	A	Discussion Post: Conceptualization & Operationalization
3. Thurs 9/17	Principles of Scientific Inquiry: Sampling Techniques	B	Quiz: Sampling Technique Scenarios
4. Thurs 9/24	Principles of Scientific Inquiry: Ethics with Human Subjects	C	Discussion Post: Ethical Research Repair Mission
5. Thurs 10/01	Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis: Surveying, Experiments, and Publicly Available Data	A	Discussion Post: Comparing Data Collection Methods
6. Thurs 10/08	Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis: Descriptive Statistics and Probability	B	Quiz: Understanding Descriptive Stats & Probability
7. Thurs 10/15	Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis: Bivariate Inferential Statistics, Part A	C	Quiz: Inferential Statistics, Part A
8. Thurs 10/22	Fall Break - No Classes		
9. Thurs 10/29	Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis: Bivariate Inferential Statistics, Part B	A	Quiz: Inferential Statistics, Part B
10. Thurs 11/05	Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis: Interviewing	B	Discussion Post: Developing an Interview Guide
11. Thurs 11/12	Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis: Field Observations	C	Discussion Post: Field Observations and Field Notes
12. Thurs 11/19	Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis: Coding Qualitative Data for Themes	A	Discussion Post: Identifying Themes by Coding

Wk/Day	Lecture Topics	Discussion	Assignments Due Saturdays by 11:59 PM
13. Thurs 11/26	Thanksgiving Recess	No Live Class	
14. Thurs 12/03	Competencies in Using Scholarly Literature: -Understanding Journal Articles (B) -Using Google Scholar and AI Literature Tools (C)	B	Quiz: About Journals
15. Thurs 12/10	Competencies in Using Scholarly Literature: Scholarly Writing & Proposal Development	C	Discussion Post: AI & Google Scholar Exercise
16. Thurs 12/17	Finals Week- All Assignments and Late Work Due on Thurs. 12/18 by 11:59pm		Final: Research Proposal

PLNU Campus Wide Policies

Final Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

*Note: The final for this class is not in-person, it is a research proposal that you will submit on Canvas.

State Authorization

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on State Authorization to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

PLNU Copyright Policy

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU Recording Notification

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because

they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an “F” grade.

Use of Technology

In order to be successful in the online or hybrid environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the *Technology and System Requirements* information. Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers, microphone, or webcams compatible with their computer available to use. Please note that any course with online proctored exams requires a computer with a camera (tablets are not compatible nor allowable) to complete exams online.

Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

Loma Writing Center

The Loma Writing Center exists to help all members of the PLNU community cultivate transferable writing skills to engage their academic, professional, personal, and spiritual communities. We work toward this goal by conducting one-on-one consultation sessions, supporting writing education across the PLNU community, and participating in ongoing writing center research.

Getting feedback from the Loma Writing Center while you're in the process of working on an assignment is a great way to improve the quality of your writing and develop as a writer. You are encouraged to talk with a trained writing consultant about getting started on an assignment, organizing your ideas, finding and citing sources, revising, editing for grammar and polishing final drafts, and more. For information about how to make in-person or online appointments, see [Loma Writing Center webpage](#) or visit the Loma Writer Center on the first floor of the Ryan Library, room 221.

- Appointment Calendar: <https://plnu.mywconline.com/>
- Website: <https://www.pointloma.edu/centers-institutes/loma-writing-center>
- Email: writingcenter@pointloma.edu