SOCIOLOGY 5
Evaluation of Evidence

Spring 2014
Dr. Christopher Sullivan

Lectures: Tues. & Thurs. 3:30 – 5pm, 10 Evans Hall
Sections: See page 3.
Office Hours: Thursdays 1pm-3pm, 496 Barrows Hall
E-mail: cbsully@berkeley.edu

Course Objectives:

How do we sort through the endless sources of data on the Internet? How do we make sense of the competing claims of pundits crowding the airwaves? Our role not just as sociologists, but also as everyday citizens and consumers of information, demands that we find ways to develop the ability to evaluate statements that begin with “The evidence shows…” – but how? And with what? This course aims to help us develop our ability to evaluate these competing statements, to encourage a healthy skepticism towards such claims, and to nurture our ability to carry out research and investigate claims on our own.

This course is an introductory undergraduate social science research methods course. It is not intended to give you deep proficiency in any single method of research that social scientists use – rather it will give you an overview of the different tools social scientists have available in their research toolkits. Students will learn the fundamentals of research design and social science research methodologies. We will consider: selecting and framing a research question; engaging with existing literatures; the logic of experiments and hypothesis testing; inductive and deductive approaches to research; and an introduction to various sociological research methods, including interviewing, participant observation, historical and comparative methods, and quantitative methods. Finally, we will discuss the emergence of “big data” and how it relates to sociology – and to us as individuals.

This is a challenging course. The readings require careful attention and thoughtful engagement. Lectures will go beyond merely summarizing the material and expand on the information presented in the readings, while sections will be a chance for you to engage with the material in a more intimate setting. The four assignments will challenge you to apply what you have learned in the classroom and get “hand-on” experience doing sociology.

Grading:

You will be graded on your understanding of the course materials presented in the readings and in lecture. This will be determined by a midterm and final examination, as well as four hands-on assignments. Exams will cover key terms and concepts, and ask you
to demonstrate your comprehension of the material covered in lecture and in the readings through short-answer and essay questions.

Assignment 1 “Measurement and Conceptualization” 5%
Assignment 2 “Participant Observation” 10%
Assignment 3 “Developing an Interview Questionnaire” 10%
Assignment 4 “Survey Research Report” (Group Project) 15%
Participation in Section 10%
Midterm Exam 15%
Final Exam 35%

**Prerequisites:** None.

**Required Textbooks:**

There are no required textbooks for this course. However, readings will be available online via the bCourse website, and as two separate course readers (divided into pre- and post-midterm readers). The course readers are available through Copy Central (located at 2576 Bancroft Way, across from Barrows Hall). I also recommend the following three resources for students wishing to engage the material from different perspectives:

ISBN-10: 0195119037


ISBN-10: 0742547159

These three books will be on course reserve at the library.

**Attendance and Participation:**

I expect you to attend both lecture and section. Material in lecture will extend beyond the readings, and will also help you work through the assignments. You are responsible for all material covered in lecture, as well as all announcements made in class and through the course website. Consistent lecture attendance greatly enhances your chances of earning a good grade in this course.

Your Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) will assign ten percent of your grade. This ten percent will be based on section participation. Participation includes attendance,
contribution to class discussion, and asking questions. Remember, quality of contribution is valued over quantity.

**Special Accommodations:**

Those requiring special accommodations for lecture, section, and/or exams should speak to the instructor or GSI early in the semester. A letter from DSP must accompany requests for exam accommodations: http://dsp.berkeley.edu.

**Academic Integrity:**

Students who are detected cheating will receive a failing grade, and be referred to Student Judicial Affairs. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, using notes (written or electronic) during an exam; copying another person’s exam or assignment; allowing someone to copy your exam or assignment; having someone take an exam for you; or plagiarizing an assignment. Plagiarism includes copying other students’ work on an assignment/exam or using electronic/internet resources without proper citation. Please refer to university guidelines on proper citations: http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Citations.html.

**Website:**

There is a website for Sociology 5 on bCourses:

https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/courses/1195708.

All registered students should be automatically added to this site. Electronic copies of the readings will be posted here, and I will post supplementary readings here as well (study guides, lecture notes, etc.).

**Graduate Student Instructors:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Meeting Time / Location</th>
<th>Graduate Student Instructor (GSI)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S 101</td>
<td>T Th 8-9AM, 189 Dwinelle</td>
<td>Mario Castillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S 102</td>
<td>T Th 9-10AM, 211 Dwinelle</td>
<td>Mario Castillo</td>
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<tr>
<td>S 103</td>
<td>T Th 10-11AM, 263 Dwinelle</td>
<td>Thomas Peng</td>
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<tr>
<td>S 104</td>
<td>T Th 11-12PM, 210 Dwinelle</td>
<td>Thomas Peng</td>
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<tr>
<td>S 105</td>
<td>T Th 12-1PM, 186 Barrows</td>
<td>Jacob Seiloe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S 106</td>
<td>T Th 1-2PM, 186 Barrows</td>
<td>Jacob Seiloe</td>
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<tr>
<td>S 108</td>
<td>M W 9-10AM, 60 Barrows</td>
<td>Dani Carrillo</td>
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<tr>
<td>S 109</td>
<td>M W 10-11AM, 122 Latimer</td>
<td>Dani Carrillo</td>
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<tr>
<td>S 110</td>
<td>M W 11-12PM, 122 Latimer</td>
<td>Rachel Wetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S 112</td>
<td>M W 4-5PM, 80 Barrows</td>
<td>Rachel Wetts</td>
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*Sections 107 and 111 have been cancelled.*
Course Outline: Sociology 5 (Spring 2014)

Week One:  Course Introduction

Tuesday, January 21:  Introduction to the Course


Thursday, January 23:  What is Sociology? Sociology as a Social Science?


Week Two:  Starting the Research Process

Tuesday, January 28:  Formulating a Research Question


Thursday, January 30:  Conceptualization, Operationalization, Measurement I

**Week Three: Next Steps in the Research Process**

**Tuesday, February 4:** Conceptualization, Operationalization, Measurement II


**Thursday, February 6:** Writing a Literature Review


**Week Four: Inductive and Deductive Approaches to Research**

**Tuesday, February 11:** The Inductive Approach to Research


***** Assignment 1 due before 3 pm on Tuesday, February 11th *****

**Thursday, February 13:** The Deductive Approach to Research


**Week Five:  Hypothesis Testing, Causality & Experiments**

Tuesday, February 18:  Hypothesis Testing & Causality


Thursday, February 20:  The Logic of Experiments


**Week Six:  Introduction to Participant Observation**

Tuesday, February 25:  Participant Observation: Choosing a Field Site


Thursday, February 27:  Participant Observation: Collecting and Analyzing Field Data


**Week Seven:  Introduction to Interviewing**

Tuesday, March 4:  Interviewing: The Basics


***** Assignment 2 due before 3 pm on Tuesday, March 4th *****

Thursday, March 6: Interviewing: Techniques and Pitfalls


Week Eight: Midterm & Review

Tuesday, March 11: Midterm Review

Thursday, March 13: In-Class Midterm Examination

No additional readings this week.

Week Nine: Research Ethics

Tuesday, March 18: Research Ethics I


Thursday, March 20: Research Ethics II


~~~~~ SPRING BREAK ~~~~~
**Week Ten: Introduction to Quantitative Research Methodologies**

**Tuesday, April 1:** Sampling


***** Assignment 3 due before 3 pm on Tuesday, April 1st *****

**Thursday, April 3:** Statistics and Measures of Central Tendency


**Week Eleven: Statistical Analysis**

**Tuesday, April 8:** Bivariate Analysis


**Thursday, April 10:** Statistical Analysis and “Control”


**Week Twelve: Statistical Analysis (continued)**

**Tuesday, April 15:** Coefficients, Significance Levels, and Confidence Intervals

Thursday, April 17: Correlation and Causation


**Week Thirteen: Historical & Comparative Methods**

Tuesday, April 22: Macro-Comparative Methods


Thursday, April 24: Historical Research


**Week Fourteen: Sociology and “Big Data” & Course Review**

Tuesday, April 29: Perils and Promises of “Big Data”


Thursday, May 1: Course Review

No additional readings.

***** Assignment 4 due before 3 pm on Tuesday, May 6th *****

***** FINAL EXAM *****

Friday, May 16th, 7pm – 10pm
Location: TBA