Illinois State University Institutional Review Board
Research with Human Subjects
Protocol Submission Form

IRB Number _____
(Number to be completed by REC)

Federal regulations and Illinois State University policy require that all research involving humans as subjects be reviewed and approved by the University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Any person (ISU faculty member, staff member, student, or other person) wanting to engage in human subject research at or through Illinois State University must receive written approval from the IRB before conducting research. For more information, templates, and forms please go to **www.rsp.ilstu.edu**

Please complete and forward this form and all supporting documents to your Department/Unit IRB representative. Handwritten applications will not be accepted. If you have any questions, please contact your Departmental/Unit IRB representative or the Research Ethics & Compliance Office, (REC) 438-2520, Campus Box 3330

I. General Information

A. Protocol Information

Protocol Title:
A Multi-Institutional Study of Research Experience Capstone Courses in Sociology

Purpose of Project (Please check only one box) ☐ Dissertation ☐ Thesis

☐ Class project (Please give course number) _____ ☐ Other

☐ Externally funded faculty/staff research (Complete Appendix B) ☐ **Non-externally funded faculty/staff research**

B. **Principal Investigator Information** (PI must be an ISU faculty or staff member)

Principal Investigator		☐ **Faculty** ☐ Staff	
Dept	Mail Code	Telephone Number	Email Address
Co-Principal Investigator Information			
Co- Principal Investigator		☐ Faculty ☐ Staff ☐ Grad. Student ☐ Undergrad. Student	
Dept	Mail Code	Telephone Number	Email Address
Co-Principal Investigator Information			
Co- Principal Investigator		☐ Faculty ☐ Staff ☐ Grad. Student ☐ Undergrad. Student	
Dept	Mail Code	Telephone Number	Email Address

II. Principal Investigator Assurance

As Principal Investigator, I certify that to the best of my knowledge:

1. The information provided for this project is correct
2. No other procedures will be used in this protocol
3. I agree to conduct this research as described in the attached supporting documents
4. I will request and receive approval from the IRB for changes prior to implementing changes (including but not limited to changes in cooperating investigators or any changes in procedures).
5. I will comply with IRB and ISU policies for conducting ethical research.
6. I will be responsible for ensuring that the work of my co-investigator(s)/student researcher(s) complies with this protocol.
7. Any unexpected or otherwise significant events in the course of this study will be promptly reported to the REC.
8. In the case of student research, I assume responsibility for ensuring that any student will comply with University and Federal regulations regarding the use of human subjects in research.
9. In the case of externally funded research, I will request a modification to my approved protocol if any relative changes to the project's scope of work are requested by the agency.

_____ _____
Principal Investigator Signature Date

III. Protocol Description

A. Provide a **BRIEF** description, in **LAYPERSON'S TERMS**, of the proposed research. State the goals and/or hypotheses of this study and how these goals relate to previous research in this area.

Providing sociology undergraduate students with opportunities to engage in original empirical research is critical. Such opportunities take a variety of forms including a research capstone course for sociology majors. Published research, primarily outside our discipline, supports the value of student research experiences in a variety of forms or settings. In sociology, there have been articles on research experiences at various levels in the curriculum but the evidence of effectiveness and value for sociology students has been mostly anecdotal or very limited in scope. In addition, there has been research on learning by sociology majors where the research capstone is but one piece of the overall experience. Thus, there is much we do not know. There is little published, empirical data-- beyond student self-report --on learning by sociology majors. We know virtually nothing about the outcomes of research-based sociology capstone courses or student perceptions of such courses. Data on these topics from multiple institutions and across the time span of the course are needed. The focus of this project, then, is on one type of sociology capstone course—the research experience capstone. The purpose of this study, or the teaching-learning problem, is to assess student learning and other outcomes from, as well as student perceptions of, a one-semester, required sociology research experience capstone course as taught at six institutions varying in geographical location, size, private-public status, and co-ed-same sex status. Measures will be taken at multiple points in time during the course using multiple methods—both qualitative and quantitative. These will include pre- and post-questionnaires, focus groups, reflective learning essays, and examination of senior theses.

B. Methodology

a. Identify all participant groups in the study and indicate criteria for including or excluding individuals from participation.

The institutions with the courses and students for the study were selected based on volunteer collaborators responding to a call from the principal investigator who found their courses in a publication on the Sociology Capstone course. All the courses meet the following criteria:
1. course is required and for sociology majors only;
2. course is one semester long;
3. other core courses (theory, methods, statistics) are pre-requisites (or a maximum of one could be concurrent with capstone);
4. course is a research experience capstone with a final paper, thesis, or journal article as the main outcome;
5. students do their project and paper as individuals or, at most, in 2 person teams (though help is provided by peers, instructor, etc.); and
6. the course is the primary "location" for the research experience, that is, though students draw from past courses and may obtain advice from other faculty, the one capstone course is the location for the research and writing.

Thus far, colleagues from the following schools are willing to collaborate, obtain local IRB approval, and collect data from students in their department's sociology research capstone course: Illinois State University, Loyola University, Western Michigan University, Saint Mary's College, Skidmore College, and Southern Illinois University- Edwardsville. IRB approval for the study will be obtained at each institution. Participation in the study will be voluntary and data will be kept confidential. The purposive sample of students (N = about 200) will be the members of the research experience sociology capstone courses in fall 2009 or spring 2010 semesters at those schools. The data collection procedures will be the same at the other schools as described below for ISU.

b. How many participants will be included in the study?
I am not targeting any specific gender or age group.
Number: Male __75___ Female __125___ Total _200____
(N/A _____ if not targeting males/females specifically)

Age range: __18___ to _**85**____

c. Justify use of any protected populations (e.g., children, mentally disabled individuals, prisoners, pregnant women). Complete whichever is appropriate, Appendix C-F, for that population.

Not applicable.

d. How will you identify potential participants and get access to contact information? Please include documentation of permission to use any proprietary sources, i.e. listserv, organization roster, etc.

Faculty collaborators at each institution, after local IRB approval, will contact potential participants via their membership in their senior capstone course. Participants will be approached during a class session about the study by a faculty member or GA not teaching the course. **At ISU, the PI will identify and recruit all participants.**

e. How will participants be recruited? Attach all recruitment documentation, (i.e. e-mail letters, flyers, telephone scripts, etc.) and indicate how they will be contacted and by whom.

See D above. Participants will be recruited via a verbal statement including informed consent in the class session. **For both the focus group portion and the senior theses, signed informed consent statements will be obtained (see attached). The other two methods, questionnaire and reflective essays will be anonymous.**

f. Who will obtain informed consent/assent and what procedures will be used (and in what order) to secure informed consent/assent?

The faculty member or GA not teaching the course will also obtain informed consent. Students at all locations will be informed that their data, aggregated, will be sent to the PI at ISU. See attached for the informed consent and recruitment statement.

g. How will the risk of coercion be minimized?

By having someone other than the instructor do the recruiting as well as by the language in the statement and by informing students that data will not be analyzed until their class has ended.

h. Where will the research take place? Please be as specific as possible. If research is confidential in nature, please explain how location will help preserve confidentiality.

Data gathering will take place in two class sessions in the regular classrooms; one at the start and one at the end of the term. In addition, focus groups will be held during another class session or outside of class but in a campus building in a private but safe location.

If consent, permission, and assent forms are being used, attach copies. If presented verbally, a copy of any presentation script must be submitted. Examples of informed consent and parent permission can be found at www.rsp.ilstu.edu

Please see the attached, specific to each part of the study, informed consent forms.

C. PROCEDURE

a. Who will collect data?

The PI who is not the instructor of the class. A GA, to be identified and added to the protocol in the fall will help with data collection.

b. What are you asking the participants to do? In what order?

Complete a pre and post questionnaire, participate in a focus group, write a reflective learning essay, **and grant permission for the PI to review their senior thesis.**

c. Will you involve them in a psychological intervention, biomedical procedure, or deception? If so, complete relevant Appendix G, H, or J.
No

d. If participants are receiving compensation for participation (e.g., payment, gifts, extra credit, etc.) indicate type and amount of compensation, how it will be disbursed, and identify the funding source.
We will likely not have any funds for this but, if we do, we hope to offer each student who participates in the focus groups which may be held outside of class, $20 for partial compensation of their time. This will be either cash or a gift card.

d. Will you record audio___x___, video _____, or still images_____ of participants whether by film, tape, digital or other media? Please check and complete Appendix K.
We may audio tape the focus group conversations.

D. INSTRUMENTS/APPARATUS

What forms, surveys, equipment, etc. will you use? (Attach copies of all forms**,** surveys and instruments to be used**.**) If online surveys will be used, please identify the system to be used and describe the system's confidentiality protections.
Copies of the pre and post questionnaire, focus group questions, and reflective essay questions are attached.

E.DATA

a. How/where will the data be stored and kept secure? Please specify building and room number.
Private office of PI, ITDC room 120, ISU Campus; **password protected computer**

b. Who will have access?
PI and secretary have keys to the office. **A graduate assistant, to be named and added to protocol in the fall, will have access to data that will not identify individual students when he/she does data entry or analysis.**

c. How will the data be used (during and after the research)? Will it be disseminated through publication, presentation or other means?
The data will be used for professional presentations and publications, as well as for possibly making changes in the capstone course.

d. How and when will the data be disposed of?
When all the data has been aggregated, analyzed, and published (about 2011), the data will be disposed of via secure campus recycling **and by deleting all electronic files via some form of a secure delete function.**

F. RISKS

a. What are the physical, psychological, or social (loss of reputation, privacy, or employability) risks?

There is a very low risk that a student might feel some minimal psychological distress related to their learning in the course when completing the anonymous questionnaire or essay. **In the focus group, there is minimal risk—as they are voluntary, confidential, and not very controversial—that participants will feel emotional discomfort or violation of privacy if another participant shares information outside the group.**

b. How will the risks be minimized?

Participation is voluntary and anonymous except for the focus group which is voluntary and confidential. The instructor will not see any data until the course has ended. Data will be aggregated. No individual identifiers will be used. **The informed consent statement for the focus group reminds members to keep information confidential to within the focus group.**

c. Will the data be anonymous _____ or confidential____x_____?

G. BENEFITS

a. What do you hope to learn?

We hope to learn about the learning outcomes, student satisfaction/perceptions, research skills obtained from a capstone research course in the discipline. This information will help us improve the course and enhance learning outcomes.

b. Who might find these results useful?

Sociology faculty and faculty in other disciplines that use a research experience in the major. Students may also find the results useful in improving how they approach the course. In addition, because the course is a research course, students will learn course content (examples, etc.) from participation in the research project.

c. How will the participants directly benefit? If they will not, please state that. Compensation is not a benefit.

See also b. above. Students may benefit from reflecting on their learning. Research shows such reflection can enhance learning. In addition, they may benefit from feeling altruistic in that their data may help improve the course for future sociology majors.

d. Explain how the benefits justify the associated risks.

The risks are minimal and are reduced even further by ethical procedures. The learning benefits to these and future students outweigh the minimal risks. **That is, the data from this study will help instructors redesign the capstone course to improve student motivation and learning in this course which many believe is critical to the curriculum and to student job hunting and graduate school applications and success.**

See also b. and c. above.

IV. Checklist

This checklist must be completed and attached to all protocols or Department Representatives will return them to the PI. Please note that for any items checked "yes" you must attach the designated, completed appendices and relevant forms and instruments.

___x__ Yes _____ No	Informed consent procedures/ documentation have been clearly explained. (**All** protocols must have a completed **Appendix A.**)
_____ Yes __x___ No	Is your research being funded? (If yes, complete **Appendix B.**)
_____ Yes __x___ No	Are you recruiting and enrolling subjects 0-7 years old? (If yes, complete and attach **Appendix C.**)
_____ Yes __x___ No	Are you recruiting and enrolling subjects 8-17 years old? (If yes, complete and attach **Appendix C.**)
_____ Yes __x___ No	Are you recruiting and enrolling prisoners as subjects? (If yes, complete and attach **Appendix D.**)
_____ Yes __x___ No	Are you recruiting and enrolling pregnant women as subjects? (If yes, complete and attach **Appendix E.)**
_____ Yes ___x__ No	Are you recruiting and enrolling mentally incapacitated individuals as subjects? (If yes, complete and attach **Appendix F.**)
_____ Yes __x___ No	Will the subjects of this study be exposed to the possibility of harm, including physiological, psychological, or social (e.g., loss of reputation, privacy, or employability). (If yes, complete and attach **Appendix G.**)
_____ Yes __x___ No	Will the subjects of this study be exposed to any psychological interventions such as contrived social situations, manipulation of the subject's attitudes, opinions or self-esteem, psychotherapeutic procedures, or other psychological influences. (If yes, complete and attach **Appendix H.**)
_____ Yes __x___ No	Will this study involve any elements of deception? (If yes, complete and attach **Appendix I.**)
_____ Yes __x___ No	Will the proposed research involve any biomedical procedures (e.g., the taking or withholding of medication, ingestion of any food or other substances, injections, blood drawing, or any other procedure which would normally be done under medical supervision). (If yes, complete and attach **Appendix J.**)
__x___ Yes _____ No	Will all or some of the subject(s) of the proposed research be audio or videotaped or recorded in any other manner? (If yes, complete and attach **Appendix K.**)
_____ Yes __x___ No	Will this proposed research involve any elements of technology? (i.e. web-based subject recruitment, email recruitment, web survey, etc.)

Appendix A: Elements of Informed Consent

Please ensure that all of these elements are included in the protocol and consent documents before checking "Yes". The informed consent procedures and documents outlined in this protocol must contain all of the following:

__x___ Yes	1.	A statement that the study involves research
__x___ Yes	2.	An explanation of the purposes of the research
__x___ Yes	3.	The duration of the participant's participation
__x__ Yes	4.	A description of procedures to be followed
__x___ Yes	5.	A description of foreseeable risks or discomforts to the participant
__x___ Yes	6.	A description of any benefits to the participants or any others that may be expected from the research
__x___ Yes	7.	A statement describing the extent, if any, that confidentiality will be maintained
__x___ Yes	8.	An explanation as to whom to contact concerning questions about the research, research participants' rights, and/or a research related injury or adverse effect. This should include the Principal Investigator's name and contact information as well as the Research Ethics & Compliance Office name and number: (309) 438-2520.
__x___ Yes	9.	A statement that participation is voluntary
__x___ Yes	10.	A statement that refusal to participate involves no penalty or loss of benefits
__x___ Yes	11.	A statement that the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits

Do the consent procedures and documents outlined in the protocol contain the following?

__x___ **N/A**	1.	Identification of any experimental procedures
__x___ **N/A**	2.	A disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any that might be advantageous to the subject
__x___ **N/A**	3.	An explanation about any compensation or medical treatments that may be available if injury occurs, what they may be, and where to get further information

Appendix K: VIDEO/AUDIO TAPING

1) If all or some of the subject(s) of the proposed research will be audio or videotaped, justify why the use of audio or videotaping is necessary to the study.

Volunteers will participate in face-to-face focus groups. Taking detailed notes is possible but difficult. Data will be lost and, in particular, the exact words or direct quotes from the students may be lost. Using only notes without audio recording would decrease our ability to have the best qualitative data from the focus groups. We will be less likely to hear and use student voices.

2) Who will have access to the tapes and for what purposes?

The PI and the graduate research assistant**, to be named and added to the protocol later**, will have access for data analysis. Tapes will not be used; a digital, electronic drive will be used.

3) Where will the tapes be stored and what security measures will be taken to prevent unauthorized persons from accessing the tapes?

The data will be stored in the locked campus office of the PI **on a password protected computer**. No identifying information will be on the electronic hard drive or in the computer files.

4) What are your plans for the ultimate use and disposal of the tapes?

When all analysis and publications are complete, the data will be erased **or deleted from the drives using some form of a secure delete function.**