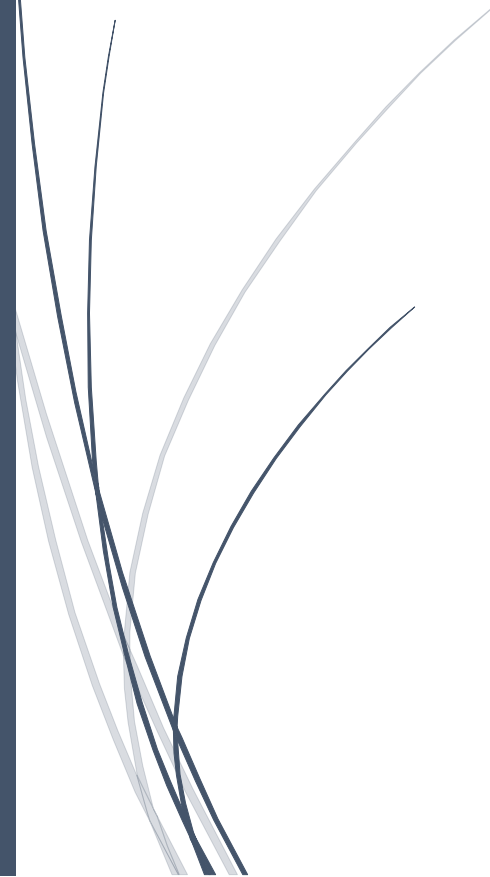


Spring 2018

FOOD INSECURITY AMONG STUDENTS AT MSU, MANKATO

Project Overview



SOCIOLOGY IN ACTION (SOC 493/593)
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INTRODUCTION

This semester we will study the prevalence of food insecurity among students at MSU, Mankato. This research will be developed into a report and a set of recommendations that will be presented to MSU, Mankato administrators at the end of the semester.

The class project comprises the majority of this class. However, you are still responsible for the other readings, homework assignments, and coursework listed on the syllabus.

Please keep in mind that this is a real research project, meaning that we are doing sociology live! That means that things may change unexpectedly throughout the semester and we might need to make adjustments to accommodate the needs of our project. For that reason, we will all need to be flexible and communicate openly and effectively with our team members, team leaders, classmates, and the professor.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

OVERVIEW

Background Research

All students will read and summarize academic literature on the topic of food insecurity on college campuses. Specific articles will be randomly assigned in class to each student. Some students will use this background research to develop a literature review. These assignments are graded individually and not part of the final project grade.

Survey

A survey will be administered to MSU, Mankato students. The survey has been designed prior to the class, but the construction of the survey will be examined by all students and results will be analyzed and reported on by a team of students.

Interviews

The survey asks respondents if they are willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview. During the course of the class some students will conduct interviews, transcribe interviews, and/or analyze their results. If no survey respondents volunteer to be interviewed, then this team will design a way to recruit students for interviews.

Resource Assessment

To better understand students' access to healthy and affordable food some students will identify the resources students have to help them. These students will produce a list of resources in a format that can be accessed by future students. They will also identify gaps in current resources and may do research to identify practices that have worked at other universities.

Poster Campaign

Prior to the release of the final report we will begin to educate the campus community about what hunger and food insecurity are by releasing a poster campaign. Some students will develop the poster designs and educational materials. The poster campaign will be released with a public presentation in March.

Final Report

There will be a final report that will summarize all aspects of the class project. Different sections of the report will be submitted by each team.

Public Presentation

At the end of the semester the class will present the final project in a public forum.

GROUP WORK

We will complete a large research project collaboratively as a class. Students will be placed into teams of 3-6 students each. Attempts will be taken to place students in the teams of their preference, but students may not be placed in their top choice team if it is not logistically feasible. Each team will complete one aspect of the project by working with a group. Work on the project will occur regularly throughout the semester and many class periods will be treated as research meetings or may be shortened to accommodate additional time to work on the project outside of class. Even so, you will still likely need to meet with your group mates outside of class. You will be expected to meet the timetable your group has agreed upon for completion of tasks as well as the deadlines set by the professor. Failure to do so will affect your grade. Your grade will be partially dependent on how your group members evaluate your contribution.

Team Leads: Most groups will have a graduate student or the professor serve as the team lead. This person will be responsible for communicating with the professor, being the point of contact for meetings, and other organizing responsibilities. As needed, team leads will be asked to meet with the professor to receive additional guidance and training to learn about running research meetings, special methodological training, and other guidance as needed.

Participation: Public and applied sociology is almost always done in a team setting so group work is integral to this class. If a student does not participate in the group setting and/or if a complaint(s) is made about the student by a group member(s) or another student, every attempt will be made by the professor to resolve the issue. If it cannot be resolved, if the problem leads others to feel unsafe, or if problematic behavior persists, it is at the professor's discretion to remove the student from the group. In the event that this happens the student will be given an alternate assignment in lieu of the Group Project. Because group work is a fundamental skill needed to gain competency in the field of applied and public sociology, the *maximum* grade the student will be able to receive for the alternate project is a C (75%).

Weekly Reports: Active group work will begin after the first month of class. Once active group work begins, a weekly report will be submitted by the team lead to the instructor within 24 hours of the in-class team meeting. This will outline the group's goals for the week and who is assigned what task. Each group sets their own goals and standards in order to meet the project deadlines. Group members will be graded according to their ability to follow through with the tasks they have agreed to do. However, more important than assessment, these reports allow the professor to know if the group needs any additional research training or help to complete the tasks they have. An outline for the weekly report is available on D2L and will be submitted on D2L each week.

THE TEAMS

MORE DETAILS

This is a very large project that can only be completed in one semester if we all work together and different people take on different parts of the project. For that reason, we will divide ourselves into teams and each focus on different aspects of the project. Students will be on only one team. Each team will have different deadlines, build different skills, and focus on a different aspect of the project. However, they will be exposed to the training necessary for each part of the project, all teams will report regularly to the entire class, and if one team needs extra assistance students may be asked to help. Further, all teams will report regularly to one another. The goal is to achieve a single cohesive report at the end of class so we will all be aware of and educated about all aspects of the project.

The responsibilities and skills developed by each team is listed in the description. These responsibilities and skills are general, and others skills will likely be developed in the course of this project as well. However, these are listed as a starting point to help students articulate this experience as they work on building their resumes and other materials as they move forward with job and school applications in the future.

All teams will have the following responsibilities: Research, writing sections of the final report, working independently, working as part of a team, taking a research ethics training.

All students will gain the following skills: Team work, leadership, oral and written communication, literature searches, report writing, communicating technical issues to a general audience, the ability to maintain confidentiality and adhere to ethical research protocols.

ACADEMIC TEAM

(graduate students only)

Team Lead: Dr. G

The Academic team will be comprised of the graduate students in the class. Graduate students are expected to complete a higher level of engagement in the class, so this team may involve extra meetings and trainings. Students on this team will complete a literature review and serve as team leads for and participate in one of the other teams. Service as team leads will encompass additional trainings on how to lead research meetings and organize projects.

Student assets that will shine in this team:

Leadership skills, self-driven, intellectual curiosity

Types of experience gained:

Leadership, project management, writing literature reviews, secondary research, independent learning

Main Tasks:

- Write a literature review
- Serve as research assistant to the professor
- Serve as co-researchers with the professor
- Serve as research team leaders

Deadlines

1/30 Literature review

2/27 Final literature review

SURVEY TEAM

Team Lead: Dr. G

The Survey Team will be in charge of analyzing the results of the survey. They explore and analyze the results of the survey. Students will learn how to produce and report on descriptive statistics and will gain skills in data analysis, using excel, making charts and graphs, and writing effectively about survey research. At times, they may help the interview team to gain skills in qualitative research as well.

Student assets that will shine in this team:

Attention to detail, ability to use or desire to learn spread sheet management and statistical software

Types of experience gained:

Database management skills in Excel and SPSS, ability to produce and interpret descriptive statistics, making charts and graphs in Excel, writing effectively about data, quantitative data skills, some qualitative data skills

Main Tasks:

- Label and clean survey data
- Run descriptive statistics
- Analyze and write about survey findings

Deadlines

2/13 Team contract due

3/27 Draft of survey findings report due

4/17 Final Report Rewrites

4/27 Final revisions due

INTERVIEW TEAM

Team Lead: Sam Orinstien

The Interview team will conduct and transcribe interviews. They will also analyze the interview data to identify patterns and trends. Students will gain skills in qualitative research, qualitative data analysis, and interviewing.

Student assets that will shine in this team:

Good listening skills, good communication skills, typing, ability to maintain confidentiality

Types of experience gained:

Qualitative data analysis, conducting interviews, communication

Main Tasks:

- Conduct interviews
- Transcribe interviews
- Qualitative data analysis

Deadlines

2/13 Team contract due

3/27 Draft of interview findings report due

4/17 Final Report Rewrites

4/27 Final revisions due

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT TEAM

Team Lead: Cole Denisen

The Resource Assessment Team will assess the current resources to available to students on MSU, Mankato and identify any resources we are lacking, according to both proven interventions as well as the expressed needs of the students in the surveys and interviews.

Student assets that will shine in this team:

Self-motivated, experience with community outreach and advocacy, good communication skills, research skills

Types of experience gained:

Secondary research, development of advocacy material, community asset and resource assessment, development of resources maps, communication of community needs to stakeholders

Main Tasks:

- Identify characteristics of success food security programs
- Complete a resources assessment of MSU Mankato's current student resources
- Identify any gap in services
- Develop recommendations for the university to improve food security

Deadlines

2/13 Team contract due

3/27 Draft of interview findings report due

4/17 Final Report Rewrites

4/27 Final revisions due

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH TEAM

Team Lead: Members will take rotating leadership of different projects

The Communications and Outreach team will be in charge of bridging the research work to the public and MSU administrators. They will be in charge of developing an effective education campaign that addresses the key issues identified in the secondary research as well as a final report and presentation of the primary research conducted in the class.

Student assets that will shine in this team:

Creativity, attention to detail, strong communication skills, desire to work with clients/public populations

Types of experience gained:

Using infographics, image design software, Excel, Word or Publisher, making charts/graphs and other visuals to communicate data, writing press releases, and effectively talking about data and research to a general audience.

Main Tasks:

- Develop an educational campaign to educate the MSU Mankato community about food insecurity
- Final editing of all sections of report to be understandable to a general audience
- Create a cohesive final report and presentation
- Press release and outreach

Deadlines:

2/13 Team contract due

2/27 Ad campaign concept due

3/16 Ad campaign due

4/17 Executive Summary and Report Template due

4/30 Final report compiled

USEFUL & GUIDELINES

TEAM CONTRACTS

All teams will develop a contract for group work. This contract will outline the goals, expectations, and procedures that all members of the group agree on. Below are the items that need to be in the contract.

You may format your contract however you wish—many groups might choose to use the headings below to format their contract, but other formats are acceptable as well. The final contract must be typed and printed and all group members and the professor must be given a signed copy.

GOALS

In this section, you should identify what the *collective* goals of your group for this project are. *Collective* goals are goals *everyone* in the group can agree on. Your goals might include what you want on your final project grade, but they should also include more substantive goals, such as the quality of the final project you all expect, or if you want to strengthen skills you already have, or try to learn new skills? Select two to three goals that are a priority for your group.

Optional: you might also each also agree on letting each individual group member identify a personal goal that they everyone agrees they can accomplish with this project. This can help when splitting up tasks, since you can focus on assigning tasks to members in a way that can help them achieve their individual goals.

EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

It is important to collectively establish expectations of working in a group in order to help you achieve your goals. Be sure to address your expectations and policies regarding the items below; you may also add more if your group decides.

ATTENDANCE & DEADLINES

Group meetings are required. What is the expectation in terms of the number of meetings that can be missed, how to notify others if you will be absent or tardy on a deadline, etc.

COMMUNICATION

Identify the basic decision making processes and how you will communicate. For communication, you would outline basic things such as politeness, letting others speak,

whether it is okay to discuss a group member's performance when they aren't there, etc. You should also address preferred form of communication outside of class (email, texting, a combination?), expected response time, and if there are forms of communication that will not be used at all. Whatever you agree to let's all group members know what contact details they need to share and check regularly. How will decisions be made—will you use a democratic procedure or complete consensus? Will all members have to agree or just those in attendance? Deciding these things now will make decision making easier if there are points of disagreements in the future.

CONSEQUENCES

How will you address issues when a group member does not uphold the agreed upon expectations and procedures? Come up with a clear process for how you will discuss it with each other and at what point you will contact the professor to have additional assistance with the issue or group member.

SIGNATURES

All group members should sign and date the team contract and a copy should be provided to all students and the professor.

WEEKLY MEETING SUMMARY FORM

Students are required to complete this Meeting Summary Form and upload it to D2L within 24 hours after your meeting. This meeting is usually in class, but may occasionally occur outside of class time.

DATE AND TIME OF MEETING	
TEAM MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE	
ANYONE ELSE IN ATTENDANCE	
SUMMARY OF WHAT WAS DISCUSSED IN THE MEETING	
TO DO LIST If applicable, be sure to note who is responsible for each task and the agreed upon deadline	
TIME, DATE, AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING	
NOTES (if needed)	

This is the evaluation that will be filled out at the conclusion of the project.
GROUP PROJECT EVALUATIONS

Please fill out an evaluation for EACH group member, ***including yourself***. The self-evaluation is the last evaluation on the sheet.

Your Name: _____

Group Member Name: _____

Group Member Evaluations

For each of the criteria below for each group member, enter the appropriate letter grade for how well you feel they accomplished that aspect of the group project. Fill in any relevant comments in the column to the right of the letter grade, if appropriate. At the bottom of each person's evaluation, write in comments about their overall participation. You must include at least 2-4 sentences about each participant in your evaluation.

	Group Member Name (write in):	
	Grade	Comments
Student was willing to meet to discuss project.	A B C D F	
Student actively participated in deciding how to arrange the project and work together.	A B C D F	
Student actively participated in preparing the class presentation.	A B C D F	
Student completed agreed upon work.	A B C D F	
Student completed agreed upon work on time .	A B C D F	
Overall, I would give this student a grade of ____ for his/her contribution to the group project.	A B C D F	

Additional Comments: