

Writing Research

Sociology 194

Fall 2017

University of California, Berkeley

Monday: 2:00 – 3:00 or 3:00 – 4:00 (104 Barrows)

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Office Hours (488 Barrows):

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<https://wejoinin.com/LalehBehbehanian>

This course guides students through the process of writing social science research papers. The two primary objectives are to learn how to **undertake research** and to **develop academic writing skills**. These two aims are interdependent: we develop our research analysis through the writing process, while we strengthen our writing skills through the practice of research.

No previous research experience is necessary for this course. You will be guided step by step through the process of crafting a project and completing a research paper: developing a precise research question; undertaking a literature review; designing a methodology; collecting and analyzing data; drafting and re-drafting a final paper; and presenting your research to your peers.

Our goal is that by the end of the semester you become familiar with all components of a research project, as well as strengthen your skills as a writer. Most importantly, this course enables you to do so by focusing on your own particular interests as the topic of your research paper.

8/28 COURSE INTRODUCTION: *What is Research?*

- Overview of Course Objectives
- Introduction to Research
- Basic Components of a Research Paper

9/4 NO CLASS – University Holiday

9/11 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

- Moving from Research Topic to Research Question
- Accounting for Feasibility & Methodological Limitations
- “So What?”: Articulating the Significance of Research

Required Reading:

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. Ch. 1 “What Research Is and How Researchers Think about It” and Ch. 2 “Moving from a Topic to a Question to a Working Hypothesis”

Luker, Kristin. *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences: Research in an Age of Info-Glut*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008. Ch. 4 “What is This is Case of, Anyway?”

Assignment DUE: Statement of Research Topic [1 page]

9/18 HOW TO DO A LITERATURE REVIEW

- The Process of Conducting a Literature Review
- Identifying Relevant Fields of Research
- Working with Different Kinds of Sources

Required Reading:

Luker, Kristin. *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences: Research in an Age of Info-Glut*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008. Ch. 5 “Reviewing the Literature”

Assignment DUE: Statement of Research Question & Significance [1 page]

9/25 CHOOSING A METHODOLOGY

- Primary vs. Secondary Data
- Overview of Different Research Methods
- Choosing the Right Methodology
- Sampling
- Time Constraints & Feasibility Issues

Required Reading:

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. Ch. 3 “Finding Useful Sources”

Luker, Kristin. *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences: Research in an Age of Info-Glut*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008. Ch. 8 “Field (and Other) Methods”

Assignment DUE: Annotated Bibliography (Identify & Annotate 6 sources)

10/2 WORKSHOPPING RESEARCH PROPOSALS

Collective Workshopping of Proposals (Research Question/Significance/Methods)

Required Reading:

Zerubavel, Eviatar. *The Clockwork Muse: A Practical Guide to Writing Theses, Dissertations, and Books*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999. Ch. 1 “The Clockwork Muse” and Ch. 2 “The Writing Schedule”

Assignment DUE: Statement of Methodology [2-3 Pages]

10/9 THE SCIENCE OF DATA COLLECTION

- Identifying Relevant Data
- Strategies for Organizing Data

Required Reading:

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. Ch. 4 “Engaging Sources”

10/16 THE ART OF DATA ANALYSIS

- The Process of Coding
- Identifying Relevant Codes
- The Emergence of Analysis through the Writing Process

Required Reading:

Becker, Howard S. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986. Ch. 1 “Freshman English for Graduate Students” and Ch. 3 “One Right Way”

10/23 RESEARCH CHALLENGES: The Ethics of Research & Navigating the “Field”

- Overview of Research Ethics
- Challenges of Navigating the “Field”
- Overcoming “Writer’s Block” – The Importance of the “Shitty First Draft”

Required Reading:

Lamont, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. New York: Anchor Books, 1994. “Shitty First Drafts”

Assignment DUE: Literature Review [3-5 Pages]

10/30 WORKSHOPPING RESEARCH PROJECTS

Collective Workshopping of Projects (Research Question/Methods/Challenges)

Required Reading:

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. Ch. 11 “Revising Sentences”

Becker, Howard S. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986. Ch. 4 “Editing by Ear”

11/3 DRAFT of RESEARCH PAPER DUE (10-15 Pages)

11/6 INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS

Individual Appointments with Professor during class time and by appointment throughout the week to discuss submitted drafts.

11/13 PEER REVIEW

Peer Review of Research Paper Drafts

Assignment DUE: Peer Review Notes

11/20 FINAL PRESENTATIONS

Student Presentations of Research Projects (5-7 minutes)

11/27 FINAL PRESENTATIONS (Continued) & CELEBRATION!

12/1	<i>FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE*</i>
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* **FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS** should be:

- **15-20 pages** if you are taking the course for **3 units**
- **20-25 page** if you are taking the course for **4 units**

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

- 15%** Attendance & Participation
- 5%** Statement of Research Topic (9/11)
- 5%** Statement of Research Question (9/18)
- 10%** Annotated Bibliography (9/25)
- 5%** Methodology (10/2)
- 15%** Literature Review (10/23)
- 15%** Draft of Research Paper (11/3)
- 5%** Peer Review Notes (11/13)
- 25%** Final Paper (12/1)

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:

Class attendance is mandatory. Students are *allotted 1 absence* during the semester for illness or any other personal issues. Any additional absences will result in a grade penalty. It is crucial that all students arrive on time. Please avoid filtering in late as this disrupts the beginning of class.

Student **participation** is integral to this course. Our class meetings will not be structured as lectures, but rather as a blend of seminar (where we discuss the research/writing process) and workshop (where we collectively assist each other in developing our projects).

REQUIRED READINGS:

ASSIGNED READINGS

Students are expected to complete all **reading assignments** *prior to attending class*. This is crucial given that our class sessions will be structured as discussions. All readings listed on the syllabus are available on bCourses.

WEEKLY RESEARCH READINGS

The readings assigned for this course are very minimal because the bulk of the reading you do will be related to your research project. In essence, you will be developing your own personal syllabus for the semester shaped by your particular research interests.

Every week, you are required to **identify and read 2 sources** that are relevant to your research project. In this manner, you'll slowly build up the necessary sources for your final research paper.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

All written work must be your own. Any words, or *ideas*, borrowed from another source (even if paraphrased) must be appropriately cited. Any form of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:

Please notify me immediately if you require any kind of special accommodations for the course. If you are registered with the DSP program, check to make sure that the necessary documentation is sent to me at the beginning of the semester. Please feel free to make an office hours appointment if you would like to discuss any necessary accommodations.