Washington State University
MAJOR CURRICULAR CHANGE FORM - COURSE
(Submit original signed form and ten copies to the Registrar’s Office, zip 1035)

Future Effective Date: __/__/____ (effective date cannot be retroactive)

☐ New course □ Temporary course □ Drop service course

☐ There is a course fee associated with this course (see instructions)

☐ Variable credit ____________

☐ Increase credit (former credit ____________)

☐ Number (former number _____)

☐ Crosslisting (between WSU departments)
(Must have both departmental signatures)

☐ Conjoint listing (400/500)

☐ Request to meet Writing in the Major [M] requirement (Must have All-University Writing Committee Approval)

☐ Request to meet GER in ________ (Must have GenEd Committee Approval) ☐ Fulfills GER lab (L) requirement

☐ Professional course (Pharmacy & Vet Med only) ☐ Graduate credit (professional programs only)

☐ Other (please list request)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soc</th>
<th>course prefix</th>
<th>526</th>
<th>course no.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental Methods</td>
<td></td>
<td>title</td>
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<tr>
<th>credit</th>
<th>lecture hrs per week</th>
<th>lab hrs per week</th>
<th>studio hrs per week</th>
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<td>Prerequisite</td>
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Description (20 words or less) In this course students learn to design experiments to test causal theories. The course covers fundamentals of experimental methods including experimental design and analysis, settings, manipulations, measures, human subjects considerations, and so forth.

Instructor: Christine Horne Phone number: 335-3912 Email: chome@wsu.edu
Contact: Phone number: Email:

Campus Zip Code: ___________

- Please attach rationale for your request, a current and complete syllabus, and explain how this impacts other units in Pullman and other branches (if applicable).
- Secure all required signatures and provide 10 copies to the Registrar’s Office.

Chair/date: _______________ Dean/date: _______________ General Education Com/date: _______________

Chair (if crosslisted/interdisciplinary)* Dean (if crosslisted/interdisciplinary)* Graduate Studies Com/date: _______________

All-University Writing Com/date: _______________ Academic Affairs Com/date: _______________ Senate/date: _______________

*If the proposed change impacts or involves collaboration with other units, use the additional signature lines provided for each impacted unit and college.
Rationale for Requesting Number Change from Soc 522 to Soc 526

Sociology currently offers a catch-all advanced methods course (522). The content of this course varies and frequently includes courses in advanced statistical analysis. We also offer two specific advanced methods courses – qualitative methods (523) and a survey methods (525). Historically, the department has regularly offered experimental methods, but it has been taught under the 522 number. In order to be consistent with the numbering for qualitative and survey methods, we would like to give experimental methods its own number in the advanced methods sequence (526).

This change will not change the frequency with which experimental methods is taught and will have no impact on department curriculum or teaching loads. It simply makes the course numbering for experimental methods consistent with that of survey and qualitative methods and will make more clear for anyone looking at our course schedule what the content of the course is (something that is difficult to do with the 522 designation). This will make students’ course records more clear. It will also make the course more accessible to students from other departments that might be interested in a course in experimental methods. (Note that this course is designed to assume that students are not psychologists or social psychologists, but rather social scientists with substantive interests who wish to add experimental methods to their toolkit of methods that they can use to answer questions they are interested in.)

Impact on Other Units

This change will provide clearer information to other units (such as political science and criminal justice) about an experimental methods course that may be of interest to their students. Other than that it should have no impact on other units in Pullman or other branches.
Sociology 526
Experimental Methods

Christine Horne  
248 Wilson-Short Hall  
Office hours: W 12:00-1:00  
Email: chorne@wsu.edu  
Telephone: 335-3912  

Course time: M, 2:10-5:00  
Course location: 201 Wilson-Short Hall  
Course credit: 3 hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will learn to design experiments that test causal theories. We will discuss what experiments are, why one might want to use an experiment, and what one can learn from experiments. We will also address issues related to developing experiments (including experimental design and analysis, settings, manipulations, and measures) and running experiments (including issues related to human subjects).

Each week students will be responsible for assigned readings. Throughout the semester you will also complete group assignments on various aspects of experiment development. The readings in conjunction with these assignments will provide the basis for class discussion. The group assignments and class discussion of these assignments will help you understand the issues to be considered in developing experiments.

Students will also complete individual assignments that build on knowledge gained from the group assignments, readings, and class discussions. Individual assignments are designed to help you develop an experiment that will answer a research question in which you are personally interested. These individual assignments will cumulate to produce a research proposal at the end of the semester. That is, by the end of the semester, you should have developed an experiment that you can actually run and that will contribute to your research program.

Course Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to develop an experimental framework, manipulations, and measures that will appropriately test theoretically driven causal hypotheses (Critical and Creative Thinking).

Students will be able to constructively use feedback to improve their experimental designs (Critical and Creative Thinking).

Students will be able to use experimental methodology to address substantive and theoretically questions (Scientific Literacy).

Students will be able to describe their experimental designs in writing in a professional manner.
READINGS

Webster, Murray, Jr., and Jane Sell, eds. 2007. Laboratory Experiments in the Social Sciences. New York: Elsevier.

Required articles will be made available.

Readings/assignments may be adjusted during the semester.

COURSE OUTLINE

The Logic and Purpose of Experiments

1/10 What can I study using experiments?

Readings:


Bring questions to class that you are interested in and that you think cannot be answered using an experiment.

1/17 No class

1/24 Why do experiments? Causal Relations

Readings:

Webster & Sell, ch 3


Assignments

Group Assignment 1
Individual Assignment 1

1/31 Why do experiments? Causal Mechanisms

Readings:


Assignments:

Group Assignment 2
Individual Assignment 2

2/7 What about external validity?

Readings:


Assignments:
Designing and Conducting Experiments

2/14  Settings

Readings:

Webster and Sell. Ch. 14


Assignments:

Group Assignment 4

2/21  No class

2/28  Settings, cont’d

For this class we will meet in the lab so that you can participate in some experiments and get a sense of the range of settings/manipulations that are possible. I will also introduce you to Medialab and Inquisit – two software tools that can facilitate creating your own experiments.

3/7  Manipulations and Measures

Readings:
Webster & Sell, ch 5
Webster & Sell, ch 9
Webster & Sell, ch 7
Assignments:
Group Assignment 5
Individual Assignment 4/5

3/14 Spring Break

3/21 Experimental Design and Analysis
Readings:
Keppel, pp. 18-20
TBD
Assignments:
Group Assignment 6
Individual Assignment 6

3/28 Resources/Getting Money/Writing Proposals
Readings:
Webster & Sell, ch. 8

4/4 Issues Related to Human Subjects (1)
Readings:
Webster & Sell, ch 6


Group Assignment 7
4/11  Issues Related to Human Subjects (2)

Readings:

Webster & Sell, ch 10
Webster & Sell, ch 12

4/18  Presentations in class
4/25  Presentations in class

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Group Assignments (20% of final grade) and Class Participation (20% of final grade):
There will be six group assignments over the course of the semester (each contributing equally to your grade). You will work on group assignments in groups of three. Group assignments should be less than one single-spaced page. They should be emailed to me and all class members by 8:00 am Monday on the week they are due. All class members should read the assignment submitted by the other group and be prepared to discuss the assignments in class. In addition, all class members should read the assigned material and come to class prepared to discuss it. If you are unable to attend class because you are sick or have an emergency, please notify me ahead of time so that we can work out a way for you to make up the material.

Individual Assignments (20% of final grade) and Final Project (40% of final grade)
There will be six individual assignments over the course of the semester (each contributing equally to your grade). These will parallel the group assignments. That is, they address the same issue, but focus on your own research interests instead of an assigned substantive topic. Individual assignments should be emailed to me by noon on Wednesday of the week that they are due. I will provide feedback on these assignments by the end of the week so that you can revise and improve them. Each time that you turn in an individual assignment, you should turn in the revised assignments from previous weeks. Your final project will build on these earlier individual assignments and should reflect revisions made over the course of the semester. You will produce a research proposal that includes a description of hypotheses, experimental design, subjects and procedures, experimental manipulations, dependent measures, other measures, and statistical analyses that will be used to analyze the data.

Grading Scale for Assignments and Course

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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C-  70-72
D+  67-69
D   60-66
F   <60

OTHER ISSUES

**Academic Integrity**

Individual assignments must be the student’s own work. Students who plagiarize or cheat in any way will fail the course. For information about WSU’s academic integrity policy go to: http://www.conduct.wsu.edu and http://www.wsulibs.wsu.edu/plagiarism/main.html.

**Students with Disabilities**

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Access Center (Washington Building, Room 217) to schedule an appointment with the Access Advisor. All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center.

**Safety**

WSU is committed to maintaining a safe environment. For information on the Campus Safety Plan, go to http://safetyplan.wsu.edu. For information on emergency management go to http://oem.wsu.edu/ Emergencies. The WSU ALERT site can be found at http://alert.wsu.edu. Please visit these sites and familiarize yourself with the information provided.