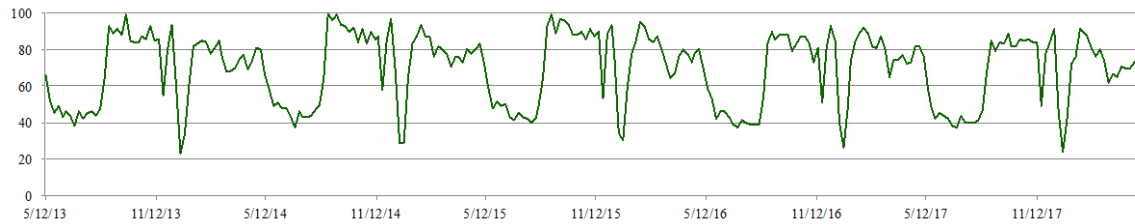


SOCIOLOGY 5: EVALUATION OF EVIDENCE SUMMER 2018



Instructor: Alexander Roehrkasse

Email: roehrkasse@berkeley.edu

Mailbox: 410 Barrows Hall

Office: 477 Barrows Hall

Office hours: W 1–3

Office hours sign-up: wejoinin.com/alex

Course website: bcourses.berkeley.edu/courses/1471655

Lecture time: T/W/Th 10am–12pm

Lecture location: 56 Barrows Hall

Final exam time: Th 8/9 10am–12pm

Final exam location: 56 Barrows Hall

Description

We seem to have available to us more and more information about individuals, groups, and whole societies. Somehow, though, it also seems that access to more information does not necessarily lead people to cite facts more accurately or to use facts to justify their opinions. Without trusted tools for finding meaning in social information, how do we know how to think and act responsibly?

This course will introduce you to a set of principles and practices for finding things out about the social world. Although there is a diversity of valuable traditions for knowing ourselves, this course will be grounded in the scientific method. Because humans and human societies are uniquely complex, being systematic about knowledge creation is especially important but also especially hard. We will tackle fundamental philosophical questions about social science, but we will also come clean about the dirty truths of gathering facts about people.

The learning objective for the course is to understand the logic and logistics of empirical social research. This will give you two new powers! First, you will be able to design and implement your own basic social research projects, including asking clear questions, collecting high-quality data, using the appropriate tools to analyze data, and communicating your findings effectively. We will learn these skills by examining closely the work of professional social scientists. But tools for understanding human beliefs and behaviors systematically are highly transferable to a variety of professional settings.

Second, you will be able to evaluate knowledge claims about social life by examining whether they are based on good evidence, sound reasoning, and ethical practices. By learning to spot “fake news,” shoddy science, and outright bullshit, you will become a more responsible participant in debates about complex and sometimes controversial social, political, and economic topics.

We will achieve the learning objective for this course through a variety of activities, including lecture and discussion, reading and critiquing scientific writing, and conducting empirical social science research ourselves. There are no prerequisites for this course, and anyone can succeed in it. In order to do so, though, you must honor the community principles and abide by course policies, attend class regularly and participate fully, and complete all assigned work in good faith and on time.

This is an accelerated four-credit course. In addition to 5.5 hours of lecture and 3.5 hours of discussion, you should expect an average of 13.5 hours of outside work per week.

This document

This syllabus serves as a sort of constitution for the course. Because this is a governing document, some amount of input and consent is appropriate: please read the syllabus carefully and come prepared to discuss revisions and/or additions, which we will add to the amendments page at the end of the syllabus. Alas, this process cannot be fully democratic—I humbly retain veto power and the right to make changes I deem necessary. After all, unlike the society into which you were born, no one is forcing you to be part of this class! Nevertheless, I pledge that the course principles, policies, assignments and schedule are subject to change only by mutual agreement, in order to enhance student learning, or in the event of extenuating circumstances.

Once we have all agreed to terms, I ask that you sign the learning agreement at the end of the syllabus, thereby ratifying this constitution.

The rest of this syllabus describes the principles, policies, assignments, materials, and schedule of the course. It also points you to resources that will help you succeed in the course and take care of yourself and your classmates. Whenever you have a question about the course, first consult the syllabus before contacting me or the Graduate Student Instructor. Please don't make me be this guy:

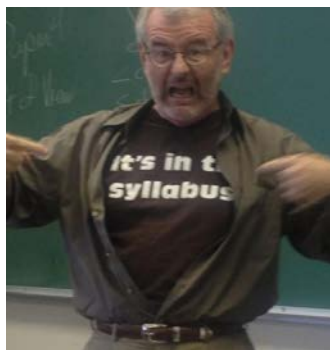


Figure 1. Angry professor

Community principles

Real learning is difficult. It requires you to get out of your comfort zone, but it also can't happen without trust and respect. It demands that you to take individual responsibility,

while at the same time recognizing that our experiences are interlinked. Finding a balance between these aspects of learning takes intention and effort.

In order to support everyone's learning, I propose that we adopt the following principles as guiding values for our learning community:

- Support one another's learning, esteem, and well-being.
- Recognize that each of us has much to learn and much to teach.
- Inquire not only into the subject matter, but also into ourselves as learners.
- Consider the roles of privilege, power, and culture in the classroom.
- Remember the relationship between individual learning and group health.

Please take some time to reflect on what each of these means to you, and what you would change or add. Come prepared to discuss these reflections on the first day of class.

We will all fail in upholding these values at some point, and that is okay. The goal is to make consistent, wholehearted effort.

In addition to these principles, I expect you to understand and abide by our campus's standards of non-academic student conduct, including policies on harassment (sa.berkeley.edu/code-of-conduct).

Study buddy

The summer session is fast-paced and the subject matter in this course is challenging and wide-ranging. You will not be able to succeed in this course alone! Please find two people *who you did not know before today* and ask them to be your study buddy. With a couple buddies, you will always have someone to call on if you miss a day of lecture and need to borrow notes, if you want to start a study group, or if you just need a little support!

Study buddy 1: Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Study buddy 2: Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

GSI and sections

The Graduate Student Instructor for the course is Naniette Coleman. Her email is nhcoleman@berkeley.edu.

There are two discussion sections. You must register for one section in order to be enrolled in the course. Naniette will distribute a syllabus specific to sections.

Due to scheduling issues, the meeting locations for section may not be accurately reflected in the university register, and the meeting location for both sections will change from day to day. Please refer carefully to the following table:

<i>Section number</i>	<i>Meeting times</i>	<i>Meeting location (Barrows Hall)</i>
101	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12–2pm	420, except 7/5: 475
102	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3–5pm	6/19–28: 475 7/3: 420 7/5: 475 Thereafter: 420

Assignments and assessment

The following table outlines the assignments for the course. For all assignments, grades will be given in points, where 1 point = .1% of the course grade. I won't give any extra credit.

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Submission location</i>	<i>Points</i>
Reading responses	Tu/W/Th, 10am	bCourses	150
Research projects			400
– Survey design	July 16, 3pm	bCourses	– 100
– Quantitative data analysis	July 30, 3pm	bCourses	– 150
– Participant observation			– 150
– Circulate detailed field notes	July 23, 12pm	bCourses	
– Submit report, reflection	August 6, 3pm	bCourses	
– Submit field notes	August 7, 10am	In class	
Examinations			300
– Midterm (50 minutes)	July 10, 10am	In class	– 75
– Final (1 hour 50 minutes)	August 9, 10am	In class	– 225
Section participation	Section meetings	In class	150

Research projects. You will conduct three small research projects over the course of the semester. Each project will combine elements of research design, data collection, data analysis, and scientific communication. The assignments are described in detail at the end of the syllabus, including grading rubrics that will be used to evaluate the assignment and a required worksheet for reflecting on your assignment. We will discuss research projects in lecture and work on them in section. Each research project asks you to communicate a lot of information with very few words, so please write carefully! See the course schedule and assignment descriptions below for more information.

Examinations. There will be two in-class tests. The midterm will cover material through Lecture 9 and corresponding course materials; the final will be cumulative. Both tests are entirely multiple choice. All subject matter addressed in lecture and in materials is testable, but no subject matter that comes exclusively from supplemental materials or discussion section will be testable. Strong emphasis will be placed on critical reasoning rather than memorization. We will discuss practice questions regularly throughout the semester. Lecture slides, reading response questions, and practice questions will serve as study guides for exams.

Section participation. Participation in section discussions is evaluated. Naniette will define quality participation in the section syllabus, describe how it will be evaluated, and offer guidance on how to succeed in section.

Reading responses. You will get more out of lecture when you've done the readings beforehand. In my experience, students often struggle to stay on pace with readings, to know how to read efficiently, and to organize their reading notes for exam study. For this reason, I assign a reading response for each day's readings. Doing these responses will help keep you on track with the course schedule, help guide your reading and facilitate reflection on your learning, and serve as in-class aids to discussion and useful study guides.

Responses are due on bCourses by 10am the day of each lecture. Responses must be 6–8 sentences in length. A quality reading response demonstrates that you have done the reading, have reflected upon at least a couple of the main arguments, and have examined your own learning. Responses will be graded for completion daily (0 or 3.57 points each) and graded for quality on three random occasions (0–25 points each). Unless otherwise noted, responses should answer the following questions:

1. What are the two most important research practices that the readings recommend, and why are they recommended?
2. What is one key concept, practice, or argument you do not understand as well as you'd like? Describe the limits to your understanding.

Note that in some cases, especially examples of research, recommendations may not be explicit, and you will need to infer them based on what the research does.

Policies

Electronic devices. During class meetings, please silence your mobile phones and refrain from using any electronic devices—including phones, tablets, and laptops—except on designated breaks. This policy is to support your learning. I understand that it may seem severe: research shows that most students do not believe that in-class electronics use affects their attention or performance.¹ The problem is, research also shows that they're wrong: reading on screens rather than printed texts leads to lower comprehension, and in-class mobile phone use is associated with lower grades.² I nevertheless acknowledge the personal inconvenience and potential environmental impact of this policy. For these reasons, I will make a course reader available (see "Materials" below) and I will make an anonymous donation to the Rainforest Action Network on our collective behalf.

¹ Tindell, Deborah R. and Robert W. Bohlander. 2012. "The Use and Abuse of Cell Phones and Text Messaging in the Classroom: A Survey of College Students." *College Teaching* 60(1):1–9.

² Duncan, Douglas K., Angel R. Hoekstra, and Bethany R. Wilcox. 2012. "Digital Devices, Distraction, and Student Performance: Does In-Class Cell Phone Use Reduce Learning?" *Astronomy Education Review* 11(1). Singer, Lauren M. and Patricia A. Alexander. 2017. "Reading on Paper and Digitally: What the Past Decades of Empirical Research Reveal." *Review of Educational Research* 87(6):1007–41.

Materials. Please bring a hard copy of the assigned materials to the relevant lecture and discussion section meetings.

Lecture, slides, and notes. Lectures will include lecture slides. I will post lecture slides on the course website by 12am on the day of lecture. The slides will outline only the basic architecture of lecture and cannot substitute for diligent notetaking in class. Lecture slides are for learning purposes only and may not be redistributed. Please take the time to develop a personal handwritten notetaking system if you haven't already. I recommend the "Cornell" system (lsc.cornell.edu/notes.html), but explore what works and doesn't work for you.

Food. Lecture is long, and for some of you it is followed immediately by section. I strongly encourage you to take care of your bodies throughout the day and through the semester. This includes nourishment. So please feel free to eat in class, but be mindful of others as you do so (e.g. don't make a daily habit of foot-long meatball subs.)

Breaks. We will take a 5- to 10-minute break halfway through each lecture. Outside of breaks, you should feel free to use the restroom as needed. There is a gender-inclusive restroom on the west end of the 6th floor of Barrows Hall.

Formatting written assignments. All research projects should be typeset in 12-point Times New Roman font; be double-spaced; be formatted with 1-inch margins and numbered pages; and include a word count in the heading that excludes any references.

Late assignments. Assignments will be downgraded 10% every 24 hours between due date and submission. (This applies also to the two intermediate deadlines for the participant observation research project.) I will grant extensions on a case-by-case basis if requested before the due date. Only in cases of documented emergencies can I grant extensions without prior notice.

Credit and grades. This is a four-credit course. Assignments for the course total 1,000 points. Grades for the course will be calculated by dividing total points by 10 and assigning a letter grade according to the following table, where brackets "[]" indicate inclusive intervals and parentheses "()" indicate exclusive intervals.

	+		-	
A	[97–100]	[93–97)	[90–93)	
B	[87–90)	[83–87)	[80–83)	
C	[77–80)	[73–77)	[70–73)	
D		[60–70)		
F		[0–60)		

See the Berkeley Academic Guide for University policy on grades (<http://guide.berkeley.edu/academic-policies/#gradestext>).

Email. Please reserve all substantive questions about the course material for discussion in seminar and office hours. In order to ensure a prompt response, please include “[SOC5]” at the beginning of the subject of all course-related emails. If you do so, you can expect responses from me within one weekday.

Office hours. Office hours are an opportunity to discuss interests, questions, or concerns in greater detail than is possible in lecture. Discussions during office hours are never evaluated. Please make reservations by following the link at the top of the syllabus. Please do not make more than one reservation every other week. Shared reservations are welcome, but must be made with mutual consent. Be sure to release your reservation immediately if you cannot make your appointment—you can do this using the link in your reservation email. Missed appointments will negatively affect your participation grade. Please email me to make an appointment if (but only if!) you are unable to attend scheduled office hours.

Academic integrity. Instances of academic misconduct including plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course and may result in a disciplinary referral. Ignorance is not an acceptable reason for misconduct—it is your responsibility to know and abide by campus standards of academic integrity. Please take the time to read Appendix II of UC Berkeley’s Student Code of Conduct, which defines academic misconduct and describes its potential consequences (sa.berkeley.edu/student-code-of-conduct). See also the library’s citations resource for information about how to avoid plagiarism (lib.berkeley.edu/how-to-find/cite-sources).

Students with disabilities. I am eager to accommodate differently abled students to the full extent possible, but all such accommodations must come through the Disabled Students Program (DSP). If you have been issued a letter of accommodation from DSP, please contact me in writing as soon as possible to make the necessary arrangements. If you need an accommodation and have not yet seen a Disability Specialist at the DSP, please do so as soon as possible (visit dsp.berkeley.edu for more information). Retroactive exceptions to stated course and section requirements and policies cannot be granted.

Materials

Reading/watching/listening to and carefully reflecting upon the course materials is an integral part of this course. I have carefully selected the materials to support your learning. In many cases, they have been important to my own understanding of the topics at hand.

You must read/watch/listen to all the materials that are listed in the course schedule *before* the course meeting for which they are listed. I may distribute supplemental materials in lecture or on the course website, but these are for enrichment only and will not be part of any evaluation.

There are two core sets of readings:

- Carr, Deborah, et al. 2018. *The Art and Science of Social Research*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Course reader. Sociology 5. Summer 2018.

The textbook is available at the Cal Student Store for purchase (\$123.75 new; \$99.00 used) or rental (\$75.95 new; \$56.95 used). The textbook can also be purchased in eBook (\$45) or loose-leaf (\$86.63) formats directly from the publisher (<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/webad-detail-editions.aspx?id=4294994944>). The course reader contains all readings not in the textbook. The reader is available for purchase (\$19.95) at Copy Central, located at 2411 Telegraph Ave. in Berkeley. (Do not use or purchase readers from previous semesters—they are not the same!) If you do not want to purchase/rent the textbook or the reader, both texts will be on reserve at Moffitt Library. I will also post the contents of the reader on the course website, but not the contents of the textbook.

In the schedule, all readings marked “ASSR” are from the textbook; all other readings are from the course reader/website. Please note that in some cases, although full texts are included in the course reader/website, only portions of the texts are assigned for a particular course meeting. Read the course schedule carefully for assigned page numbers, which are *in italics*. All other materials, such as audio or video recordings, are accessible via hyperlinks in the course schedule.

Resources

School is hard and so is life. The summer session can be especially difficult. It’s always okay to ask for help. If you’re struggling, please reach out. Office hours are always a safe and open space to discuss your academic needs and to connect you with relevant resources for your non-academic needs. A general directory of campus resources for students, including academic, health and wellness, safety, legal, and social justice and diversity resources, is available here: sa.berkeley.edu/conduct/resources. Other important resources include:

- UC Berkeley Student Learning Center, which offers tutoring as well as support services for international students: slc.berkeley.edu/summer-sessions
- UC Berkeley emergency medical and mental health resources: uhs.berkeley.edu/emergency#students
- UC Berkeley guidance on recognizing depression: uhs.berkeley.edu/look-for-the-signs
- UC Berkeley support for survivors of sexual violence and harassment: survivorsupport.berkeley.edu
- UC Berkeley food pantry: pantry.berkeley.edu
- UC Berkeley housing and homelessness resources: sa.berkeley.edu/housing-and-homelessness
- UC Berkeley short-term emergency loan program: financialaid.berkeley.edu/short-term-emergency-loan

Schedule and content

I. Social science: logic and purpose.

In this module, we identify the features of social science that distinguish it from other traditions of knowledge creation. We address some tradeoffs inherent to social science, and discuss how to make the most of them.

1. June 19. Introduction to course, social science and its others.

What are the goals of this course? Why is it important to understand how social science works? How is social science different from natural science? How is it different from journalism?

- ASSR. Chapter 1, “The Art and Science of Social Research: An Introduction,” pp. 2–31.

2. June 20. The analytic viewpoint.

What state of mind should we adopt when we do social science? What do we gain and lose by “abstracting”? How do we find the right amount of abstraction?

- “How to Read an Academic Paper.” https://youtu.be/SKxm2HF_k0
- Healy, Kieran. 2017. “Fuck Nuance.” *Sociological Theory* 35(2):118–127.

3. June 21. The creation of social scientific knowledge.

What are the goals of empirical social research? How do we know if we’re achieving them?

- ASSR. Chapter 2, “Research Foundations: Linking Sociological Theory to Research,” pp. 31–59.
- Burawoy, Michael. 1990. “Marxism as Science: Historical Challenges and Theoretical Growth.” *American Sociological Review* 55:775–793. Pp. 775–784 only.

4. June 26. Reflexivity and ethics.

Why is it important to examine ourselves in the research process? How should we reflect on our own views and conduct?

- ASSR. Chapter 3, “Ethical Issues in Social Science Research,” pp. 66–99.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Loïc J. D. Wacquant. 1992. “Epistemic Reflexivity.” Pp. 36–46 in *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

II. Basic elements of empirical inquiry.

In this module, we explore the logic of empirical research. Important design decisions must be made before researchers begin collecting or analyzing data. If you make the wrong decisions, your research findings will be limited or compromised. We learn to apply the logic of empirical research in order to choose wisely.

5. June 27. Formulating questions and hypotheses.

How do empirical social scientists come up with research questions? How do they come up with possible answers?

- Pager, Devah. 2003. “The Mark of a Criminal Record.” *American Journal of Sociology* 108(5):937–75. Pp. 937–945 only.

- Dey, Ian. 1999. "Introduction." Pp. 1–12 in *Grounding Grounded Theory: Guidelines for Qualitative Inquiry*. New York: Academic Press.

6. June 28. Developing measures.

How do we connect our abstractions to empirical reality? How do we organize our measurements so that we can use them for analysis?

- ASSR. Chapter 4, "From Concepts to Models: Hypotheses, Operationalization, and Measurement," pp. 100–131.
- Flores, René D. 2017. "Do Anti-Immigrant Laws Shape Public Sentiment? A Study of Arizona's SB 1070 Using Twitter Data." *American Journal of Sociology* 123(2):333–84. Pp. 333–339, 343–348 only.
- Take any one Implicit Association Test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/>

7. July 3. Evaluating measures.

How do we know if our measurements are good ones?

- ASSR. Chapter 5, "Evaluating Research: Reliability and Validity," pp. 132–155.
- Johnson, Noel D. and Alexandra Mislin. 2012. "How Much Should We Trust the World Values Survey Trust Question?" *Economics Letters* 116(2):210–12.

8. July 4. No class (Independence Day).

- Complete online survey by 5pm. The survey should take you less than 5 minutes to complete. Choose the appropriate survey based on whether or not your birthday is an odd or even number (e.g. my birthday is October 13th; 13 is an odd number). It is important that you only view the survey assigned to you!
 - Even: <https://goo.gl/forms/Kir5Mesdful2dtS93>
 - Odd: <https://goo.gl/forms/O6KG8BoJvKuHboes1>

9. July 5. Sampling and inference and review of basic elements of empirical inquiry.

With limited resources, how do we choose what to look at? What kinds of claims can we make based on our choices?

- ASSR. Chapter 6, "Sampling Strategies," pp. 156–191.
- Pew Research Center. "Methods 101: Random Sampling." <https://youtu.be/sonXfzE1hvo>

July 10. In-class midterm exam. [Note: there is still reading for today's class; see below.]

III. Methods of data collection.

This module surveys the various methods social researchers use to collect data. We discuss how researchers decide what kinds of data are suitable for particular research questions, and how they acquire it responsibly. We compare the strengths and weaknesses of data types and collection methods.

10. July 10. Experiments.

Can we study social settings by manipulating them? Why would we do this?

- ASSR. Chapter 8, "Experimental Research," pp. 234–271.

- Pager, Devah. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108(5):937–75. Pp. 945–960 only.

11. July 11. Surveys.

What can we learn by asking large numbers of people simple questions?

- ASSR. Chapter 7, "Survey Research," pp. 192–233.
- Pew Research Center. "Methods 101: Question wording."
<https://youtu.be/eFzGdQrr2K8>
- "How Popular is Donald Trump?" FiveThirtyEight.com.
<https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/trump-approval-ratings/>

12. July 12. Interviewing.

What if we ask a small number of people complicated questions?

- ASSR. Chapter 11, "In-Depth Interviewing," pp. 340–375.
- Becker, Howard S. 1959. "Becoming a Marihuana User." *American Journal of Sociology* 59(3):235–242.

July 16. Survey design project due.

13. July 17. Ethnography.

Can researchers capture important features of social settings by immersing themselves in them?

- ASSR. Chapter 10, "Ethnography," pp. 302–339.
- Goffman, Alice. 2009. "On the Run: Wanted Men in a Philadelphia Ghetto." *American Sociological Review* 74(3):339–357. Pp. 339–353 only.

14. July 18. Materials-based methods.

What can we learn about people and processes from the traces they leave behind?

- ASSR. Chapter 12, "Materials-Based Methods," pp. 376–421.

15. July 19. Social networks and review and comparison of data collection methods.

What does the structure of social relationships tell us about the people in those relationships? How do we decide between alternative methods of collecting data?

- ASSR. Chapter 13, "Social Network Analysis," pp. 422–459.

IV. Methods of data analysis.

In this module, we learn how to extract meaning from data. We explore how the appropriate method of data analysis depends not only on the type of data, but also on the research question.

July 23. Circulate detailed participant observation field notes to project team and Naniette by email.

16. July 24. Analyzing quantitative data (1).

Can we use numbers to learn basic facts about large groups?

- ASSR. Chapter 14, “Univariate and Bivariate Analysis of Quantitative Data,” pp. 460–493.

17. July 25. Analyzing quantitative data (2).

Can we use numbers to test hypotheses? Can we use them to measure the certainty of our findings?

- ASSR. Chapter 15, “Multivariate and Advanced Quantitative Methods,” pp. 494–531.
- Anscombe, F. J. 1973. “Graphs in Statistical Analysis.” *The American Statistician* 27(1):17–21.

18. July 26. Analyzing qualitative data.

Can we extract meaning from words, gestures, and expressions systematically?

- ASSR. Chapter 16, “Analysis of Qualitative Data,” pp. 532–577.
- Goffman, Alice. 2009. “On the Run: Wanted Men in a Philadelphia Ghetto.” *American Sociological Review* 74(3):339–357. Pp. 353–356 only.

July 30. Quantitative data analysis project due.

19. July 31. Comparison and causality.

Can we study causality without an experiment?

- ASSR. Chapter 9, “Evaluation Research,” pp. 272–301.
- Flores, René D. 2017. “Do Anti-Immigrant Laws Shape Public Sentiment? A Study of Arizona’s SB 1070 Using Twitter Data.” *American Journal of Sociology* 123(2):333–84. Pp. 348–357 only.

20. August 1. Mixed methods and review and comparison of data analysis methods.

How do we decide how to analyze data? Are multiple approaches better than one? If so, who should combine them?

- Johnson, R. Burke and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie. 2004. “Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come.” *Educational Researcher* 33(7):14–26.

V. Scientific interaction and communication.

In this module, we address several essential but frequently ignored social science practices that are necessary to ensure the accuracy, trustworthiness, and impact of social science research.

21. August 2. Transparency and reproducibility.

What scientific practices deserve our trust? Why?

- Kestenbaum, David, and Jacob Goldstein. 2018. “The Experiment Experiment.” *Planet Money*, March 7. <https://goo.gl/8JxKKm>
- Young, Cristobal, and Aaron Horvath. 2015. “Sociologists Need to be Better at Replication.” *Orgtheory.net*, August 11.
- Krugman, Paul. 2013. “The Excel Depression.” *The New York Times*, April 18.

August 6. Participant observation project due.

22. August 7. Public sociology and scientific communication.

What do social scientists owe to society? How do we uphold that obligation?

- Pager, Devah. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology* 108(5):937–75. Pp. 960–962 only
- Eviction Lab. 2018. <https://evictionlab.org/>

23. August 8. Conclusion and in-class review for final exam.

August 9. In-class final exam.

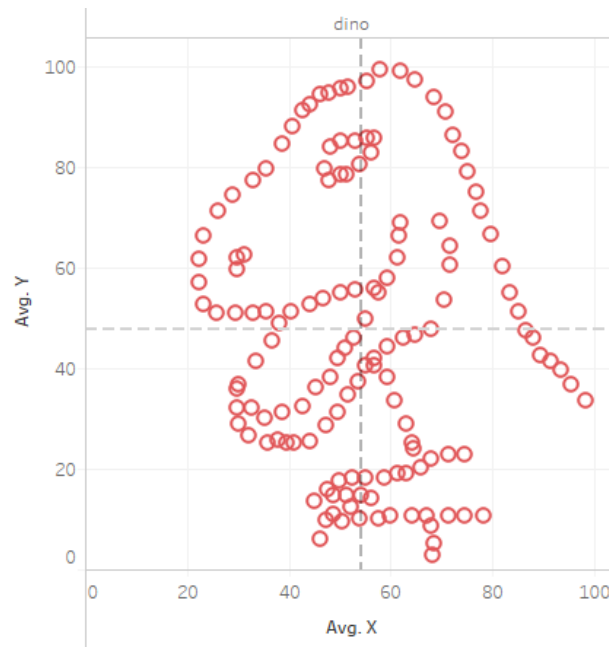


Figure 2. Datasaurus

Research project 1. Survey design

Due July 16 at 3pm via bCourses. 100 points.

Americans appear deeply divided about government spending on social programs. That said, the opinions they express seem to depend on how you ask the questions! Suppose we want to understand people's attitudes about governmental efforts to reduce poverty. We receive some funding to conduct a survey. This assignment asks you to design a questionnaire to measure a large number of opinions, and to write a memo justifying the questionnaire's design. The purpose of the assignment is to learn to think carefully about asking questions and developing measures, which allows us to interpret the data we collect with greater certainty.

Survey questionnaire. Write a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire should be designed to obtain the following information from each respondent:

- Their age, gender, race/ethnicity, and occupation
- Whether they voted in the last election and, if so, whether they voted for Clinton, Trump, or someone else
- Their attitudes toward five governmental policies intended to reduce poverty

Except for a header with your name, the survey should be written and formatted as though it were actually going to be administered. It should be no more than one page, use clear language, and be formatted so that it is easy for respondents to read, understand, and give written answers to.

Survey design memo. Write a memo justifying the design choices you have made. For each question in the questionnaire:

- Why is the question wording appropriate for measuring the intended construct?
- Why are the response type (e.g. open- or close-ended), response options (e.g. Likert scale descriptions), and/or level of measurement (e.g. number of response options) appropriate for measuring the construct?

Finally, address why the ordering of questions is appropriate.

The memo should be 500–600 words and should not appear on the same physical page as the questionnaire. See course policies for formatting guidelines. Include a research project reflection on a separate page.

Grading rubric for survey design research project.

<i>Project component</i>	<i>Points awarded</i>	<i>Points possible</i>
Survey questionnaire		
<i>Are the questions worded clearly and appropriately?</i>		10
<i>Is the choice of response types, response options, and levels of measurement reasonable?</i>		25
<i>Is the question ordering effective?</i>		5
<i>Is the questionnaire formatted well?</i>		10
Survey design memo		
<i>Is the justification for question wording sound?</i>		10
<i>Is the justification for response types, response options, and levels of measurement sound?</i>		25
<i>Is the justification for the question ordering sound?</i>		10
<i>Is the memo clearly written and appropriately formatted? Is the project reflection thorough?</i>		5
Total		100

Research project 2. Quantitative data analysis

Due July 30 at 3pm via bCourses. 150 points.

The U.S. population is becoming less religious. Many social researchers also think that Americans are becoming less happy. Is there a relationship between these two broad social trends? In this assignment we use survey data to get some systematic empirical insight into this question. The purpose of the assignment is to learn how to access, interpret, and manipulate public data; to do simple quantitative analysis of survey data; and to use analytic results to answer a research question.

Data access. Download an extract of survey data from the General Social Survey: <https://gssdataexplorer.norc.berkeley.edu/vfilter>. Use the search and filter functions in the Data Explorer to create an extract with the following features:

- Year: 2016
- Variables: SEX, ATTEND, HAPPY

You will need to create an account to download the sample. Choose “Excel Workbook” as the file format extract type.

Data analysis. You may use any software package you prefer. I recommend Microsoft Excel because it is easy to use. (Stata and R are useful for more advanced methods, but are not necessary for this assignment.) All necessary software is accessible through UC Berkeley: <https://software.berkeley.edu/>. You will likely need to do some independent learning about how to manipulate and analyze data. Quantitative social researchers of all skill levels have to do this all the time, and so it is part of the assignment. There are many resources online, and you can usually find the help you need by describing your problem in a Web search (YouTube and StackExchange are particularly helpful). Hint: if you are using Excel, using sorting and the COUNTIFS function will be especially helpful.

For your data analysis, create two figures and two tables:

- Figures 1 and 2: create histograms that illustrate the distributions of religious institutional attendance and overall happiness.
- Table 1: create a cross-tabulation showing the bivariate association between SEX and HAPPY, with cells containing counts of observations.
- Table 2: display the same information as in Table 1, but represent it as the percentage of all men/women contained in each cell.
- Table 3: create a cross-tabulation showing the bivariate association between ATTEND and HAPPY, with cells containing counts of observations.
- Table 4: display the same information as in Table 3, but represent it as the percentage of each attendance group contained in each cell.

In figures and tables, exclude non-responses (e.g. “Don’t know,” “Refused,” “No answer,” or “Not applicable”). Make sure the figures and tables are labeled clearly.

Report. Write a report that answers the following questions:

- Describe the level of measurement and central tendencies for ATTEND and HAPPY.
- Describe the association you observe between HAPPY and each of the other two variables. What is the direction and strength of each association?
- Conclude by using the results of analysis to answer the following questions:
 - Are men happier than women? Give one reason why measurement error may influence our conclusion.
 - If I want to be happier, should I become more religious? Give at least one reason why and at least two reasons why not (hint: Americans are also becoming more isolated).

Place the figures and tables at the end of the memo. The report should be 700–800 words, not including the figures and tables. See course policies for formatting guidelines. Include a research project reflection on a separate page.

Grading rubric for quantitative data analysis research project.

<i>Project component</i>	<i>Points awarded</i>	<i>Points possible</i>
Data analysis		
<i>Are the figures and tables formatted and labeled clearly and appropriately?</i>		30
<i>Are the quantities correct?</i>		30
Report		
<i>Are the levels of measurement correct and the central tendencies appropriate and accurate?</i>		10
<i>Are the bivariate associations between variables accurately described and interpreted?</i>		30
<i>Are the conclusions drawn from the variable associations clear and defensible?</i>		40
<i>Is the memo well written and appropriately formatted? Is the project reflection thorough?</i>		10
Total		150

Research project 3. Participant observation

Detailed field notes due to via group-specific “Detailed field notes” discussion on bCourses by July 23 at 3pm. Report and reflection due August 6 at 3pm via bCourses. Handwritten material (raw field notes, coded detailed field notes) due in lecture August 7 at 10am. 150 points.

One of the central concerns of sociology is the idea of social hierarchy. For this project, we will define social hierarchy as differential access to some desirable thing—whether that thing is physical space or time, people’s concern or attention, or social position based on observable characteristics or behavior. Hierarchy is manifested in the social world in subtle and complex ways. The purpose of this assignment is to learn how to use ethnographic methods to study subtle and complex social phenomena, especially interactive ones. Because this research deals with human subjects who are potentially identifiable, please consider research ethics carefully from start to finish.

Fieldwork and field notes. I have randomly assigned you to research teams of four people. We will take time in class on July 18 to collaborate in choosing research sites. The site may be any public location where you might see examples of social hierarchy in the way people interact with each other. For example, you might wish to observe the area in a local coffee shop where people jockey for cream, sugar, cup tops, etc. Who moves to the front of the counter, and who stays back? Who politely asks for a place, and who just barges in? What are people’s reactions to those around them? Do they vary by gender, race, age, style of clothing? Alternatively, you might wish to observe a busy store entrance (who walks through the door first?) or observe a crowded bus at rush hour (what is the reaction of those already on the bus to those entering the bus?). You may pick any location you wish, as long as it is public and you can witness a variety of people using that public space. (You will want variety among a few of dimensions. Consider gender, age, ethnicity/race, class, etc.) All researchers on your team must observe the same specific research site (i.e. not just a bus, but the 12; not just any café, but Café Strada). You must identify a research site by the end of the in-class activity on July 18.

Each student must observe your research site for at least 30 minutes on at least two separate occasions. No more than two members of the research team should observe the research site at once. Consider the advantages of having multiple viewpoints on the same incidents. (I.e. Do you see the same things? Do you see them the same way?) Balance this against the advantages of having observations of more incidents. (Does what you see depend on the time of day or day of week?)

While you are at the location, unobtrusively write short notes to yourself. These will then form the basis for detailed field notes that you will write after leaving the site. For some social situations, you might not be able to write notes until after you leave the scene. In both cases, write up your detailed field notes immediately after leaving the field of study. You must share your detailed field notes with your research team via the group-specific “Detailed field notes” discussion on bCourses by July 23 at 3pm.

Read through your research team's detailed field notes at least once. After you have read them, code important observations that highlight social hierarchy. Do this with a different colored pen or pencil. Be sure to code both your detailed field notes and your teammates' detailed field notes.

Report. Write a report addressing the following:

- Where you did your participant observation
- Why you chose this location
- How you identified social hierarchy
- What your observations imply about hierarchy in social interactions
- What similarities and differences across different research teammates' field notes imply for reliability and reflexivity

The report should be 700–800 words. See course policies for formatting guidelines. Include a research project reflection on a separate page.

You must submit your report and a research project reflection by 3pm on Monday. Note that you must individually submit five things in total:

1. An original copy of your raw field notes
2. Your detailed field notes, coded
3. Your research teammates' detailed field notes, coded
4. Your report
5. Research project reflection

Be sure that your detailed field notes are identifiable from those of your teammates. Although the collection of detailed field notes you submit will be the same as your teammates', your coding will be unique and your report and reflection will be your own.

Grading rubric for participant observation research project.

<i>Project component</i>	<i>Points awarded</i>	<i>Points possible</i>
Fieldwork and field notes		
<i>Are your raw field notes adequate to prompt detailed field notes?</i>		5
<i>Are your detailed field notes thorough, perceptive, and reflexive?</i>		30
<i>Is your coding thorough, well-organized, and relevant?</i>		25
Report		
<i>Is the field site, method, and time of observation well documented and well justified?</i>		15
<i>Is the operationalization of social hierarchy compelling?</i>		25
<i>Are conclusions about hierarchy and social interaction made at an appropriate level of generality?</i>		15
<i>Is the meaning of observational differences across teammates considered carefully?</i>		15
<i>Are research ethics considered and followed?</i>		10
<i>Is the memo well written and appropriately formatted? Is the project reflection thorough?</i>		10
Total		150

Research project reflection

1. What do you like best about your completed project?
2. Reflecting on how you went about completing this assignment, what strategies worked best for you?
3. What did you find most difficult or challenging in working on this project? Why do you think it was so challenging?
4. If you had more time, what would you keep working on?
5. How might you change your process for future assignments?
6. What questions or issues should I be sure to pay attention to in evaluating and giving feedback on your project?
7. What grade would you give yourself on this project?

Amendments to the syllabus

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Learning agreement

- I have read and understand the entire course syllabus.
- Whenever I have a question about the course, I promise to consult the syllabus before inquiring with the instructor or GSI.
- I have found two study buddies and I have their email address.
- To the best of my ability, I pledge to honor the community principles and abide by the course policies, attend class regularly and participate fully, and complete all assigned work in good faith and on time.
- To the best of my ability, I will seek help when I need it.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____