

Course Syllabus
Sociology 20
Introduction to Sociological Research Methods
Summer 2019

Instructor: Pat Reilly

Time and Location: Monday and Wednesday 12:00pm-1:45pm; Location Royce 190

Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00AM-11:30AM; Haines A55

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This course is an introduction to the foundational aspects of how to conceptualize, design, and execute sociological research. We will cover the basics of the various methods of conducting data collection and discover how each is best suited for answering particular research questions. We will also undertake the individual steps of designing a sociological research project, from learning how to construct a research question, to identify and use a relevant method, to find the proper cases and samples to satisfy a line of inquiry, to interpret data, and to plan a research project.

While this course provides a foundation for doing research assignments in your future sociology courses, it also provides some fundamentals that may prove helpful in the working world. Because research is a key aspect of many jobs in for-profit and non-profit organizations, this class' content will have practical applications in many segments of students' lives outside of college.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:

For this course, there will be three parts of your grade:

Attendance and Participation (20%): Regular attendance is required in this course. In addition to allowing you to maximize this component of your grade, your attendance and participation will provide the foundation for you to do your best on the other elements of your final grade. You are allowed one free absence during the quarter; additional unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade. If you have to miss a class due to emergency, please contact me, and we can make arrangements concerning catching up with the course.

Furthermore, your active participation is the other element of this part. You will not be penalized for shyness; I absolutely value quality and quantity in your comments. Besides, the more that people contribute in class, the more enjoyable the class becomes!

Homework Assignments (50%): You will have brief homework assignments for each class. Each one will either provide an opportunity to develop your ability to execute a methodological approach allow you to address a particular aspect of your final research project before the it is due. Each assignment will be due in the next class by hard copy. I will them according how well you satisfy the demands of the assignment.

For the assignments that are relevant to your research proposal, they will provide you an opportunity to satisfy particular aspects of your final project well before the deadline and some

indication of what you are doing correctly or points for improvement. Satisfactorily completing these assignments and considering the comments that I provide for each will help you perform better on the final paper and will save you from rushing at the end.

Research Proposal (30%): Your final assignment is due on September 14 at 9:30 PM California-time. It will be the final version of your proposal that you have been working on throughout this course. It will consist of a proposal for original sociological research project that you might conduct. The final paper will be a **minimum 5, maximum 7 pages** in length. Please send it to me through e-mail.

COURSE MATERIALS:

The assigned course readings or materials will be available at the course website. The course website is <https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/191C-SOCIOL20-1>. You will find scans of the readings with the corresponding class session. Please read them prior to the session, print them, and bring them to class.

E-MAIL PROTOCOL:

The best way of getting into contact with me is through e-mail. If you have any questions about the course material or readings, do not hesitate to e-mail me. Also, if you plan on missing a session, please contact me, so we may find a way that you can catch up. I tend to respond to e mails quickly, usually within a few hours; the only exceptions are on weekends, nights, or when I do not have access to a computer.

In the subject line of your e-mails, please put "SOC20." Doing this will make sure that you get past my email filter and to prevent my e-mail client from mistakenly thinking that your e-mail about the class is a sales pitch for discount pharmaceuticals, a cache of fake Rolexes, or a fantastic financial opportunity involving a foreign prince or sketchy real estate investments.

CELL PHONES AND COMPUTERS:

Following the practice of many professors in this department, there will be no laptops or tablets in class. While this minimizes distractions, it also encourages you to take better notes. Research shows that students actually perform better in courses, retain information better, and engage more when there are no laptops in class. Because recordings of each class session are available as podcasts, do not worry if you miss anything, or you can ask me to repeat any points. You do not need to transcribe every word of the lecture. Exceptions can be made in certain circumstances, especially if there are issues that prevent you from handwriting. Please let me know ahead of time, and I recommend contacting the Office for Students with Disabilities regarding any issues. Furthermore, please refrain from texting in class. If you need to take a call or make a text, please wait to make them after class is over.

OFFICE HOURS:

My office hours will be on Wednesday 10:00AM-11:30AM at Haines A55. I am also available by appointment. I encourage you to come to office hours to address any questions that you may have with the content or the class in general. Office hours can be a venue for you to get individualized advice surrounding the design and execution of your project. Doing this early in the course can assure that you are going in the right direction with your assignments and the final project.

DISABILITIES ISSUES:

In the interest of fairness, please tell me about any disabilities or medical issues that may require any special accommodations and provide to me documentation to us from the Office for Students with Disabilities, so we can make proper arrangements.

PODCASTING:

Course sessions will be podcasted, which will aid in your studying and will help you to keep pace with any classes that you miss. This should not be a substitute for attending class, since excessive absences will adversely affect your grade and will prevent you from participating and maximizing what you get out of the class.

RESPECT:

For this course, we will be covering particular topics that may touch upon issues that might be controversial or align with individual's beliefs, experiences, or passions. Because this course benefits from your discussion, responses, and sharing, I encourage you to be respectful of your fellow course members. Furthermore, I am committed to treating each member of the class with the utmost respect. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any issues with any part of the course.

HONOR CODE:

You MUST adhere to the UCLA Honor Code with your response papers and final exam. All cases of plagiarism or cheating will be reported to the Dean's Office, where they will adjudicate a warranted punishment.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

August 5: Introduction

August 7: Asking Sociological Questions

Caroline Hodges Persell. 1990. "Doing Social Research." In *Understanding Society: An Introduction to Sociology*, 3rd ed. Pp. 26-36.

<http://www.asanet.org/introsociology/Documents/Persell%20Methods%20Reading11.htm>

"In Praise of Soft Science." *Nature* 435. Editorial.

August 12: Class Cancelled

August 14: Causality, Generalizability, and Sampling

Kiju Jung, Sharon Shavitt, Madhu Viswanathan, and Joseph M. Hilbe 2014. "Female Hurricanes Are Deadlier Than Male Hurricanes." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 111:8782-8787.

Eric Holthaus. 2014. "Hurricanes Named After Women Are More Dangerous? Not So Fast." *Slate*. June 3.

<https://slate.com/technology/2014/06/are-hurricanes-named-after-women-more-dangerous-not-so-fast.html>

NPR *Politics Podcast*. 2016. "Not All Polls Are Created Equal."

<http://www.npr.org/2016/01/19/463628465/politics-podcast-not-all-polls-created-equal>

August 19: Survey Methods

Bethany Bryson. 1996. "'Anything But Heavy Metal': Symbolic Exclusion and Musical Dislikes." *American Sociological Review* 61:884-899.

Backstory Podcast. 2010. "Beyond Numbers: A History of the U.S. Census."

<http://backstoryradio.org/shows/the-meaning-of-numbers-a-history-of-the-u-s-census/>

David R. Harris and Jerimiah Joseph Sim. 2002. "Who is Multiracial? Assessing the Complexity of Lived Race." *American Sociological Review* 67:614-627.

RESEARCH PROJECT STEP: Asking Your Research Question

August 21: Ethnographic Methods

Jessica Calarco. 2011. "'I Need Help!': Social Class and Children's Help-Seeking in Elementary School." *American Sociological Review* 76: 862-882.

Forrest Stuart. 2019. "Code of the Tweet: Urban Gang Violence in the Social Media Age." *Social Problems*.

RESEARCH PROJECT STEP: Trying Ethnographic Research

August 26: Interview Methods

Michel Anteby and Nicholas Occhiuto. 2019. "Stand-in Labor and the Rising Economy of Self." *Social Forces*.

Colin Jerolmack and Shamus Khan. 2014. "Talk is Cheap: Ethnography and the Attitudinal Fallacy." *Sociological Methods and Research* 43:178-209.

RESEARCH PROJECT STEP: Trying Interviewing Methods

August 28: Historical Methods

Karida Brown, Michael Murphy, and Apollonya Porcelli. 2016. "Race, Environment, and Appalachia's Coal Camp Blacks." *DuBois Review* 13:327-344.

Cristina Mora. 2014. "Broadcasting Panethnicity: Univision and the Rise of Hispanic Television." *Making Hispanics: How Activists, Bureaucrats, and Media Constructed a New American*.

September 2: Network Methods

Peter Bearman, James Moody, and Katherine Stovel. 2002. "Chains of Affection: The Structure of Adolescent Romantic and Sexual Networks." *American Journal of Sociology* 110:44-91.

Gabriel Rossman. 2017. "Glory and Gore." *Contexts* 16(3):42-47.

RESEARCH PROJECT STEP: Picking Your Question

September 4: Experimental Methods and Audit Studies

Devah Pager. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108:937-975.

René Flores and Ariela Schachter. 2018. "Who are the 'Illegals'? The Social Construction of Illegality in the United States." *American Sociological Review* 83:839-868.

RESEARCH PROJECT STEP: Where Does My Question Fit?

September 9: Computational Sociology and Big Data

Noah Askin and Michael Mauskopf. 2017. "What Makes Popular Culture Popular? Product Features and Optimal Differentiation in Music." *American Sociological Review* 82:910-944.

Nate Silver. 2015. "Rich Data, Poor Data." <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/rich-data-poor-data/>

RESEARCH PROJECT STEP: What Is My Site? What Is My Plan?

September 11: Research Ethics and the Flaws in the System

Christine Aschwandten. 2015. "Science Isn't Broken: It's Just a Hell of a Lot Harder Than We Give It Credit For." <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/science-isnt-broken/>

Allan M. Brandt. 1978. "Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study." *The Hastings Center Report* 8:21-29.

Maria Konnikova. 2015. "How a Gay-Marriage Study Went Wrong." <http://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/how-a-gay-marriage-study-went-wrong>