

Sociology H190B: Senior Honors Thesis Seminar
Spring Semester 2018

Senior Thesis Seminar meets
50 Barrows Hall
Tuesday 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Instructor: Mara Loveman
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Course Description

The purpose of the honors seminar is to guide you in the design, research, and writing of a senior honors thesis. Last semester, you formulated a plan for your thesis and took steps to begin your 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 inclusive of front/back material. Occasionally a thesis may be longer, but under no circumstances should it exceed 80 pages. 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 23, February 13, March 6, and April 10), and to make a final oral presentation about your thesis.

Those of you who presented to the entire thesis group last semester will update their findings within their individual sections on March 13 and 20. During the remaining four classes (April **3, 10, 17, 24**), the two thesis sections will meet jointly in Barrows 420. Two students from each section will present their findings to the entire senior thesis class.

The first complete draft of the entire thesis is due on April 10. You will have about a month to improve it. The final thesis is due on May 8. There are no incompletes or extensions allowed for this course, except in truly extenuating circumstances. Whatever you have written by May 8 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 16) Planning for the Semester and Update on Progress

Discussion of the themes and organization of the seminar this semester;

Begin updates on your progress during the intersession

Week 2 (January 23) 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). Please include your complete bibliography showing what you have read and what you still intend to read for the thesis

Continue student presentations updating progress over winter break

Week 3 (January 30) Field research/data collection issues

Discussion of issues relating to field research and data collection

Week 4 (February 6) Field research/data collection issues

Continue discussion of research issues

Suggested reading: “Processing fieldnotes: Coding and memoing” ch. 6 from Emerson et al., *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*

Week 5 (February 13) Strategies for organizing empirical evidence

Strategies in organizing research findings and writing up results; both sections of H190 will meet in Barrows 420

Writing Assignment #2: Present empirical evidence gathered to date (5-7 pages). If possible, include a brief outline of the thesis (1-2 pages)

Week 6 (February 20) Troubleshooting

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

Week 7 (Feb 27) Individual consultations

Sign up in advance for individual meetings

Week 8 (March 6) Sociological Significance

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

Writing Assignment #3: Revised 7-12 pages of your thesis presenting empirical evidence as well as a brief indication of what you think might be the sociological implications of your findings. Update the outline of your thesis as necessary.

Weeks 9, 10 (March 13, 20) In-section updates from students who presented research to the entire thesis class last fall.

[No meeting on March 27 due to spring break]

Group Presentations Weeks 11-14 (April 3, 10, 17, 24)

Formal presentations of projects (20-25 minutes) followed by comments and discussion; two presentations each week. We will meet in 420 Barrows.

Week 11

Week 12

Week 13

Week 14

PSA Meeting Mar 28 – 31: Undergraduate presentations will be scheduled for Friday, March 30.

Writing Assignment #4 due April 10: Submit a complete draft of the thesis

Final thesis due on May 8: Turn in a copy of your completed thesis to the assignment section on b-course as well as an email attachment to me (mkelsey@berkeley.edu) and to Cristina Rojas (cmrojas@berkeley.edu) for Sociology Department records. You may want to consider printing out and binding a copy of your thesis (a copy shop will do this for under \$5) for your personal records.