

## **Sociology 5 – Evaluation of Evidence**

Evaluation of Evidence is a course that aims to provide a general overview of the ways in which sociologists collect information about social phenomena. The course provides an introduction to a number of basic quantitative and qualitative methods for gathering and analyzing social data.

I hope to spark your interest in sociology and will encourage you to see sociology as a research enterprise, as a process of learning about our social world. The course will introduce you to the elements of research design and to the basic principles of data analysis so that you will have a good foundation for future learning. You will also learn firsthand about the problems of research by trying out several different data collection methods on a small scale, and practice presenting this data in the written format of academic sociology. We will also reflect in a more theoretical way on the premises, promises and pitfalls of sociology as a project of empirical social research.

The goals for this class are for students to learn through practice to: (1) collect and analyze data about social phenomena through a diverse set of research methods; (2) read social research with a critical eye so as to skeptically evaluate its contexts, data, methods and claims; (3) situate your own practice research within a broader discussion of a social issue and previous research on the topic and (4) present written arguments about social research in an academic sociological format.

### **Course Organization, Policies, Assignments and Grading**

Each week will be a mix of going over a selection of readings from the textbook, examples of real social science research writing and some lessons on simplified methodological techniques.

Your grade for the class will be determined by four areas: (1) class attendance and participation will count for 10% of the overall grade; (2) four reading response papers will count for 20% of the overall grade; (3) four practice research project papers will be worth 15% each, for 60% of the grade for the class; and (4) the final exam will be worth 10% of the overall course grade.

For attendance and participation: Attendance at all course lectures is mandatory. There will be a sign-in sheet circulated at the beginning of each meeting. Each of the 24 lectures will be worth 1/4 point towards your overall grade, for a total of 6 points. The other 4 points are for 8 required weekly office hours meetings, 1/2 point each, to discuss your practice research project papers.

Reading Responses: On Fridays of weeks when there is not a practice research project paper due, you will submit to bCourses a reading response paper addressing at least two readings from the course connecting it to a media article you will find on your own. This will mean making an argument or analysis of your own and using the course reading and the article you find to support your argument. Your argument should be stated at the beginning of the paper in a clear thesis statement. The response papers should be 250-300 words. Please include the total word count at the top of the first page with your name and ID number. Papers shorter or longer than the guidelines will have an automatic deduction. Papers are due Friday on bCourses.

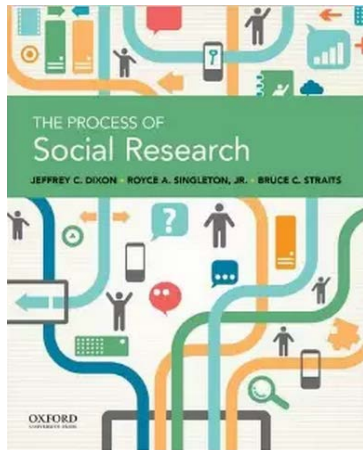
This final exam will count for 10% of your overall class grade. It will be a blue book final exam, short-answer based, and given on the last day of class at 10:00am on Thursday, August 10, 2017.

The Practice Research Project Papers will require you to do your own research, from primary and secondary sources and ultimately from some original basic practice research of your own. The research should typically take 1-2 hours and the papers should be about 1000 words. In this limited space you will have to include all the major parts of a real academic sociological research paper: introduction with a clear thesis statement, literature review, methodology, data and your interpretation/conclusions. In addition, the discussion section for this class will be used in order to workshop your practice research projects with your GSI. More detailed instructions for these research projects will be distributed and discussed in lecture on the dates indicated below.

Throughout the process of writing up your practice research projects and reading and writing exercises, your best resource will be Writing for Sociology: Second Edition, the guide provided by the Sociology Department. It has very useful information about the organization, formatting and composition of papers and about how to use citations properly. The guide is available at:

[http://sociology.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/documents/student\\_services/writing\\_guide/Writing%20for%20Sociology%20Guide%20Second%20Edition.pdf](http://sociology.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/documents/student_services/writing_guide/Writing%20for%20Sociology%20Guide%20Second%20Edition.pdf)

### **Materials for Class Use**



There is one required textbook for the class. This is a new research methods textbook published by Oxford University Press. Therefore it can be very expensive new. I suggest you find a way to mitigate this by sharing, renting, borrowing or selling back this textbook.

However, it is imperative that you have access to this text, since the review questions from each chapter will make up both the study review guide and be the basis for the final exam.

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. 2015. *The Process of Social Research*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. ISBN- 13: 978-0199946754

Additionally, I will supplement our textbook readings with sociology research articles that deal with the methods and issues we are discussing, chapters from relevant books, newspapers as well as other media sources. Students are encouraged to share material like this that you find, be it an article, video or other information you find interesting that pertains to the class material. All supplementary materials will be available on the class bCourses website.

### **Course Website**

The first order of business in this class will be making sure you have access to the course website on bCourses. Class information, announcements, readings, assignments, grades, slides from the lecture and feedback for your work will be on the bCourses website. The website is also where you will submit all of your work. Let me know right away if you are having trouble accessing it.

## **Honor Code, Plagiarism, Academic Integrity and Ethics**

UC Berkeley has adopted the following Honor Code:

“As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honest, integrity, and respect for others.” The hope and expectation is that you will adhere to this code.

### **Plagiarism**

To copy text or ideas from another source without appropriate reference is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade for your assignment and usually further disciplinary action. For additional information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, see, for example:

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/instruct/guides/citations.html#Plagiarism>  
<http://gsi.berkeley.edu/teachingguide/misconduct/prevent-plag.html>

### **Academic Integrity and Ethics**

Honesty and integrity are of great importance in all facets of life. They help to build a sense of self-confidence, and are key to building trust within relationships, whether personal or professional. There is no tolerance for dishonesty in the academic world, for it undermines what we are dedicated to doing – furthering knowledge for the benefit of humanity.

Your experience as a student at UC Berkeley is hopefully fueled by passion for learning and replete with fulfilling activities. And we also appreciate that being a student can be stressful. There may be times when there is temptation to engage in some kind of cheating in order to improve a grade or otherwise advance your career. This could be as blatant as having someone else sit for you in an exam, or submitting a written assignment that has been copied from another source. And it could be as subtle as glancing at a fellow student’s exam when you are unsure of an answer to a question and are looking for some confirmation. One might do any of these things and potentially not get caught. However, if you cheat, no matter how much you may have learned in this class, you have failed to learn perhaps the most important lesson of all.

## **Week 1**

### **Tuesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>**

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research*  
Chapter 1 “Why Care About Research Methods?” Pp. 1-13

I will introduce myself and the course, go over the syllabus and class policies, deal with enrollment issues, and discussing grading. We will go over the first reading response and the first practice research projects you will be doing. I will go over the first reading for the course.

Hand out **Practice Research Project 1: Archival methods in comparative historical research**

### **Wednesday, June 21<sup>st</sup>**

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research*  
Chapter 2 “Science and Social Research: From Theory to Data and Back?” Pp. 14-37

“Introduction to Sociology/Sociological Methods” Wikibooks. Available at:  
[https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction\\_to\\_Sociology/Sociological\\_Methods](https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Sociology/Sociological_Methods)

### **Thursday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research*  
Chapter 14 “Reading and Writing Social Research” Pp. 428-446

Suggested further reading:

*Writing for Sociology: Second Edition*. Chapter 2 “Understanding the Assignment” Pp. 19-26

*Writing for Sociology: Second Edition*. Chapter 3.3-3.4; 3.6-3.9 Pp. 29-33; 37-44

*Writing for Sociology: Second Edition*. Chapter 4.4-4.5; Pp. 49-50

*Writing for Sociology: Second Edition*. Chapter 5 “Thesis Statements and Arguments” Pp. 57-61

*Writing for Sociology: Second Edition*. Chapter 6 “Handling Other People’s Writing” Pp. 65-77

*Writing for Sociology: Second Edition*. Appendix B “Checklists and Editing Tips” Pp. 97-99

Jasper, James M. 2002. “Why So Many Academics are Lousy Writers.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education: Career Network*. Tuesday, March 26, 2002.

### **Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Turn in **Reading Response 1**

## **Week 2**

### **Tuesday, June 27<sup>th</sup>**

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research* Chapter 4 “Research Designs: It Depends on the Question” Pp. 73-102

Lesson on basic literature review and archival research techniques available through the library

### **Wednesday, June 28<sup>th</sup>**

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research* Chapter 10 “Existing Data Analysis: Using Data from Secondhand Sources” Pp. 288-327

Babbie, Earl. 2017. *The Practice of Social Research* (Fourteenth Edition) Chapter 11 “Comparative and Historical Research” Pp. 341-346

### **Thursday, June 29<sup>th</sup>**

Voss, Kim. 1993. *The Making of American Exceptionalism: The Knights of Labor and Class Formation in the Nineteenth Century*. “Introduction: Working-Class Formation and the Knights of Labor” Pp.1-18; Chapter 8 “Toward a Reinterpretation of the American Labor Movement” Pp. 231-250 and “Appendix 3 – Event-History Analysis” Pp. 256-260.

### **Friday, June 30<sup>th</sup>**

Turn in **Practice Research Project 1: Archival methods in comparative historical research**

## **Week 3**

### **Wednesday, July 5<sup>th</sup>**

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research* Chapter 9 “Field Research and In-Depth Interviews: Systematic People Watching and Listening” Pp. 242-287

Hand out **Practice Research Project Paper 2: Ethnography or In-depth Interviews**

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research* Chapter 13 “Qualitative Data Analysis: Searching for Meaning” Pp. 395-427

### **Thursday, July 6<sup>th</sup>**

Humphreys, Laud. 1976. “Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places.” In *The Research Experience*, edited by M. Patricia Golden. Pp. 85-114

Luker, Kristin. 1985. *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*. Preface Pp. xiii-xiv; Chapter 1 “Introduction 1-10” and “Appendix 1: Methodology” Pp. 247-256

### **Friday, July 7<sup>th</sup>**

Turn in **Reading Response 2**

### **Week 4**

### **Tuesday, July 11<sup>th</sup>**

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research* Chapter 3 “The Ethics and Politics of Research: Doing What’s “Right” Pp. 38-72

Weigel, David. 2013. “Why Wasn’t the Heritage Foundation’s Jason Richwine Smart Enough to Listen to His Friends?” *Slate Magazine*, Friday, May 10, 2013.

### **Wednesday, July 12<sup>th</sup>**

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research* Chapter 7 “Experiments: What Causes What?” Pp. 173-203

### **Thursday, July 13<sup>th</sup>**

Lovaglia, Michael J. 2012. “From Summer Camps to Glass Ceiling: The Power of Experiments.” In *The Contexts Reader*, Second Edition, edited by Douglas Hartmann and Christopher Uggen. Pp. 535-543

Milgram, Stanley. 2009. *Obedience to Authority*. “Methods of Inquiry” Pp. 13-26); “Expected Behavior” Pp. 27-31 and “Closeness to the Victim” Pp. 32-43

### **Friday, July 14<sup>th</sup>**

Turn in **Practice Research Project Paper 2: Ethnography or In-depth Interviews**

### **Week 5:**

### **Tuesday, July 18<sup>th</sup>**

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research* Chapter 4 “Research Designs: It Depends on the Question” Pp. 73-102

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research* Chapter 10 “Existing Data Analysis: Using Data from Secondhand Sources” Pp. 288-327

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research*  
Chapter 12 “Quantitative Data Analysis: Using Statistics for Description” Pp. 352-394

Hand out **Practice Research Project 3: Statistical analysis of existing data**

**Wednesday, July 19<sup>th</sup>**

Babbie, Earl. 2017. *The Practice of Social Research* (Fourteenth Edition) Chapter 14 “Bivariate Analysis” Pp. 425-428

Bo, Boroka. Lesson on basic crosstabs and using GSS data.

**Thursday, July 20<sup>th</sup>**

Sampson, Robert J. 2008. “Rethinking Crime and Immigration.” *Contexts* Winter 2008 Pp. 28-33

Heaney, Michael T. and Fabio Rojas. 2007. “Partisan, Nonpartisan, and Antiwar Movement in the United States.” *American Political Research* N. 35 (July) Pp. 431-464

**Friday, July 21<sup>st</sup>**

Turn in **Reading Response 3**

**Week 6:**

**Tuesday, July 25<sup>th</sup>**

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research*  
Chapter 11 “Multiple Methods: Two or More Approaches Are Better than One” Pp. 328-351

**Wednesday, July 26<sup>th</sup>**

Klinenberg, Eric. *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago*. “The Urban Inferno” Pp. 1-13; “The City of Extremes” Pp. 14-36; and “Dying Alone” Pp. 37-78

**Thursday, July 27<sup>th</sup>**

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research*  
Chapter 5 “Measurement: Linking Theory to Research” Pp. 103-136

Rubin, Zick. 1976. “Measurement of Romantic Love”. In *The Research Experience*, edited by M. Patricia Golden. Pp. 495-513

**Friday, July 28<sup>th</sup>**

Turn in **Practice Research Project Paper 3: Existing Survey Data**

## **Week 7:**

### **Tuesday, August 1<sup>st</sup>**

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research* Chapter 6 “Sampling: Case Selection as a Basis for Inference” Pp. 137-172

Hand out **Practice Research Project Paper 4: Survey**

### **Wednesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singleton, and Bruce C. Straits. *The Process of Social Research* Chapter 8 “Surveys: Questioning and Sampling” Pp. 204-241

Schuman, Howard. 2012. “Sense and Nonsense about Surveys.” In *The Contexts Reader*, Second Edition, edited by Douglas Hartmann and Christopher Uggen. Pp. 509-517

### **Thursday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Babbie, Earl. 2017. *The Practice of Social Research* (Fourteenth Edition) Chapter 6 “Indexes, Scales, and Typologies” Pp. 155-181

### **Friday, August 4<sup>th</sup>**

Turn in **Reading Response 4**

## **Week 8:**

### **Tuesday, August 8<sup>th</sup>**

Mills, C. Wright. 2001. “The Promise.” in *Down to Earth Sociology: Introductory Readings* (Eleventh Edition) edited by Garth Massey. Pp. 19-26

Burawoy, Michael. 2005. “For Public Sociology.” *American Sociological Review* 70 (February) Pp. 4-28.

Hand out **Final Exam Study Guide**

### **Wednesday, August 9<sup>th</sup>**

Final Exam review in class

### **Thursday, August 10<sup>th</sup>**

**\*\*\* IN CLASS FINAL EXAM \*\*\***



**Friday, August 11<sup>th</sup>**

Turn in **Practice Research Project Paper 4: Survey**