

**Sociology H190B: Senior Honors Thesis Seminar
Spring Semester 2019**

Senior Thesis Seminar
!86 Barrows Hall
Tuesday 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

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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 29, February 10, March 12, and April 16).

Students who did not present their work in progress at the end of last semester will make an oral presentation summarizing their thesis research during the weeks of March 12, March 19, April 2, April 9 and April 16. 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 16. You will have about a month to improve it. **The final thesis is due on May 14.** There are no incompletes or extensions allowed for this course, except in truly extenuating circumstances. Whatever you have written by May 14 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 class participation. Your thesis will also receive a designation (noted on your transcript) of honors, high honors, or (rarely) 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 22) Planning for the Semester and Update on Progress

Review the plan for the spring semester of the senior thesis seminar;
Sign up for presentations 3/12, 3/19, 4/2, 4/9, and 4/16 (2 students per date)
Discuss first assignment due January 29

Week 2 (January 29) Data collection (joint meeting in 420 Barrows)

Be prepared to share your research question and how you will gather the data you need to answer your research question.

Writing Assignment #1: Revise your prospectus and bring a hard copy to class for peer review exchange. On b-course, submit a longer document that includes:

- a) a copy of your revised prospectus;
- b) your research and writing schedule for the semester, making sure you set specific target dates for your goals (1-2 pages);
- c) your complete bibliography showing what you have read and what you still intend to read for the thesis.

Week 3 (February 5) Revise, Revise, Revise: the Art of Editing

1st Hour: Peer review of revised prospectus (some students can use 420 Barrows)

2nd Hour: Reconvene in section classrooms. Be prepared to introduce your partner's project and engage in a discussion of editing

Assigned Reading: Howard Becker, "Freshman English" (on b-course)

Writing Assignment 2 is due Sunday, Feb 10

Writing Assignment #2: Present empirical evidence gathered to date (5-7 pages).

Week 4 (February 12) Individual meetings

Week 5 (February 19) Individual meetings

Week 6 (February 26) Presenting Preliminary Findings and Troubleshooting

Prepare a 3-5 minute statement on your preliminary findings, including any challenges you have encountered (or anticipate)

Assigned Reading: Emerson et al. "Processing Fieldnotes: Coding and Memoing" (on b-course).

Week 7 (March 5) Sociological Significance and Troubleshooting

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

Week 8 (March 12) (Joint session in 420 Barrows)

Formal presentations of projects (10 minutes) followed by comments and discussion; four presentations each week.

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.

Week 9 (March 19) (Joint session in 420 Barrows) Formal presentations

Week 10 (April 2) (Joint session in 420 Barrows) Formal presentations

Week 11 (April 9) (Joint session in 420 Barrows) Formal presentations

Week 12 (April 16) (Joint session in 420 Barrows) Formal presentations

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

NB: Writing Assignment 4 is due Tuesday, April 16

Week 13 (April 23) Individual consultations

Week 14 (April 30) Individual consultations (1st hour) and PARTY in 420 Barrows!!!

Final thesis due on May 14: 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.