

**SOC 3111
Research Methods
Fall 2018**

Venue and Location: Online (Canvas)

Instructor: Lazarus Adua
Email: lazarus.adua@soc.utah.edu
Office Hours: By appointment only

TA: Tamanna Shah
Email: tamanna.shah@soc.utah.edu
Office: By Appointment Only

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the theory and practice of social science research. The course introduces students to research ethics, explains the logic and process of different research designs, explores some common forms of data-gathering (such as interviews, surveys, observation, etc.), discusses ways to analyze and report different types of data, and guides students through the development, evaluation, and presentation of social research. The course prepares students to become both original producers and critical consumers of social research.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, the student will be able to:

- 1) Name and explain the basic principles of research ethics
- 2) Compare the advantages and disadvantages of common research methodologies, including experimental, survey and qualitative research;
- 3) Identify, read, summarize, and critically evaluate various sources of research
- 4) Explain in writing social science research and research methodology

Teaching and Learning Methods

This course will involve a variety of teaching and learning methods, group work, experiential activities that *teach* research methods by *doing* research methods, and online discussions. Students are expected to be active participants in their own learning.

The focus of this course is on becoming both a critical *consumer* and *producer* of research, allowing learning to transcend the walls of our classroom and be applied to lives and careers where we will be constantly confronted with the need to evaluate the validity and source of information presented to us. Furthermore, because research methodology can be applied to almost any topic, students are encouraged to integrate their knowledge and learning from other courses to the development and critique of the research methods learned within this class.

General Education

The successful completion of SOC 3111 with a grade of C- or better will satisfy the Upper Division Writing Intensive general education requirement (CW) for a bachelor's degree at the University of Utah.

As an approved CW course at the University of Utah, SOC 3111 will provide direct instruction in how to write a research report/proposal, how to read and critique existing research, and how to present research findings to different audiences (i.e., poster or oral presentation). These skills are critical for social science researchers, and are also foundational topics related to helping students learn, practice, and develop their own effective communication practices in general. Frequent written assignments, building to a larger written research project at the end of the term, will allow students to develop, get feedback, and then revise/refine their research ideas throughout the semester. Students will also develop an oral presentation, where they have to articulate and discuss their research question and proposed research methodology. Students will use the feedback provided on these assignments to revise/refine their ideas for a final written research report at the end of the semester. Given the nature of these assignments plus the requirement of a final research report, a majority of the final course grade will be based on the students' ability to write and communicate.

Specific Learning Outcomes & Assessments for **Intellectual and Practical Skills**

1. *Inquiry & Analysis* – Inherent in “research methods” is learning how to ask research questions (inquiry) and how to answer that question with data or evidence (analysis). The course schedule has dedicated learning units focused on both question formulation and data analysis. Assessment will be done with a review of an assignment on developing research topics/questions, an assignment related to data analysis (quantitative or qualitative), and a final research project.
2. *Information Literacy* – A major objective of the course is to teach students to become both a critical consumer and producer of research. To do so, students will learn how to ask questions about how the evidence was collected, whether it is representative of a larger phenomenon or population, how it was analyzed, and whether it is presented in an unbiased way. These are all examples of information literacy. To achieve this outcome, the course schedule includes dedicated learning units on how to evaluate the validity (i.e., accuracy and truthfulness) of material and information that is presented to us, as well as units on how to do both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Assessment will be done with a literature review assignment where students identify and evaluate others' published research, assignment related to presenting/analyzing data, final research project.

Specific Learning Outcomes & Outcome Assessments for **Personal & Social Responsibility**

1. *Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning* – A course in “research methods” emphasizes the need to match data/evidence with our theories/ideas. While this course provides a solid foundation for those who want to pursue a career in research, it also teaches students to be more critically aware of the sources and validity of information that we see everyday (i.e., in the media) – an important skill for lifelong learning and success for everyone. The course's focus on developing and refining one's communication skills (orally and in writing) is another important outcome of this course. Assessment: quality of writing, presentation, and discussion, especially those assignments where students critique their own or other's research.
2. *Ethical Reasoning* – Researchers are obligated to conduct ethical research, especially when dealing with human subjects. This course has a dedicated learning module related to the basic principles and practice of ethical research. Assessment: Students will complete a standardized and rigorous training course related to “research ethics” where they will receive a certificate allowing them to work on research projects at the University or other research entities (CITI training).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Readings

There are two assigned textbooks for this class. The first textbook is a social research method textbook, and the second focuses on the craft of writing and formulating research. These books are available at the University of Utah bookstore, on reserve at the Marriott Library. Students should be able to find use copies online.

1. Earl R. Babbie. *The Basics of Social Research 7th Edition*
2. Booth et al, *Craft of Research 4th Edition*

Additional readings and resources will be available via Canvas.

Class Tasks

Quizzes (300 points –30 points /Quiz)

There will be twelve (12) quizzes, each worth 30 points. These quizzes are meant to help you keep abreast with the readings. Each student's two lowest quiz scores will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Discussion Forums (150 points –50 points/Discussion)

There will be three online discussion forums over the course of the semester. Students are required to participate in these discussion forums during the period each is open and available. Given that these discussion forums are similar to what happens in class, there will be no makeup opportunities. One exception applies. I will allow makeup for any of these discussions, if an affected student can show that he/she was incapacitated or physically incapable of completing the exercise during the entirety of the period it was open and available. Each discussion forum will be available for 7 days (Monday to Sunday). Each is worth 50 points.

Research Benchmark Assignments (350 points; 50 points/benchmark assignment)

There will be a series of benchmark assignments throughout the term: research ethics certification; topic selection for approval; annotated bibliography; draft introduction to research project; survey research; qualitative data collection; and draft methods. The assignments are intended to 1) provide an opportunity for students to “practice” a part of the research process and/or 2) to serve as a building block or initial *draft* of the final research project. These frequent and regular assignments provide instructor and/or TA feedback, so students can develop and revise their ideas and writing throughout the semester. You may do this in groups. However, if you choose the group option, you must continue with that option with the same group members for the Final Research Project (see below).

Gains Report (50 points)

Each student will be required to complete and submit bullet points of the most important things he/she learned in the class over the course of the semester. You will be required to provide up to ten (10) bullet points, but no less than five (5). This assignment is worth 50 points.

Final Research Project –AKA Final Paper (150 points)

The final project will require students to make decisions regarding a research topic they want to study, identify and review existing research literature that is related to the chosen topic, and choose and justify an appropriate research design (i.e., data collection and analysis strategy) that could answer a specific research question within their topic area. The culmination of this project will be a written paper. Projects may be done in groups. The benchmark assignments can serve as input or building blocks for this project; in fact, they are intended to serve this purpose.

GRADING

Course grades will be calculated as a weighted average of online discussions (30%), assignments (40%), and final research project (30%).

Grade	Points	Percent
A	930-1000	93.0-100.0
A-	900-929	90.0-92.9
B+	870-899	87.0-89.9
B	830-869	83.0-86.9
B-	800-829	80.0-82.9
C+	770-799	77.0-79.9
C	730-769	73.0-76.9
C-	700-729	70.0-72.9
D+	670-699	67.0-69.9
D	630-669	63.0-66.9
D-	600-629	60.0-62.9
E	< 600	< 60

The instructor is committed to providing the most fair and transparent grading procedures and outcomes as possible. To this end,

- Instructor will grade assignments and provide feedback within 7 days of submission.
- It is the student's responsibility to report and discuss grade discrepancies with instructor.
- Instructor will entertain grade change requests, but such discussions should occur outside of class time and at least 24 hours after a grade is assigned (i.e., take a day to reflect on the comments provided and review the material prior to requesting grade change)
- No late assignments or make-ups for in-class activities will be accepted, without approved documentation.
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THE FINE PRINT OF A SYLLABUS

Student Behavior & Expectations

- ❖ *Participation*: We expect regular and timely participation in all class activities online.
- ❖ *Canvas and U-Mail*: All course resources and announcements will be posted on the course website (Canvas), and sent via university assigned emails. Students have access to these resources through their unid. Students are responsible for regularly checking Canvas and Umail. Technical support is provided via classhelp@utah.edu or 801-581-6112.
- ❖ *Assignment Submissions*: Students are responsible for submitting assignments on-time, with correct naming convention and file extension, and using the software type and version required. Please read assignment sheets carefully. **NO EMAIL SUBMISSIONS. ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO CANVAS.**
- ❖ *Be Respectful*: Participation in the University of Utah community obligates each member to follow a code of civilized behavior in and out of the classroom. In order to maintain a positive, civil environment for learning, students are expected to meet the goals described in the University of Utah's Student Code, which states "*the mission of the University of Utah is to educate the individual and to discover, refine and disseminate knowledge. The University supports the intellectual, personal, social and ethical development of members of the University community.*"

These goals can best be achieved in an open and supportive environment that encourages reasoned discourse, honesty, and respect for the rights of all individuals. Students at the University of Utah are encouraged to exercise personal responsibility and self-discipline and engage in the rigors of discovery and scholarship.”

- ❖ **Keep an Open Mind.** Some of the readings, lectures, films, or presentations in this course may include material that conflicts with the core beliefs of some students. Please review the syllabus carefully to see if the course is one that you are committed to taking.
- ❖ **DO NOT Cheat:** It is assumed that all work submitted to instructor is your own work. When you have used ideas of others, you must properly indicate that you have done so. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on an individual assignment, failure in the course, and/or expulsion from the university. Academic misconduct, according to the University of Utah Student Code, “includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information...It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct.” For detailed definitions and possible sanctions please see: <http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html>.

Support and Resources for Student Success

- ❖ **Wellness Statement:** Your personal health and wellness are essential to your success as a student. Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive in this course and at the University of Utah. Please speak with the instructors before issues become problems. And, for helpful resources, contact the course-assigned SSA or the Center for Student Wellness at www.wellness.utah.edu or 801-581-7776.
- ❖ **Americans with Disabilities Act.** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.
- ❖ **Sexual Misconduct.** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).
- ❖ **LGBT Resource Center:** The U of Utah has an LGBT Resource Center on campus. They are located in Room 409 in the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. You can visit their website to find more information about the support they can offer, a list of events through the center and links to additional resources: <http://lgbt.utah.edu/>. Please also let us know if there is any additional support you need in this class.

- ❖ Learners of English as an Additional/Second Language. If you are an English language learner, please be aware of several resources on campus that will support you with your language and writing development. These resources include: the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.utah.edu/>); the Writing Program (<http://writing-program.utah.edu/>); the English Language Institute (<http://continue.utah.edu/eli/>). Please let us know if there is any additional support you would like to discuss for this class.

As the only institution in the state classified in the highest research category (R1), at the University of Utah you will have access to state-of-the-art research facilities and be able to be part of the knowledge creation process. You will have the opportunity to do research of your own with faculty who are leading experts in their field, engaging in programs that match your research interests. Further, you will interact with and often take classes with graduate students that provide an advanced understanding of the knowledge in your field.

SEE COURSE SCHEDULE IN THE NEXT PAPER

SCHEDULE

WEEK	TOPIC	TASKS & DUE DATES
1 (Starts Monday 08/20)	WHAT IS “SOCIAL SCIENCE” RESEARCH? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human Inquiry and Science - Paradigms, Theory, and Research <p><u>Reading:</u> Earl Babbie –Chapters 1 & 2</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the assigned readings 2. Review PowerPoint slides 3. Quiz #1 due on Saturday, 08/25/18 @11:59PM
2 (Starts Monday 08/27)	RESEARCH ETHICS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Ethics and Politics of Social Research - Institutional Review Board <p><u>Reading:</u> Earl Babbie –Chapter 3 <u>Assignment:</u> Online research ethics training</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the assigned readings 2. Review PowerPoint slides 3. Quiz #2 due on Saturday, 09/01/18 @11:59PM 4. CITI Certificate due on Saturday 09/01/18 @11:59PM
3 (Starts Monday 09/3)	THE STRUCTURING OF INQUIRY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research Design <p><u>Reading:</u> Earl Babbie –Chapter 4 Craft of Research: section 1 and 2 <u>Assignment (Writing):</u> Topic Approval Discussion #1: Why do some researchers cheat? Now available</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the assigned readings 2. Review PowerPoint slides 3. Quiz #3 due on Saturday, 09/08/18 @11:59PM 4. Topic due on Saturday , 09/08/18 @11:59PM 5. Discussion #1 due on Sunday 09/09/18 @11:59PM
4 (Starts Monday 09/10)	CONCEPTUALIZATION, OPERATIONALIZATION & MEASUREMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conceptualization - Operationalization - Measurement <p><u>Reading:</u> Earl Babbie –Chapter 5 <u>Assignment (Writing):</u> Annotated Bibliography from Literature Search ----- <u>Assignment (Writing):</u> Draft of Intro</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the assigned readings 2. Review PowerPoint slides 3. Quiz #4 due on Saturday, 09/15/18 @11:59PM 4. Work on <i>Annotated Bibliography</i> and <i>Draft Introduction</i>
5 (Starts Monday 09/17)	THE LOGIC OF SAMPLING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Probability and nonprobability based sampling techniques - Sample bias and sampling error 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the assigned readings 2. Review PowerPoint slides 3. Quiz #5 due on

	<p><u>Reading:</u> Earl Babbie –Chapter 7</p>	<p>Saturday, 09/22/18 @11:59PM</p> <p>4. Annotated Bibliography from Literature Search due on Saturday, 09/22/18 @11:59PM</p> <p>5. Continue to work on <i>Draft Introduction</i></p>
<p>6 (Starts Monday 09/24)</p>	<p>Becoming a Critical Consumer & Producer of Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Types of research reports - Sections/format/style of reports - Peer-review process - How to find research (guest speaker from library) - How to read research - How to integrate & Synthesize research (lit review) <p><u>Reading:</u> Craft of Research: Section 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Draft of Intro (writing) Assignment</p>	<p>1. Complete the assigned readings</p> <p>2. Review PowerPoint slides</p> <p>3. <i>Draft Introduction</i> due on Saturday, 09/29/18 @11:59PM</p>
<p>7 (Starts Monday 10/01)</p>	<p>MODES OF OBSERVATION I: EXPERIMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experimental Designs <p><u>Reading:</u> Earl Babbie –Chapter 8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Discussion #2 available</p>	<p>1. Complete the assigned readings</p> <p>2. Review PowerPoint slides</p> <p>3. Quiz #6 due on Saturday, 10/06/18 @11:59PM</p>
<p>8 (Starts Monday 10/08)</p>	<p>Fall Break: October 07-14</p>	<p>Fall Break: Enjoy the break and be safe.</p>
<p>9 (Starts Monday 10/15)</p>	<p>MODES OF OBSERVATION II: SURVEY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey Research - Multi-item indices and scales - <p><u>Reading:</u> Earl Babbie –Chapter 6 (indexes and scales) & 9 (survey research)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Survey Research (experiential) Assignment Draft of Methods (writing) Assignment</p>	<p>1. Complete the assigned readings</p> <p>2. Review PowerPoint slides</p> <p>3. Quiz #7 due on Saturday, 10/20/18 @11:59PM</p> <p>4. Discussion #2 due on Sunday, 10/21/18 @11:59PM</p>
<p>10 (Starts Monday 10/22)</p>	<p>MODES OF OBSERVATION III: QUALITATIVE FIELD RESEARCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participant observation - Intensive interviewing <p><u>Reading:</u> Earl Babbie –Chapter 10</p>	<p>1. Complete the assigned readings</p> <p>2. Review PowerPoint slides</p> <p>3. Quiz #8 due on Saturday 10/27/18</p>

	Qualitative Data Collection (experiential) Assignment	@11:59PM
11 (Starts Monday 10/29)	<p>MODES OF OBSERVATION III: UNOBTRUSIVE RESEARCH & EVALUATION</p> <p>Unobtrusive Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Secondary analysis - Historical comparative designs <p>Evaluation Research</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> Earl Babbie –Chapters 11 & 12</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the assigned readings 2. Review PowerPoint slides 3. Quiz #9 due on Saturday, 11/03/18 @11:59PM 4. Survey research assignment due on Saturday, 11/03/18 @11:59PM
12 (Starts Monday 11/05)	<p>ANALYSIS OF DATA: QUALITATIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Features and techniques of qualitative analysis - Making a claim and supporting it <p><u>Reading:</u> Earl Babbie –Chapter 13 Craft of Research – Section 3</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Discussion #3 available</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the assigned readings 2. Review PowerPoint slides 3. Quiz #10 due on Saturday, 11/10/18 @11:59PM 4. Qualitative Data Collection assignment due on Saturday, 11/10/18 @11:59PM
13 (Starts Monday 11/12)	<p>ANALYSIS OF DATA: QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Features and techniques of quantitative analysis (intro to stats) - Visualizing data (how to make figures/tables) <p><u>Reading:</u> Earl Babbie –Chapter 14 Craft of Research – Section 3</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete assigned reading 2. Review PowerPoint slides 3. Quiz #11 due on Saturday, 11/17/18 @11:59PM 4. <i>Draft Methods</i> due on Saturday, 11/17/18 @11:59PM 5. Discussion #3 due on Sunday, 11/18/18 @11:59PM
14 (Starts Monday 11/19) Note: This is a short week; Due date is Wednesday	<p>Communicating Research: Papers, Presentations, Posters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading and Writing Social Research - Examples of research posters, papers, presentations (provide) <p><u>Reading:</u> Earl Babbie –Chapter 15 Craft of Research – Section 4</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete assigned reading 2. Review PowerPoint slides
15 (Starts Monday	<p>Communicating Research: Papers, Presentations, Posters (Cont'd)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete assigned reading (may only need quick revision since

11/26)	<u>Reading:</u> Earl Babbie –Chapter 15 Craft of Research – Section 4 Revisions - Revise your research paper - The first draft is never the final draft	reading is the same as last week) 2. Continue to review PowerPoint slides 3. Quiz #12 due on Saturday, 12/01/18 @11:59PM
16 (Starts Monday 12/03)	Work on Final Project/Paper Complete your <i>Gains report</i>	1. Work on your final paper (research project) 2. Contact instructor and/or TAs with questions 3. <i>Gains report</i> due by 11:59PM on Saturday, 12/08/18.
EXAM WEEK	Final Project (written)	1. Submit Final Project paper by Wednesday, 12/12/18

SUMMARY OF DUE DATES

Tasks	Due Date	Submission	Effort	Points
<i>Quizzes (Two dropped)</i>				300
#1	Sat., 08/25/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	30
#2	Sat., 09/01/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	30
#3	Sat., 09/08/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	30
#4	Sat., 09/15/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	30
#5	Sat., 09/22/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	30
#6	Sat., 10/06/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	30
#7	Sat., 10/20/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	30
#8	Sat., 10/27/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	30
#9	Sat., 11/03/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	30
#10	Sat., 11/10/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	30
#11	Sat., 11/17/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	30
#12	Sat., 12/01/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	30
<i>Discussions</i>				150
#1	Sun., 09/09/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	50
#2	Sun., 10/21/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	50
#3	Sun., 11/18/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	50
<i>Research Benchmark Assignments</i>				350
#1: Ethics Certification	Sat. 09/01/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	50
#2: Topic for Approval	Sat., 09/08/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual/Group	50
#3: Annotated Bibliography	Sat., 09/22/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual/Group	50
#4: Draft of “Intro”	Sat., 09/29/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual/Group	50
#5: Survey Research	Sat., 11/03/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual/Group	50
#6: Qualitative Data	Sat., 11/10/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual/Group	50
#7: Draft of “Methods”	Sat., 11/17/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual/Group	50
<i>Gains Report</i>	Sat., 12/08/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual	50
Final paper	Wed., 12/12/18 @11:59PM	Canvas	Individual/Group	150

Grading Rubric for Discussions, Research Benchmark Assignments, and Final Paper

All assignment will be graded on a ten-point scale. Unless specified on the individual assignment sheet, the following guidelines will be used to assign a point value:

- 10** **EXCELLENT:** The student exhibits a critical understanding of the concepts, can articulate concepts in his/her own words, and shows an active mastery over the concepts. The work shows creativity and innovative thinking. Written work is complete, on-time, and is free from errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The assignment adheres to all instructions. The assignment is perfect or near perfect.

- 9** **VERY GOOD:** The student's work shows a good mastery of the subject. Some innovation, creativity, and critical thought, but may show some very minor lapses in reasoning or understanding. Written work is complete, on-time, and is free from errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The assignment adheres to all instructions.

- 7-8** **GOOD:** The student's work shows a basic mastery of the subject. The work is solid, but is not necessarily innovative or creative. Otherwise 'very good' or 'excellent' work is marred by sloppy editing or poor presentation.

- 5-6** **LESS THAN SATISFACTORY:** The work shows incomplete mastery of the subject. The work exhibits major spelling and grammar errors or is very sloppy. The assignment is incomplete or fails to follow the instructions. The assignment is turned in outside of class-time.

- 1-4** **POOR:** The student's work shows fatal gaps in understanding, is very sloppy, or is incomplete.

- 0** **NOT ACCEPTABLE:** The student's work does not satisfy the learning requirements of this exercise. The student failed to turn in an assignment altogether.