

**SENIOR HONORS THESIS SEMINAR**  
**Sociology H190B**  
**Spring 2012**  
**Tuesday 12-2 pm 129 Barrows Hall**

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Office Hours: Tuesday  
2:30-4:30 pm

**Course Description**

The purpose of the honors seminar is to guide you in designing, conducting research, and writing a senior honors thesis. Last semester, you formulated a plan for your thesis and began the research. This semester you will complete the research, explore the sociological implications of your findings, and write your thesis.

Your thesis should be between 35 to 50 pages (double spaced). In order to assist your progress, you will be expected to meet with me on an individual basis at regular intervals, to complete four written assignments (due on January 24, February 14, March 13, and April 3), and to make an oral presentation about your thesis.

For the oral presentation, plan to speak for about half an hour about your aims and design, your findings, and the implications of your study. This will be followed by comments and discussion. Oral presentations will take place between March 21 and May 1 (two each week). The first complete draft of the entire thesis is due on April 3 after we return from spring vacation. Then you will have about a month to improve it. The final thesis is due on May 1.

There are no incompletes or extensions allowed for this course, except in truly extenuating circumstances. Whatever you have written by May 1 will stand as the final version of your thesis. Last semester you received an IP (In Progress). This semester you will receive a grade for the entire year based on the quality of your thesis and your work over the two semesters and a designation on your transcript of honors, high honors, or highest honors.

The foundation of a good thesis is a clear and intellectually sophisticated argument that highlights the sociological relevance of your research. Your argument needs to be supported by empirical evidence in a manner that would convince a skeptical reader of the value of your perspective. Your prose should be polished and should also reflect the creativity of your unique voice. I hope that the joys and challenges of designing, conducting and analyzing your own research are reflected in your thesis. It should be a piece of work that inspires personal pride and shows the care and training of the many people who have guided you through sociology.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### **Week 1 (January 17) Planning for the Semester and Update on Progress**

Discussion of the themes and organization of the seminar this semester; presentations on your progress during the intercession

### **Week 2 (January 24) Update on Progress**

*Writing Assignment #1:* A summary of what you have accomplished so far (and specifically over the break), how you intend to proceed during the spring semester, and the major problems (practical and intellectual) that you anticipate in the next phase of your work (1-3 pages); a research and writing schedule for the semester with specific target dates (1-2 pages); proposed organization and outline of the thesis (1-2 pages) with a complete current bibliography showing what you have read and what you still intend to read for the thesis

More presentations/ cluster group meetings

### **Week 3 (January 31) Writing strategies and style**

More presentations/ cluster group meetings

Discussion of issues relating to writing style and organization

Bring Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) to class

### **Week 4 (February 7) Writing strategies and style**

Discussion of issues relating to writing style and organization

Bring Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) to class

Review William Strunk and E.B. White, *Elements of Style* <http://http://www.bartleby.com/141/>

**Week 5 (February 14) Strategies for organizing empirical evidence**

Graduate students will share their experience in organizing research findings and writing up the results; both sections of H190 will meet in Barrows 420

*Writing Assignment #2:* 5-7 pages of your thesis presenting empirical evidence; in addition, give a brief indication of what you think might be the sociological implications of your findings and provide an updated outline of your thesis

**Week 6 (February 21) Individual consultations**

Sign up in advance for individual meetings

**Week 7 (February 28) Individual consultations**

Sign up in advance for individual meetings

**Week 8 (March 6) Troubleshooting**

Seminar meeting to discuss issues relating to the thesis design and content

**Weeks 9 (March 13) Sociological Significance**

Prepare a 3-5 minute statement on the sociological significance of your findings

*Writing Assignment #3 due March 15:* 5-7 pages of your thesis presenting empirical evidence; in addition, give a brief indication of what you think might be the sociological implications of your findings and provide an updated outline of your thesis

**Weeks 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 (March 21, April 3, 10, 17, 24, May 1) Oral Presentations [No meeting on March 27 due to spring break]**

Formal presentations of projects (30-35 minutes) followed by comments and discussion; two presentations each week

*Writing Assignment #4* due April 3: Submit a complete draft of the thesis

Co-editing

*Final thesis* due on May 1: Turn in two bound copies