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Office Hours: Fri 6-7 (RWAC 0623)  
and by appointment over Zoom

Fall 2024  
RWAC 0623  
Friday 3-5:50pm

### **Sociology Honors Seminar: Part I / 196A**

The honors program in Sociology is a two quarter seminar series in which each student does an original research project culminating in an honors thesis. In the Fall Quarter we will emphasize the development of a clear research question, how to situate such a question in existing literature, and research methods suitable for gathering the data necessary to answer the question. You will develop a bibliography, begin to gather and analyze data, and draft an introduction and a literature review section of your paper. The class will be run as a workshop, where you will present your work, discuss and help find solutions to problems you encounter as well as problems encountered by others in the process of doing the research, and peer review each other's drafts. You will be working with your advisors as well as with me and with members of your honors student cohort throughout the Fall and Winter quarters.

Note about Assignments and Class Discussion: It is important to remember that all the in-class discussion and peer review is of *ongoing work* so the goal is for us to create a mock academic and broader "public" audience/readership for each other's work. The collaborative process is designed, as it often is in graduate seminars and professional research settings, to sharpen arguments, improve clarity and promote insights and progress as you develop the project. None of the assignments during Fall quarter will be graded but all assignments will receive comments from me. Everything during this quarter is in draft form and is meant to be material for revision and inclusion in the final thesis submitted at the end of Winter quarter. Comments from your advisors and from me and from your peers are all designed to help you produce the final thesis.

Note about Grading: At the end of Fall quarter everyone gets an "IP" grade ("In Progress" grade). When your final grade is submitted at the end of Winter quarter it will also retroactively replace the "IP" from Fall quarter.

#### **Recommended Readings:**

(Both are available in hard copy at the library and online at Geisel)

The Sociology Writing Group, *Guide to Writing Sociology Papers* (2013)

[https://search-library.ucsd.edu/permalink/01UCS\\_SD/1vtf07t/cdi\\_proquest\\_ebookcentral\\_EBC6642218](https://search-library.ucsd.edu/permalink/01UCS_SD/1vtf07t/cdi_proquest_ebookcentral_EBC6642218)

Wayne Booth, et. al., *The Craft of Research (Fourth Edition)* 2016 [https://search-library.ucsd.edu/permalink/01UCS\\_SD/1d412s/alma991003659639706535](https://search-library.ucsd.edu/permalink/01UCS_SD/1d412s/alma991003659639706535)

September 27            *Introduction & Discussion of Research Project Topics*

October 4                *Focusing on Research Questions - Session I*  
Be prepared to discuss your topic and research question/s with the class.  
(Reading: *The Craft of Research* Ch 3 & 4)

Present in class your research project focusing on the research question and your approach:

- 1) State your research question – as a question (the puzzle to be solved or the problem to be investigated)
- 2) Tell us about its significance sociologically and in terms of public/general importance as well as its importance to you (Why do you think this project matters – why did you decide to do this work),
- 3) Tell us what kind of evidence/data you think you need to gather to answer your question/s
- 4) What research methods to you plan to use to generate such evidence.
- 5) (Optional) If you are ready - state one or two possible answers you think may emerge through your work.

October 11

*Focusing on Research Questions - Session II*

Be prepared to discuss your topic and research question/s with the class.  
(Reading: *The Craft of Research* Ch 3 & 4)

Present in class your research project focusing on the research question and your approach:

- 1) State your research question – as a question (the puzzle to be solved or the problem to be investigated)
- 2) Tell us about its significance sociologically and in terms of public/general importance as well as its importance to you (Why do you think this project matters – why did you decide to do this work),
- 3) Tell us what kind of evidence/data you think you need to gather to answer your question/s
- 4) What research methods to you plan to use to generate such evidence.
- 5) (Optional) If you are ready - state one or two possible answers you think may emerge through your work.

October 18

*Situating your Project in Scholarly Literature*

Choose one sociological source relevant to your topic. Come to class prepared to discuss the research design of that source and how it relates to your own work. Try to find an article or book that can serve as a model for your own project - tackling a similar puzzle and/or using methods and/or theoretical approaches similar to those you would like to use.

(Reading: *Guide to Writing Sociology Papers* Ch 4, *Craft of Research* Ch. 5)

**DUE (Upload to Canvas and Share with your Advisor):**

Draft an (*in progress*) bibliography of scholarly work and a brief one page (at most two pages) statement of arguments or debates you find in the literature related to your research question that are helping you situate your work within scholarly literature.

October 25

*Library Resources Instruction with Zoe Trainer, Social Sciences Librarian*

Meet in Instruction Room 1 at Geisel during our usual time.

Prepare by thinking about the sources for data and academic literature you want to use so you can learn how to locate, search, and use resources including databases in Geisel and in other UC locations.

November 1

*Matching Research Questions to Methodological Approaches*

In class we will discuss the specific questions that will guide your research and how to select and justify particular methods to generate data to answer them. Prepare to discuss your methodological approach and any preliminary data you have gathered. The goal is to link the method/s to the research question/s you are trying to answer. (Feel free to use more than one method to generate different types of data.)

(Reading: *Guide to Writing Sociology Papers*: Ch 7&9)

November 8

*Placing your Project in a Sociological Field and Defining its Significance (Why should your readers care?) & Drafting your Introduction – Session I*

In class we will do peer review of drafts of your introductions.

**DUE Wednesday November 6th on Canvas for Peer Review in class Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> :**

An Introduction to your thesis that includes 1) your research question/puzzle, 2) a ‘hook’ that makes your readers care about the answer, and 3) the significance of the sociological inquiry to ongoing debates (and to policy or public interests as well if appropriate).

Optional: If you are ready you can also draft a concluding short “table of contents” paragraph outlining the organization of the thesis (for example “First I will examine xxx. In section two I will analyze yyy. Finally I will demonstrate zzzz).

(Reading: *The Craft of Research* Ch. 6)

- November 15 *Placing your Project in a Sociological Field and Defining its Significance (Why should your readers care?) & Drafting your Introduction – Session II*  
In class we will do peer review of drafts of your introductions.
- DUE Wednesday November 13<sup>th</sup> on Canvas for Peer Review in class Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> :**  
An Introduction to your thesis that includes 1) your research question/puzzle, 2) a ‘hook’ that makes your readers care about the answer, and 3) the significance of the sociological inquiry to ongoing debates (and to policy or public interests as well if appropriate).  
Optional: If you are ready you can also draft a concluding short “table of contents” paragraph outlining the organization of the thesis (for example “First I will examine xxx. In section two I will analyze yyy. Finally I will demonstrate zzzz).  
(Reading: *The Craft of Research* Ch. 6)
- November 22 *Gathering & Sorting Data - Session I*  
Bring examples of data you have collected so far and be prepared to talk about  
1) problems you may be having in your data gathering, 2) types of methods that are working (or not), 3) your most promising data at this point. 4) Suggest one argument think you can make with the data you have so far.
- (November 29 *No Meeting - Happy Thanksgiving*)
- December 6 *Gathering & Sorting Data - Session II*  
Bring examples of data you have collected so far and be prepared to talk about  
1) problems you may be having in your data gathering, 2) types of methods that are working (or not), 3) your most promising data at this point. 4) Suggest one argument think you can make with the data you have so far.
- DUE (Upload to Canvas):**  
Write two (or three) pages stating 1) your research question, 2) an emerging argument which you think may answer it, and then 3) provide one or two pieces of evidence to support your claim. 4) Please add a couple sentences saying about the work you plan to complete in Winter quarter (your ‘to-do’ list).  
*Note: You may turn this in on December 6<sup>th</sup> or you may choose to turn it in with your final assignment on December 13<sup>th</sup>. If you turn it in sooner you will receive comments sooner but you may want more time to work on arguments after the Gathering & Sorting Data sessions are complete. This decision is yours.*
- December 13 (FINALS WEEK) *(No Class)*  
**DUE (Upload to Canvas and Share with your Advisor):**  
Turn in a draft of one section of your final thesis. You may choose any section you like. The introduction you have been revising or a literature review section is a good place to start but you may want to begin working on one of your data analysis and argument sections. This is up to you – and remember that this is a draft so it can contain specific questions about which you would appreciate feedback.