

Sociology 5 – Evaluation of Evidence – Fall 2016
Professor Heather A. Haveman

Mondays and Wednesdays, 5:00-6:30pm, 145 Dwinelle
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Course Objectives

People today are barraged by information – a torrent of facts, opinions, and analyses that appear in books, in newspapers and magazines, on radio and television, through the Internet. The pressure to make sense of that information has never been greater.

This course will improve your ability to evaluate much of that information by showing you how to think about social research, which is commonly used to introduce and support, or challenge and discard, public policies in all societies. Your life as a citizen is shaped by people who argue that “the evidence shows” that we should abolish affirmative action, reinstitute the draft, expand social security, establish markets for air pollution, make marijuana legal, and so on. Our task in this course is to learn how to treat those claims with the skepticism they deserve, without falling into the despairing conviction that since data can be used to prove anything, any kind of data is as good as any other.

This course will not give you proficiency in any single research method; instead, it will give you an overview of the tools most commonly used by social scientists and a sense of what distinguishes good research from bad. By the end of the semester, you will be able to assess the soundness of research by evaluating research designs and data-collection strategies in light of research questions and theory. With these skills, you will be able to determine whether or not you agree with researchers’ conclusions. And when you disagree, you will be able to articulate why.

To learn how to evaluate research, we will read many examples, including a number by members of Berkeley’s Sociology Department. You will also be asked to do 3 individual and 3 group research projects to get hands-on exposure to research. The course will demand much time and effort, but it is an investment that will pay off in future courses: the logic of evaluation of evidence can be transferred to most scientific and research endeavors. You will also find this course useful after college, as you will be better able to evaluate journalistic reports of current research, design your own reports in a variety of professional settings, and think logically through situations where you are asked to evaluate evidence (*e.g.*, on a jury, in the voting booth, at work, in response to market research).

Soc 5 – Evaluation of Evidence – General Information

Enrolling in the Class

Each student must be registered for the lecture course and for one of the sections: 101 TuTh 8-9am, 102 TuTh 9-10am, 103 TuTh 5-6pm, 104 TuTh 6-7pm, 105 TuTh 12-1pm, 106 TuTh 1-2pm, 107 MW 8-9am, 108 MW 9-10am, 109 MW 10-11am, 111 MW 12-1pm.

Note: There will be no section meetings until Wed, 31 Aug. Sept. (for MW sections) or Th. 1 Sept. (for TuTh sections).

The waitlist. There is a waitlist for the course. All students – those enrolled and those on the waitlist – must attend the first 3 lectures or be dropped from the course. I will take roll! (Feel free to laugh at my pronunciation of your names while I do so.) Waitlisted students: you have a better chance of getting into the course if you pick a section with a shorter waitlist. We will clear the waitlist after lecture 3 (Wed. 31 Aug.).

Class Culture and Standards of Behavior

Readings offer you the chance to learn how working social scientists actually DO research, how they gather and analyze data. You are expected to do assigned reading before class. You will be tested on the readings in quizzes at some point during every lecture. To help focus your reading, the schedule of classes includes questions to consider for each set of readings. Think through these questions carefully, as they will inform the quizzes, midterm, and final exam.

The textbook is required. It is by Earl Babbie and is titled *The Practice of Social Research, 14th Edition*. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. ISBN 978-1-305-10494-5.) It is available at the ASUC bookstore. It is very expensive – over \$200 for the print version. It's by far the best book on this topic, which is why I chose it, despite its cost. You can find used versions of it at the ASUC store, at Moe's on Telegraph, or through www.abebooks.com, a network of independent bookstores. Or you can use the e-book or rent the book through the publisher at this web site: <http://www.cengagebrain.com/shop/isbn/9781305104945>). You can also purchase a second-hand copy of any editions between 9 and 13 (even the foreign edition) because the material is substantially the same in all these editions. But if you choose a different edition than the 14th, you should make sure that you're reading the right chapters – the chapter order varies from edition to edition. I have put copies of the book on 2-hour reserve in Moffitt.

Other readings: Some are journal articles that are available through the UC Berkeley library. The schedule of classes provides links to these readings that work if you are on campus or if you are off campus and have connected via the library's virtual private network. (To download and install the software for this, go to <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/using-the-libraries/vpn>.) A few readings are not available online from the library. They are in a reader that is available from Copy Central on Bancroft.

Lectures will explore the philosophical underpinnings of research design and describe the many different ways of gathering and evaluating evidence. You are responsible for all material discussed in lectures, as well as any announcements made there.

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No laptops are allowed in class unless you have a legitimate, DSP-documented reason and have received explicit permission from me. (I know I couldn't resist surfing the web or emailing my friends during class, so I'm removing the temptation!) All lecture slides will be available before class, so there is no reason for you to spend time reproducing the figures in the slides. And recent research shows that taking notes on laptops is detrimental to learning because it results in shallower information processing (Mueller and Oppenheimer, *Psychological Science* 2014 – see article abstract at <http://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/04/22/0956797614524581.abstract>).

Cell phones must be switched off (not just set to vibrate), unless you have a legitimate need (e.g., your spouse is about to have a baby or a liver transplant) that you have told me about.

In-class quizzes will be drawn from the readings, section discussions, and/or lectures. They will be held at a random point during every lecture, beginning with lecture 4. They will usually consist of 3 or 4 multiple-choice questions. Your scores on these quizzes constitute 15% of your grade.

You will take these quizzes using clickers, which resemble remote controls and allow students to take quizzes, respond to polls, and provide feedback in real time. You can purchase clickers at the ASUC bookstore, new or used. After purchasing them, you must register them in order for them to work. To do so, go to <http://www.iclicker.com/registration/> and follow the instructions on that web site. Use your 8-digit student ID (5-digit ID for Concurrent Enrollment students).

I adopted this technology for several reasons. Research by cognitive psychologists (e.g., Brown, Roediger, and McDaniel *Make It Stick* 2014) indicates that students should be graded frequently throughout the semester rather than at only a few points in time. Clickers make this possible in large classes. Clickers also make it possible for me to determine how well you grasp the material so I can spend less time on the concepts you understand well and more time on the challenging ones. This, in turn, leads to more interesting discussions. Finally, using clickers makes it easier for your reactions and opinions to serve as launching point for in-class discussion and debate.

Bring your clicker to class every day. The care and keeping of your clicker is your responsibility. If you forget it, if it runs out of batteries, if it fails to communicate with the receiver, or if it experiences any other kind of technical difficulty, you will get zero on that day's quiz. I will not change any quiz grade based on a report of a technical malfunction. I understand, however, that freak accidents happen and that even the most conscientious person can forget something once in a while. To allow for that possibility, I will drop your 2 lowest quiz scores.

Sections are an indispensable part of the course. They provide you with opportunities to ask questions about the readings or lectures, and otherwise engage the material actively, which is hard to carry off in a large lecture. Sections begin Wed, 31 Aug. Sept. (for MW sections) or Th. 1 Sept. (for TuTh sections).

Sections are led by Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs). Section meetings and your GSI's office hours are your main points of contact. Please do not deluge the GSIs with emails. Please do not phone your GSI, unless she or he invites you to do so (GSIs are not required to give out their phone numbers). Each GSI has a mailbox in 410 Barrows.

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Here is a list of GSIs, along with their email addresses:

GSI	Email
Veronique Irwin	virwin@berkeley.edu
Elizabeth McKenna	emckenna@berkeley.edu
Michelle Phillips	m.phillips@berkeley.edu
David Showalter	davidshowalter@berkeley.edu
Ugur Yildirim	ugur.yildirim@berkeley.edu

Your GSI will assign 20% of your grade based on your participation in section. Participation involves attending sections, contributing to discussions, asking relevant questions (they're usually the questions that other section members wonder about), and answering questions asked by GSIs. Motormouths beware: the quality of your contribution is far more important than the quantity.

Midterm and final exam. These will test you on your comprehension of course material. Both are closed-book tests. Each constitutes 10% of your grade. The midterm is **Mon. 10 Oct., in class**. The final exam is **Fri. 16 Dec., 3-6pm**. The exam period runs from 3-6pm, but the final for this course will take only 1.5 hours to complete, because it has the same weight as the midterm.

Research projects are designed to give you hands-on experience with research. The list of research projects is at the end of the syllabus, after the schedule of classes and readings. These projects are **due in your GSI's mailbox in Barrows Hall by 4pm** on their respective due dates. Late projects will be marked down 1 full grade (*e.g.*, B→C) for each day late.

You will complete 3 individual research projects (projects 1-3) and 3 group research projects (projects 4-6). A lot of sociological research is coauthored; doing this work in groups gives you a sense of what it is like to work on a research team. It also allows you to learn from each other.

Academic honesty. According to a recent national survey (the National Study of Youth and Religion Wave 2), 50% of college students reported cheating at least once in the previous year and 18% reported more frequent cheating. It is a mathematical certainty that some members of our class will try to cheat at some point during the semester. In fairness to students who are honest, those who are detected cheating will be dealt with as severely as University policy allows. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, using notes or written or electronic materials during an exam or quiz; copying another person's exam, quiz or research project; allowing someone to copy your exam, quiz, or research project; having someone take an exam or quiz for you; or plagiarizing any written assignment. Any suspected cheating will be immediately reported to Student Judicial Affairs.

The use of clickers in lectures will allow us to have more enjoyable, more interactive discussions and to conduct daily quizzes quickly. It also, however, creates opportunities for academic dishonesty. Using someone else's clicker for them is the same as cheating on an exam. To ensure honesty and to avoid any appearance of dishonesty, no person may ever have more than one clicker in his or her possession. If I or one of the GSIs sees any student holding, touching, or otherwise interacting with more than one clicker at any time during class, those clickers will immediately be confiscated and the incident will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs.

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Grading

You will be graded on your understanding of readings, lectures, and discussions in section meetings, and on your ability to complete hands-on research projects, as listed below.

Requirements	Value	Due Date
In-class quizzes	15%	
Participation in section meetings	20%	
Research project 1: Identifying units of analysis	5%	Wed. 7 Sept.
Research project 2: Identifying variables & units of analysis	5%	Mon. 19 Sept.
Research project 3: Identifying independent & dependent variables	5%	Wed. 28 Sept.
Midterm exam (in class)	10%	Mon. 10 Oct.
Research project 4: Constructing & analyzing data tables	10%	Mon. 24 Oct.
Research project 5: Designing a survey	10%	Mon. 7 Nov.
Research project 6: Doing a direct-observation study	10%	Mon. 21 Nov.
Final exam (in exam period)	10%	Fri. 16 Dec.

The median grade in past years has ranged between A- and B.

Procedure for appealing grades. To appeal a grade on research project or the midterm please follow this procedure:

- 1) Within **7 days** after the project or midterm is handed back to you, write a note (1-2 paragraphs) explaining why you think your grade should be changed and deliver it to your GSI via email.
- 2) Make an appointment to meet with your GSI during office hours (for group assignments, not all group members have to be present), during which time your GSI will explain his/her decision about your appeal. If you can't meet your GSI during office hours, your GSI will respond to you via email.
- 3) If you are not satisfied with your GSI's decision and reasoning, within **7 days** of receiving your GSI's decision, make an appointment to meet Professor Haveman, who will be the final arbitrator.

Soc 5 – Evaluation of Evidence – Schedule of Classes and Readings

1. Wed. 24 Aug. Introduction

What are the goals of this course? What do I have to do to get a good grade? What should I do if I'm on the wait list?

2. Mon. 29 Aug. Sociology and Social Science

What is social science? What does science do?

Reading: Babbie. Chapter 1. Human inquiry and science.

3. Wed. 31 Aug. Paradigms, Theories, and Hypotheses

How is scientific knowledge organized? What are the elements of scientific theories? How does scientific knowledge evolve?

Reading: Collins, Harry, and Trevor Pinch. 1993. The sex life of the whiptail lizard. Chapter 6 in *The Golem: What Everyone Should Know about Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Reader)

Note: Sections begin Wed, 31 Aug. Sept. (for MW sections) or Th. 1 Sept. (for TuTh sections).

*** Labor Day Mon. 5 Sept. ***

Note: GSI office hours begin after Labor Day.

4. Wed. 7 Sept. Paradigms, Theories, and Hypotheses

Reading: Babbie. Chapter 2. Paradigms, theories, and social research.

Due: Research project 1.

5. Mon. 12 Sept. Research Design

What are the main purposes of sociological research? How do we know that X causes Y? What kinds of entities should we study – people, informal groups, organizations, social artifacts? How should we time our observations of those entities?

Reading: Babbie. Chapter 4. Research design.

6. Wed. 14 Sept. Inductive Research: Generating Hypotheses

How do sociologists come up with new ideas? How do they develop novel explanations from observing the social world?

Why can we say that Becker's article takes an inductive sociological approach? What role does theory play in his argument? In what ways does he provide an example of pure inductive research, and in what way does he deviate from pure induction? How might you build on Becker's findings to study drug users today?

Readings: Ian Dey. 1999. Introduction. Chapter 1 in *Grounding Grounded Theory: Guidelines for Qualitative Inquiry*, pp. 1-12. New York: Academic Press. (Reader)

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Babbie. Chapter 13. Qualitative data analysis (read only the first 3 sections – introduction, linking theory and analysis, and qualitative data processing)

Howard S. Becker. 1953. Becoming a marijuana user. *American Journal of Sociology*, 59 (3): 235-242. (available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2771989>)

7. Mon. 19 Sept. Deductive Research: Testing Hypotheses

How do sociologists test predictions derived from theory? How do they relate empirical observations to theoretical concepts? How do we know that X causes Y?

Reading: Arthur L. Stinchcombe. 1968. Fundamental forms of scientific inference. Chapter 2 in *Constructing Social Theories*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Reader)

Due: Research project 2.

8. Wed. 21 Sept. Deductive Research: Testing Hypotheses

How is Pager's article an example of a deductive sociological approach? Identify one of the theories she discusses and the related hypotheses. How does she test these hypotheses?

Reading: Devah Pager. 2003. The mark of a criminal record. *American Journal of Sociology*, 108 (5): 937-975. (available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/374403>)

9. Mon. 26 Sept. Measurement (I): Conceptualization, Validity, and Reliability

How do we translate theoretical concepts into observable phenomena we can measure? How do we know that our measures of theoretical concepts are valid and reliable?

Readings: Babbie. Chapter 5. Conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement.

Christopher Jencks. 2015. The war on poverty: Was it lost? *New York Review of Books*, April 2, 2015. (available at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2015/04/02/war-poverty-was-it-lost/>)

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9EehZlw-zk> (in class)

10. Wed. 28 Sept. Measurement (II): Indices, Scales, and Typologies

Why and when do sociologists use composite measures? What is the difference between a scale and an index? How do you construct them? How do you construct typologies?

Readings: Babbie. Chapter 6. Indexes, scales, and typologies.

Malcolm Gladwell. 2011. The order of things: What college rankings tell us. *New Yorker*, Feb. 14. (bcourses)

11. Mon. 3 Oct. Data Analysis and Statistics Refresher (I)

What are the basic ways to summarize quantitative data? How sure can we be about the conclusions we draw from gathering and analyzing data? How should we read tables of quantitative data and interpret them? How should we construct data tables?

Readings: Babbie. Chapter 14. Quantitative data analysis.

Jane Miller. 2004. Creating effective tables. Chapter 6 in *The Chicago Guide to Writing about Numbers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Reader)

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12. Wed. 5 Oct. Midterm Review

Due: Research project 3.

13. Mon. 10 Oct. IN-CLASS MIDTERM (This will cover material up to class 10 ONLY)

Note: No section meetings Tues. 11 Oct. or Wed. 12 Oct.

14. Wed. 12 Oct. Data Analysis and Statistics Refresher (II)

How do we quantify the relationship between two or more variables? How do we draw inferences from our samples to the populations from which they are drawn?

Reading: Babbie. Chapter 16. Statistical analysis. (Read only the sections up to and including “inferential statistics.” Do not read the section on “other multivariate techniques.”)

15. Mon. 17 Oct. Sampling Plans

What should our unit of analysis be? How should we select units to observe – from what universe or population should we sample? How many observations should we take?

Reading: Babbie. Chapter 7. The logic of sampling. (Also review chapter 14.)

16. Wed. 19 Oct. Knowing What We Know: Reviewing the Literature

How can I find out what research has already been done on a topic?

Readings: Babbie. Chapter 17. Reading and Writing Social Research.

W. Lawrence Newman. 2011. How to review the literature and conduct ethical studies. Excerpt from chapter 5 in *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, Seventh Ed.* (Reader)

17. Mon. 24 Oct. Ways to Gather Data: Experiments (I)

What are the features of a good (laboratory or field) experiment? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this research design? What can we learn from this research design that we can't learn from other research designs?

Reading: Babbie. Chapter 8. Experiments.

Due: Research project 4.

18. Wed. 26 Oct. Ways to Gather Data: Experiments (II)

What hypotheses did the authors set out to test? In what ways did they make sure that their methods and results were scientifically sound? Suppose that all their subjects (women and men) had more macho attitudes after the test than they had before the test, regardless of the result they were given. What conclusions would you draw? Think of another widely held belief in our culture. How might you test that belief through a laboratory experiment?

Reading: Robb Willer, Christabel Rogalin, Bridget Conlon, and Michael T. Wojnowicz. 2013. Overdoing gender: A test of the masculine overcompensation thesis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 118 (4): 980-1022. (available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/668417>)

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19. Mon. 31 Oct. **Ways to Gather Data: Surveys (I)**

What does it take to design and construct a good survey? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this research design? What can we learn from this research design that we can't learn from other research designs?

Readings: Babbie. Chapter 9. Survey research.

Howard Schuman. 2002. Sense and nonsense about surveys. *Contexts*, 1 (2): 40-47. (available at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublication?journalCode=contexts>)

Molly Ball. 2013. A more perfect poll. *The Atlantic*, March. (bcourses)

20. Wed. 2 Nov. **Ways to Gather Data: Surveys (II)**

What theory is Fligstein trying to test? Identify the IV(s), DV(s), and any moderator or mediator variables. What is his unit of analysis and sampling method? How does he measure his variables? To conduct a similar study on Americans, what kind of data would you gather?

Readings: Neil Fligstein. 2007. Who are the Europeans? Chapter 5 in *Euroclash: The EU, European Identity, and the Future of Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Read pages 121-145 [theory and results] and pages 158-159 [data sources].) (Reader)

Selections from Eurobarometer 61, Basic English Questionnaire. (bcourses)

21. Mon. 7 Nov. **Ways to Gather Data: Interviews and Direct Observation (I)**

What are structured interviews, and what is the best way to conduct them? What is ethnography? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this research design? What can we learn from this research design that we can't learn from other research designs?

Readings: Babbie. Chapter 10. Qualitative field research. Chapter 13. Qualitative Data Analysis (the first 12 or so pages – up to but not including “Computer software for qualitative data analysis”). (Also review Chapter 9, the section on “Interview surveys”).

Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Field Notes*, pp. 48-52. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Reader)

Patricia Adler and Peter Adler. 2003. The promise and pitfalls of going into the field. *Contexts*, 2 (2): 41-47. (available at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublication?journalCode=contexts>)

Robert S. Weiss. 2004. In their own words: Making the most of qualitative interviews. *Contexts*, 3 (4): 44-51. (available at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublication?journalCode=contexts>)

Due: Research project 5.

22. Wed. 9 Nov. **Ways to Gather Data: Interviews and Direct Observation (II)**

What is Rivera's research question? In what way is her study inductive? In what way is it deductive? How did she gather data? Why did she choose that method? How did she summarize her data? How generalizable are her findings? What conclusions does she draw?

Reading: Rivera, Lauren A. 2012. Hiring as cultural matching: The case of elite professional service firms. *American Sociological Review*, 77 (6): 999-1022. (available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41723081>)

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23. Mon. 14 Nov. Ways to Gather Data: Use Existing Data (from Archives) (I)

What are archival data (a.k.a. “found” data)? Where can we find them? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this way of gathering data? What can we learn from this type of data that we can’t learn from other types?

Reading: Babbie. Chapter 11. Unobtrusive research.

24. Wed. 16 Nov. Ways to Gather Data: Use Existing Data (from Archives) (II)

What is Haveman’s research question? Why does she gather data from archives, rather than doing an experiment, a survey, or a direct-observation study? How did she summarize her data? What theoretical conclusions does she draw?

Reading: Heather A. Haveman. 2015. *Magazines and the Making of America: Modernization, Community, and Print Culture, 1741-1860*. Chapter 1 and Appendix 1. Princeton University Press. (Reader)

25. Mon. 21 Nov. Comparing the Different Ways to Gather Data

What are the pros and cons of each way of gathering data? What kinds of research questions are best answered using which data-gathering method?

Due: Research project 6.

*** Thanksgiving Break Wed. 23 Nov.-Fri. 25 Nov. ***

26. Mon. 28 Nov. Ethics

How can we be sure to conduct research ethically? What special requirements for ethics must we fulfill if our research involves human subjects?

Reading: Babbie. Chapter 3. Ethics.

Reading: Before class, visit these web sites to familiarize yourself with these 2 (in)famous experiments:

- 1) The Milgram Obedience Experiment: <http://vids.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=vids.individual&videoid=5512184>)
- 2) The Stanford Prison Experiment: <http://www.prisonexp.org/>.

27. Wed. 30 Nov. Final Exam Review

Fri. 16 Dec. Final exam: 3:00-4:30 (1.5 hours only, just like the midterm, with 10 minutes’ “Berkeley time” at the start)

Soc 5 – Evaluation of Evidence – Research Projects (Individual and Group)

Research project 1 (individual): Identifying units of analysis (DUE Wed. 7 Sept.)

Your GSI will hand out this assignment, which will consist of a series of statements. Your task is to determine the unit of analysis for each statement.

You are to work on this assignment on your own. You are expected to uphold the honor code and NOT collaborate with anyone else.

Research project 2 (individual): Identifying variables and units of analysis (DUE Mon. 19 Sept.)

Download this article: Jeffrey W. Lucas. 2003. Status processes and the institutionalization of women as leaders. *American Sociological Review*, 68: 464-480. (available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1519733>)

Most studies have only 1 unit of analysis; a few have 2 or more. What is the unit of analysis for this study? Copy and paste (or type) into a word document a short passage from the article to justify your answer. Explain how this passage justifies your answer.

Most studies focus on multiple variables that describe their unit of analysis. Identify 2 variables that describe the unit of analysis you identified and give a complete list of their attributes, as they were described in the article. Copy and paste (or type) a short passage from the article to justify your answer.

This project could be done in about a half-page but you can take up to 2 pages maximum. Again, you are to work on this assignment on your own.

Research project 3 (individual): Identifying independent and dependent variables (DUE Wed. 28 Sept.)

Download this article: Cristobal Young, Charles Varner, Ithai Z. Lurie, and Richard Prisinzano. 2016. Millionaire migration and taxation of the elite: Evidence from administrative data. *American Sociological Review*, 81 (3): 421-446. (available at <http://asr.sagepub.com/content/81/3.toc>)

Identify 1 dependent variable and 1 independent variable. Make sure that these 2 variables are predicted to be causally related to each other. Copy and paste (or type) into a word document one or more short passages from the article to justify your choices of variables. Explain how these passages justify your answers. Explain, in your own words, how and **why** the independent variable is related to the dependent variable.

This project should be 2 pages maximum. Again, you are to work on this assignment on your own.

Soc 5 – Evaluation of Evidence – Research Projects (Individual and Group)

Research project 4 (group): Constructing and analyzing data tables (DUE Mon. 24 Oct.)

During this election year, there is a lot of talk about what government should do and what it should not do – what things we should spend tax revenues on. You will analyze data from the most recent General Social Survey (GSS) to investigate the association between two dimensions of social status, education (level) and age (years), and opinions about government spending on 2 important topics (education and welfare).

To do this, you will download 2 files from bcourses concerning the 2014 General Social Survey. These were downloaded from <http://sda.berkeley.edu/archive.htm>. The worksheet labelled “1000 observations” contains the data you are to analyze – a subset of variables on 1000 observations taken from the 2014 survey. The codebook lists the variables and explains what each means and how each is coded.

Note: In the GSS, several different codes are used to denote missing values. The specific form depends on the variable. Before you start tabulating the data, check the codebook for the each variable you are analyzing to make sure your tables don’t include observations with missing values on any of the variables you are analyzing.

- ◆ Create 2 tables to display the distributions of 2 variables: education level and opinions about government spending on welfare.
 - ◆ For education, aggregate data into the following categories: less than high school, high school, some college (<4 years), college graduate (4+ years)
 - ◆ For both variables, show the actual distribution of observations, not just measures of central tendency and dispersion.
- ◆ Create another table (a cross tab) to show the bivariate association between education and opinions of government spending on welfare.
- ◆ In your report, describe the level of measurement for each variable.
- ◆ In your report, describe the central tendency of each variable. Be sure to use measures that are appropriate for each variable, given its level of measurement.
- ◆ In your report, describe the association you observe between the variables (the direction and your assessment of its strength).

This project should be 3-4 pages long – 4 pages maximum.

If you need help learning how to use excel, go to the link below. It will lead you through 4 video lessons on excel basics. Tutorials: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4zq3R8b5dQ>.

Soc 5 – Evaluation of Evidence – Research Projects (Individual and Group)

Research project 5 (group): Designing a survey (DUE Mon. 14 Nov.)

You will design a questionnaire that might be used in a survey to assess people's attitudes toward legalizing marijuana. Your questionnaire should obtain the following from each respondent:

- ◆ their age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education;
- ◆ a 2-part contingency question about their occupation; and
- ◆ their attitude toward legalizing marijuana in the form of a matrix question, using Likert-type responses to five statements.

This project should be 4-6 long – 6 pages maximum.

The first page should be the questionnaire laid out in the format you would use if you were actually conducting the survey. Make sure that the format will be easy to read and will not be difficult for respondents to answer. Be sure to provide appropriate spaces for respondents to check or write-in their answers.

Question wording should be simple and straightforward: avoid double-barreled questions, loaded terms, and negations. Justify your choice of open or closed-ended question. For closed-ended questions, response categories should be exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Matrix questions using Likert-type responses should have a consistent scale, but 1 or 2 questions should be reverse-coded.

In the following 3-5 pages, discuss these issues:

- ◆ *Question wording*: For each question, why are you asking this question? What concept or aspect/dimension of a concept do you hope to measure? Why did you word it this way? Why did you ask an open- or closed-ended question?
- ◆ *Question level of measurement*: For each question, identify the level of measurement and explain why it is appropriate. (All questions in the 5-part matrix question should be at the same level.)
- ◆ *Question order*: Why did you put the questions in this order?

Soc 5 – Evaluation of Evidence – Research Projects (Individual and Group)

Research project 6 (group): Doing a direct-observation study (DUE Mon. 21 Oct.)

One of the central concerns of sociology is the idea of social hierarchy. How is hierarchy manifested in our social world? For this project, we will define social hierarchy as differential access to some thing, to public space, to people's concern or attention or to a social position based on observable characteristics.

For this project, start by picking a public location where you might see examples of social hierarchy in the way people interact with each other. For example, you might wish to observe the area in a local coffee shop where people jockey for cream, sugar, cup tops, etc. Who moves to the front of the counter, and who stays back? Who politely asks for a place, and who just barges in? What are people's reactions to those around them? Do they vary by gender, race, age, style of clothing? Alternatively, you might wish to observe a busy store entrance (who walks through the door first?) or observe a crowded bus at rush hour (what is the reaction of those already on the bus to those entering the bus?). You may pick any location you wish as long as it is public and you can witness a variety of people using that public space. (You will want variety among a number of dimensions. Consider gender, age, ethnicity/race, class, etc.)

Each student must observe your social location at least twice for 30 minutes each time (not one 60-minute session). Different team members can visit the site at different times; you need not all visit the site at the same time.

Follow these steps in your analysis:

- 1) During the first visit to the location, unobtrusively write short notes. (For some settings, you might not be able to write notes until after you leave the scene.)
- 2) Type up a clean, expanded version of your field notes. Do this immediately after leaving the field.
- 3) Read through your typed field notes and code observations that highlight/indicate social hierarchy. For these code memos, it often helps to use different colored pens or pencils.
- 4) From these codes, write a preliminary theoretical memo – expand on the codes.
- 5) Go back into the field for your second visit, guided this time by your field notes, codes, and preliminary theoretical memo. Repeat steps 1) to 4) above, refining your codes and preliminary theoretical memo.
- 6) Working with the other members of your group, combine your typed and coded field notes your and theoretical memos. Write a 3-5 page report (5 pages maximum) outlining:
 - ◆ where (and when) you did your participant observation;
 - ◆ why you chose this location;
 - ◆ how you identified social hierarchy (what you saw as markers of social hierarchy – at least 2 things);
 - ◆ what your observations imply about the causes or consequences of social hierarchy – that is, induce a hypothesis that could be tested with other data.

In projects like this, agreement among observers is an indicator of inter-rater reliability. What you all agree you see is reliable evidence; what you disagree on is less reliable. Therefore, your points of disagreement and agreement about what you saw/coded should be discussed in the paper.

You must hand in your report and all your rough and typed field notes, no matter how messy, along with your theoretical memos. You will be graded on submitting your field notes, showing that you have thought systematically about your notes by coding them in theoretical memos, and on your final discussion of what you saw.