

Sociology 105

Research Design and Sociological Methods

Spring 2018

Professor Mao-Mei Liu

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Class: MWF 8-9am, Barrows 54

Office hours: MW 9-10am ([sign-up](https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/vzfqm) at <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/vzfqm>)

Th 10am-12noon (drop-in), Barrows 477

COURSE DESCRIPTION¹

Sociology 105 is a seminar in sociological research design and methods. We will introduce the major building blocks of sociological research and their related issues: its goals, methods, research questions, theoretical traditions, literature review, ethics, as well as writing. Throughout, we will nurture a growth mind-set. Sociology 105 is most appropriate for social science undergraduates who wish to learn how to begin and develop an original sociological research project.

In this seminar, you will begin the transition from being a consumer to becoming a producer of sociological knowledge. This can seem like an intimidating process, so we will break down the steps involved. The seminar size and format of the classes allow for – and indeed encourage - your active participation and engagement. We will discuss readings and examples of real sociology, grapple with your questions and concerns about the research process, and workshop your individual projects.

You will produce an original research proposal that can lead to a senior or honors thesis or serve as a springboard for graduate school.

COURSE GOALS

By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- ◆ Explain the various goals and missions of sociological research
- ◆ Be conversant in the various methods and their attendant strengths and weaknesses
- ◆ Identify major ethical issues involved in sociological research
- ◆ Use theory in research
- ◆ Conduct a literature review
- ◆ Craft a sociological research proposal

REQUIRED TEXTS

Course Reader: Available at Copy Central (2576 Bancroft Way)

¹ I am very grateful to Professors Jill Bakehorn and Gillian Gualtieri for their course designs of Soc 105 and to Professors Mary Kelsey, Mara Loveman and Daniel Schneider for sharing their deep knowledge of mentoring undergraduate research and their syllabi of Soc 190 and Soc 5. My syllabus builds on Bakehorn and Gualtieri's syllabi and borrows many of the course guidelines and policies from Kelsey, Loveman and Schneider's syllabi.

MILESTONES

1) Research Topic/Statement of Interest (5% of final grade)

1 page paper about research topic and purpose of research.

DUE: Wednesday, 1/31

2) Research Question (5% of final grade)

1 page paper detailing your research question or questions.

DUE: Wednesday, 2/14

3) Ethical Issues (5% of final grade)

1 page paper addressing any ethical concerns you might encounter.

DUE: Wednesday, 2/21

4) Theoretical Frame (5% of final grade)

1 page paper discussing possible theories that may offer insight into your project.

DUE: Wednesday, 3/7

5) Literature Review (15% of final grade)

4-6 page paper discussing relevant literature.

DUE: Wednesday, 3/21

6) Methods (15% of final grade)

3-5 page paper detailing what method(s) and research site or case.

DUE: Wednesday, 4/11

7) Final Research Proposal (35% of final grade)

15-20 page research proposal

DUE: Monday, 5/7 at 12noon

COURSE EXPECTATIONS & POLICIES

Readings & Participation: Please complete readings prior to class and outline your questions, concerns and responses beforehand. Be ready to discuss. Bring your reading materials to every class; you will likely need to refer to them in class discussions. Keeping up with readings also equips you to complete assignments successfully. While lecture is one component of the course, the vast bulk of our time will be dedicated to group discussions, activities and workshops. I expect you to be an active participant in the course. **Participation will constitute 15% of your final grade.** All phones must be silenced and put away during class. Please take hand-written notes if you are able (research finds that students learn more). While you may not agree with everything we read and discuss, I do expect you to keep an open mind, practice and nurture your sociological imagination, and communicate respectfully.

Email Please clearly indicate our class in the subject line (e.g. "SOC 105 Research Design..."). I endeavor

to respond to emails within 24 hours, but this is not always possible; please be patient.

Office Hours I highly encourage you to come to office hours. Office hours are a good time to introduce yourself, talk about ideas you are thinking about, and discuss problems you may have with class. I will be holding office hours Mondays and Wednesdays 9-10am ([sign-up](#) at <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/vzfqm>) and Thursdays 10am-12noon (drop-in).

Grading **No late assignments will be accepted without prior approval.** All assignments will be checked by TurnItIn for plagiarism. Be sure to carefully consider my feedback; I provide it to help you improve.

Academic Rigor & Honesty The UC Berkeley Honor Code states that “As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others.” (<http://asuc.org/honorcode/index.php>). I expect you will follow these principles. You may not copy specific text or ideas from others, whether from fellow students, from authors of our readings or other material you find, without specific attribution. To do otherwise is to plagiarize. As a student of the University of California, you are bound by the Code of Academic Conduct. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will result in a referral to The Center for Student Conduct and a zero for that assignment.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Disability Accommodations If you qualify for any disability accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so you can receive the accommodations to which you are entitled. <http://dsp.berkeley.edu>

Student Learning Center Provides support for writing, various academic disciplines including social sciences, as well as help for transfer and international students. <http://slc.berkeley.edu>

Mental Health and Wellness Resources A range of issues can cause barriers to learning and well-being, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, depression, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. If you or someone you know is suffering, consider utilizing the confidential mental health services available on campus (<https://uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling>). If you have an urgent problem, call the Tang Center 24/7 Counseling Line at (855) 817-5667 and/or text 741741 to communicate with a trained Crisis Counselor via Crisis Text Line (<https://www.crisistextline.org/>)

Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Services To learn more about these issues, how to support survivors, or how to file a report and receive support services, start here: <http://survivorsupport.berkeley.edu>. Please note that I am not a confidential advocate. To speak to a confidential care advocate: <http://sa.berkeley.edu/dean/confidential-care-advocate>

COURSE OUTLINE

Readings to be **completed** by day listed. Schedule subject to change.

WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTIONS

Wednesday, 1/17 **Introductions**

Friday, 1/19 **The Goals of Sociology**

Mills, C. Wright. 2011. "The Sociological Imagination" Pp 13-18 in *Readings for Sociology*. Seventh Edition, edited by Massey Garth. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Berger, Peter L. 2011. "Sociology as an Individual Pastime" Pp 3-12 in *Readings for Sociology*. Seventh Edition, edited by Massey Garth. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

WEEK TWO: INTRODUCING SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

What is research in sociology? What are the purposes of research in sociology? What makes a topic sociologically interesting? What sociological research interests you?

Monday, 1/22 **What is Social Research?**

Ragin, Charles C. and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. "Chapter 1: What Is (And Is Not) Social Research?" Pp 5-32 in *Constructing Social Research*. Second Edition. Los Angeles, CA: Pine Forge Press.

Wednesday, 1/24 **What are the Goals of Sociological Research?**

Adler, Emily Stier and Roger Clark. 2011. "Chapter 1: The Uses of Social Research" Pp 1-18 in *An Invitation to Social Research: How It's Done*. Fourth Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning

Friday, 1/26 **Sociology and You**

Please look over the program for the 2017 American Sociological Association meeting (convention2.allacademic.com/one/asa/asa17/) What research projects piqued your curiosity? Why?

WEEK FOUR: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How do I formulate a research question? What makes a research question feasible? How do I focus my topic interest? What if my question changes?

Wednesday, 2/7

Turning a Topic into a Question

Adler, Emily Stier and Roger Clark. 2011. "Developing a Researchable Question" Pp 88-96 in *An Invitation to Social Research: How It's Done*. Fourth Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning

Friday, 2/9

Timing and Case Selection

Adler, Emily Stier and Roger Clark. 2011. "Cross-sectional, Longitudinal and Case Study Designs" Pp 157-184 in *An Invitation to Social Research: How It's Done*. Fourth Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. Excerpt "Intentional Selection of Observations" pp. 139-49 in *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

WEEK FIVE: RESEARCH ETHICS

What ethical concerns do sociologists encounter? What is informed consent? What can we learn from infamous ethical breaches of the past? Who gets to speak for whom?

Monday, 2/12

Ethics and Social Research

Adler, Emily Stier and Roger Clark. 2011. "Chapter 3: Ethics and Social Research" Pp 39-70 in *An Invitation to Social Research: How It's Done*. Fourth Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning

Wednesday, 2/14

****Research Question Due****

Friday, 2/16

Who Gets to Speak for Whom?

Lewis-Kraus. Gideon. 2016. "The Trials of Alice Goffman." *The New York Times*. January 12.

WEEK NINE: ANALYZING DATA

Once I have my data, how do I proceed? How does this process vary for different kinds of data?

Monday, 3/12 What Do I Do with this Quantitative Data?

Adler, Emily Stier and Roger Clark. 2015. "Chapter 15: Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis." Pp 414-441 in *An Invitation to Social Research: How It's Done*. Fourth Edition. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.

Wednesday, 3/14 What Do I Do with this Qualitative Data?

Adler, Emily Stier and Roger Clark. 2015. "Chapter 15: Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis." Pp 441-463 in *An Invitation to Social Research: How It's Done*. Fourth Edition. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.

Friday, 3/16 Working with Concepts

Carr, Deborah, Elizabeth Heger Boyle, Benjamin Cornwell, Shelley Correll, Robert Croesnoe, Jeremy Freese and Mary C. Waters. 2018. Pp 100-106 in *The Art and Science of Social Research*. New York: WW Norton.

WEEK TEN: RETURNING TO THEORY

How does theory inform my data? What happens when my data don't match my theory? What are alternative explanations? How do I address the skeptics?

Monday, 3/19 Testing Theories with Data

Abascal, Maria and Delia Baldassari. 2015. Introduction and Conclusion in "Love Thy Neighbor? Ethnoracial Diversity and Trust Reexamined" *American Journal of Sociology* 121(3): 722-82.

Wednesday, 3/21 Advancing Theory with Data

****Literature Review Due****

Schilt, Kristen. 2006. Intro, Theories, Conclusion from "Just One of the Guys? How Transmen Make Gender Visible at Work." *Gender & Society*. 20 (4):465-490.

Friday, 3/23 Addressing the Skeptics workshop

Monday 3/26 - Friday, 3/30 NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

