Sociology 612: Research Methods
9-11:50 Wednesdays, 714 PLC

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Office Hours: Thursday, 1:00-3:00, Zoom via Calendly
(https://calendly.com/light-sociology/15min)

But statistics are just fish sticks
Without their human faces
How can I empathize with all the lives
That each number embraces
-Darren Hanlon

Course Description: Sociology can be exceedingly hard to define. The proverbial person on the street seems just as likely to equate sociology with social work as with the study of society. The phrase "the study of society" is itself unsatisfactory being too vague and more often than not resulting in tautology: After all, what is society, but the amorphous thing sociologists study. Abbott (2004) defines sociology by the areas of analysis inequality, race, class, and so forth that bound sociological work. In other words, sociology is what sociologists do. This seems more to the point, but is still too vague. Sociology in my conceptualization is a specific collection of methods and theories extending from the macro-micro, the positivist-interpretivist and so on. Here, sociology is both a practice (the sociological labor described by Abbott) and an object (the product of this labor).

In this course we will study the methods that form the core of sociology and hopefully learn a little more about ourselves as sociologists. This is not an easy task. Unlike some disciplines there is not a discrete set of tools employed by most practitioners. Rather, sociology consists of a range of tools that have very different assumptions. While we are likely to only use a handful of the tools available to us, having a working understanding of the toolkit as a whole helps our own more specialized work. To understand the strengths and weaknesses of these tools, we must develop an understanding of the logic of research and think through some of the fundamental principles of research, such as what makes a good research question, what is explanation, and what are the constraints of particular methods. We will also spend some time thinking about the practical side of research, such as managing projects, writing proposals, and reviewing articles.

In sum, this class aims to offer a foundation for understanding and conducting sociological research.

Grade Distribution:

Reviews (2 reviews, no more than 1000 words):	25%
NSF-GRFP Proposal (2 pages, single-spaced):	20%
Final Prospectus (about 4000-5000 words):	35%
Article Presentation & In-Class Participation:	10%
Weekly Discussion Questions	5%
Flash Presentation:	5%

Requirements:
- **Reviews**

- Like an article review, critique an empirical article from the syllabus, but focus primarily on the methods. Explain what the paper seeks to accomplish and delve into the strengths and weaknesses of the approach. Are there any counterfactuals worth considering? Would a different methodological approach provide different insight? No more than 1000 words.

    - **NSF-GRFP Proposal** The midterm project is based on the National Science Foundation's Graduate Research Fellowship Program application. The application consists of two sections. For this class, we will only develop the second, the Graduate Research Statement. This statement is no more than 2 pages long, single-spaced.
- **Final Prospectus**
    - The final prospectus is a formal front-end of a research paper through the data and methods section that can be used as a prospectus for an MA thesis. Imagine trying to convince your adviser and potential outside members that you have a good manageable research idea for an MA project. It should correspond in style to the introductions and literature reviews in your subfield, but must contain a clear research question(s), a discussion of concepts pertinent to your topic, and an overview of relevant methodological approaches to your topic and how they present conflicting or overlapping results. The data and methods section should present your proposed data and methods. Note: Students with MA thesis in hand can make alternative arrangements for final project prior to the end of week 3.
- **Weekly Discussion Questions**
    - Submit three questions to a discussion board on canvas about the reading at least 1 hour before each class. These questions should provide evidence of how you are reading the material and highlight what is most intriguing to you from the weekly readings.
- **Article Presentation and In-Class Participation**
    - Each student is asked to present the material from one of the assigned articles (scheduled during week 1 or 2) and participate in discussion throughout the class. The presentation should address the following issues: 1. What are the main research questions? 2. What are the main theoretical arguments? 3. What are the methods? 4. Do the theory, methods, question match? 5. Do the authors' use any heuristics? 6. What are the main "take-home points?" 7. Generate 2-3 questions to motivate discussion.
- **Flash Final Proposal Presentation**
    - Four minute presentation with no more than three slides on your final project.

Recommended Texts:
Abbott, Andrew. 2004. Methods of Discovery. Norton.
Becker, Howard. 1986. Writing for Social Scientists. University of Chicago Press.
Lieberson, Stanley. 1985. Making It Count. California.
Luker, Kristin. 2008. Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences: Research in the Age of Info-Glut. Harvard University Press.
Singleton, Royce A., Jr. and Bruce C. Straits. 2010. Approaches to Social Research. Oxford UP.
Sword, Helen. 2012. Stylish Academic Writing. Harvard UP.

Schedule: The schedule is subject to change with appropriate notice in class or through email. Note that all material is available on Canvas.

Date	Topic	Task
9/28	*Introduction*	(Moody and Light 2006) (Schwemmer and Wieczorek 2020)
10/5	*What is a good idea? What questions do I ask? Research questions as the engine of research*	(Baldassarri 2018) (Martin 2018) (Luker 2009 (excerpt)) (Vasquez-Tokos and Norton-Smith 2017) (Wingfield and Chavez 2020)
10/12	*What do I study? And what do I read? And what do I write? Building a theoretical lens through prior research*	(Walton 1992) (Small 2011) (Musto 2019) (Becker 2008) (Wohl and Fine 2017) (Cloutier 2016)
10/19	*How do I explain? Research Design and Causality*	(Singleton Jr, Straits, and Straits 1993 (excerpt)) (Jackson and Cox 2013) (Mishel 2016) (Bail et al. 2018) (Kootstra 2016) **Reader Response #1**
10/26	*To what end: Theory-building, description, and explanation*	(Gross 2009) (Hedström and Udehn 2011) (Charmaz 1995) (Timmermans and Tavory 2012) (Besbris and Khan 2017) (Mueller and Abrutyn 2016)
11/2	*Who or what do I "talk" to?*	Luker Babbie Excerpt (Herbert 2018) *Heat Wave* Debate (Clarke 2004) (Duneier 2006) (Klinenberg 2006)
11/9	*Research Ethics: Institutional Imperatives and Beyond*	ASA Code of Ethics: (Association 1997) CITI Training (Blee and Currier 2011) (Goffman 2009) (Cohen 2015)

		NSF Proposal
11/16	*Reflexivity, Open Science, and Peer Review: Social scientists make the world*	(Hirschman 2016) (Bonilla-Silva and Zuberi 2008) (Basile, Asselin, and Martin 2018) TBD
11/23	*Qualitative Analysis: Issues and Exemplars*	(Jerolmack and Khan 2014) (Lamont and Swidler 2014) (Vasquez-Tokos 2017) (Harrison 2012): Methods Appendix (Dow 2015) (Jerolmack 2007) (Pascoe and Diefendorf 2019)AM
11/30	*Quantitative Analysis: Issues and Exemplars*	(Bourdieu 1979) (Hauser, Paolacci, and Chandler 2018) (Westbrook and Saperstein 2015) (Littlejohn 2019) (Lee et al. 2015) (Evans 2019) **Reader Response #2**
12/8		**Final Proposal**

Additional University and Course Policies[1]

Encouraging Inclusive Learning Environments: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Academic Misconduct: The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting

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[1] From Professor Light and/or the Teaching Engagement Program (tep.uoregon.edu)

to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

Being A Good Academic Citizen: What it means to be a good academic citizen is changing at a rapid pace. Classroom norms differ between departments and professors. Technology and our relationship to it have much to do with these ambiguities. So, being a good academic citizen means following traditional norms of good academic behavior: don't plagiarize, including non-appropriated paraphrasing and quotation (see full statement below), be respectful of others ideas, and so forth. But, it is also worth considering newer norms. For my class your phones should be put away. It is distracting to others to have people fidgeting with their text messages. You *can* use a laptop, but you should stay on task and respectful of others around you. If someone is being distracting, please contact me or a GTF. Last, you may NOT sell material for this class (notes, study guides, etc.). Any student who needs help with note-taking should talk to me.

Remote Learning:
Note that the same ethics and responsibilities of the face-to-face classroom apply to remote learning and our Zoom meetings. Please be respectful of one another and courteous to one another both in our large meetings and in breakout rooms.

Your Well-being:
Life at college can be very complicated. Students often feel overwhelmed or stressed, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationships, or just need help navigating challenges in their life. If you're facing such challenges, you don't need to handle them on your own--there's help and support on campus.

As your instructor if I believe you may need additional support, I will express my concerns, the reasons for them, and refer you to resources that might be helpful. It is not my intention to know the details of what might be bothering you, but simply to let you know I care and that help is available. Getting help is a courageous thing to do—for yourself and those you care about.

University Health Services help students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. If you need general resources on coping with stress or want to talk with another student who has been in the same place as you, visit the Duck Nest (located in the EMU on the ground floor) and get help from one of the specially trained Peer Wellness Advocates.

University Counseling Services (UCS) has a team of dedicated staff members to support you with your concerns, many of whom can provide identity-based support. All clinical services are free and confidential. Find out more at counseling.uoregon.edu or by calling 541-346-3227 (anytime UCS is closed, the After-Hours Support and Crisis Line is available by calling this same number).

Basic Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (346-3216, 164 Oregon Hall) for support.

The UO Basic Needs Resource Guide includes resources for food, housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, technology, finances, and legal support.

Bail, Christopher A., Lisa P. Argyle, Taylor W. Brown, John P. Bumpus, Haohan Chen, MB Fallin Hunzaker, Jaemin Lee, Marcus Mann, Friedolin Merhout, and Alexander Volfovsky. 2018. "Exposure to Opposing Views on Social Media Can Increase Political Polarization." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115(37):9216–21.

Becker, Howard S. 2008. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article.* University of Chicago Press.

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo, and Tukufu Zuberi. 2008. "Toward a Definition of White Logic and White Methods." *White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology* 1.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1979. "Public Opinion Does Not Exist." *Communication and Class Struggle* 1:124–30.

Clarke, Lee. 2004. "Using Disaster to See Society." *Contemporary Sociology* 33(2):137–39. doi: 10.1177/009430610403300202.

Cloutier, Charlotte. 2016. "How I Write: An Inquiry into the Writing Practices of Academics." *Journal of Management Inquiry* 25(1):69–84.

Duneier, Mitchell. 2006. "Ethnography, the Ecological Fallacy, and the 1995 Chicago Heat Wave." *American Sociological Review* 71(4):679–88. doi: 10.1177/000312240607100408.

Gross, Neil. 2009. "A Pragmatist Theory of Social Mechanisms." *American Sociological Review* 74(3):358–79.

Herbert, Claire W. 2018. "Like a Good Neighbor, Squatters Are There: Property and Neighborhood Stability in the Context of Urban Decline." *City & Community* 17(1):236–58. doi: 10.1111/cico.12275.

Hirschman, Daniel. 2016. "Stylized Facts in the Social Sciences." *Sociological Science* 3:604–26.

Jackson, Michelle, and D. R. Cox. 2013. "The Principles of Experimental Design and Their Application in Sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 39(1):27–49. doi: 10.1146/annurev-soc-071811-145443.

Klinenberg, Eric. 2006. "Blaming the Victims: Hearsay, Labeling, and the Hazards of Quick-Hit Disaster Ethnography." *American Sociological Review* 71(4):689–98.

Kootstra, Anouk. 2016. "Deserving and Undeserving Welfare Claimants in Britain and the Netherlands: Examining the Role of Ethnicity and Migration Status Using a Vignette Experiment." *European Sociological Review* 32(3):325–38. doi: 10.1093/esr/jcw010.

Mishel, Emma. 2016. "Discrimination against Queer Women in the US Workforce: A Résumé Audit Study." *Socius* 2:2378023115621316.

Moody, James, and Ryan Light. 2006. "A View from above: The Evolving Sociological Landscape." *The American Sociologist* 37(2):67–86. doi: 10.1007/s12108-006-1006-8.

Musto, Michela. 2019. "Brilliant or Bad: The Gendered Social Construction of Exceptionalism in Early Adolescence." *American Sociological Review* 84(3):369–93.

Schwemmer, Carsten, and Oliver Wieczorek. 2020. "The Methodological Divide of Sociology: Evidence from Two Decades of Journal Publications." *Sociology* 54(1):3–21.

Singleton Jr, Royce A., Bruce C. Straits, and Margaret Miller Straits. 1993. *Approaches to Social Research*. Oxford University Press.

Small, Mario Luis. 2011. "How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study: Recent Trends in a Rapidly Growing Literature." *Sociology* 37(1):57.

Timmermans, Stefan, and Iddo Tavory. 2012. "Theory Construction in Qualitative Research: From Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis." *Sociological Theory* 30(3):167–86.

Westbrook, Laurel, and Aliya Saperstein. 2015. "New Categories Are Not Enough: Rethinking the Measurement of Sex and Gender in Social Surveys." *Gender & Society* 29(4):534–60.

Wohl, Hannah, and Gary Alan Fine. 2017. "The Active Skim: Efficient Reading as a Moral Challenge in Postgraduate Education." *Teaching Sociology* 45(3):220–27. doi: 10.1177/0092055X17697770.