

Sociology H190A.001
Senior Honors Thesis and Seminar
Fall 2012 – Tuesdays, 12noon-2pm, 129 Barrows

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This is the first semester of a two-semester sequence in which each student will complete a senior honors thesis. During this semester students will develop a research question, build a case that the research question should be pursued, select/devise a method for researching the question, and perhaps begin acquiring the data. During the spring semester students will finish any remaining data acquisition, analyze the data, and write-up the thesis

Two sections of H190 are offered. Sometimes the two sections will meet together.

Requirements

Some requirements should go without saying. Attendance is one such requirement. Attendance at all classes is required and failure to meet this requirement will be reflected in the final grade for the course. Vocal participation is also required in this seminar.

Grading

All major works (books, bridges, buildings) are constructed in sections over lengthy periods of time. The thesis will be no different. To aid your efforts the seminar is organized such that you will draft the final document in stages. Each written assignment moves the thesis forward. On-time completion of those assignments is essential. Thus, late work will not be accepted.

You will notice that assignments are not expressed in terms of pages or sources read. In real research such superficial guidelines are not helpful—imagine someone telling Einstein they need a formula for how matter and energy in the universe are related, but it should include only four symbols (including the equal sign)! One reason page, symbol, and source counts are not helpful is that they make some researchers continue on past the point at which they have made their point [think $E=((mc^2)\times 1)$], yet give other researchers the false security that comes with believe that because they have reached the page count guideline they have done their job [think $E=mc$]. Both messages are unhelpful; the examples show how hewing to such superficial guidelines can lead one into inelegance or even error. Thus, it will help you succeed in this class and, more important, in research, if you shift as soon as possible from the “how many pages?” or “how many sources?” way of thinking about assignments to “how clear is my argument?”, “how grounded is my position?”, and “how will this help me complete my effort to understand this part of the social world?” way of thinking about assignments.

You will receive an In-Progress (IP) grade for successful completion of the work this term. A

final letter grade will be awarded at the end of the spring semester.

Deadlines

No late work will be accepted.

Required Reading

Most of the reading for this course will be connected to the substance and methods of your projects. However, some specific reading is assigned, and will be available via **JSTOR**, **Google Scholar**, in the **READER** (which is available at Copy Central across from Barrows Hall, on Bancroft), or comes from the one required book for the course, listed below:

Turabian, Kate L., as Revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2007. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Seventh Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers, 7th edition*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

(Henceforth this text will be called “Turabian”)

Turabian can be purchased at University Press Books, which is located at 2430 Bancroft Way, just across from Zellerbach.

Calendar of Written Assignments, Fall 2012

Assignment	Due Date
Empirical Research Question	Sep 4
First Annotated Bibliography	Sep 18
CPHS Assignments	Oct 2
Draft Case for Your Research w/ Second Annotated Bibliography	Oct 9
Draft Methods Section w/ revised Empirical Research Question section attached	Oct 30
Revised Draft Methods Section	Nov 20
Final Prospectus	Dec 11

Week 1, August 28 – Introduction**Week 2, September 4 – Making the Case for Conducting Your Research***Empirical Research Question Assignment due*

Turabian, pp. 3-35.

Week 3, September 11 – Tools and Techniques for Library Research JOINT MEETING**Week 4, September 18 – Methods I – Substantive Descriptions***First Annotated Bibliography due*

Turabian, pp. 36-48.

Kominski, Robert. 1990. "Estimating the National High School Dropout Rate." *Demography* 27: 303-311. **JSTOR**

Nesman, Teresa M. 2007. "A Participatory Study of School Dropout and Behavioral Health of Latino Adolescents." *Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research* 34: 414-430.
GoogleScholar

Week 5, September 25 – Methods II – Causal Explanation*Assignment*

Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) applicants must register for the eProtocol (<http://cphs.berkeley.edu/>) and complete the CITI training program: Group 2 Social and Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel, Basic Course:

<https://www.citiprogram.org/default.asp>

Certificate of Completion due October 2

George Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2005. "Process-Tracing and Historical Explanation," pp. 205-233 in *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. **READER**

Week 6, October 2 – Drafting Questions for Respondents**Week 7, October 9 – Protecting Human Subjects JOINT MEETING***Draft "Case for Your Research" due, with Second Annotated Bibliography attached*

NOTE: Paper Proposals for the Pacific Sociological Association Annual Meeting (in

Reno/Sparks on March 21-24, 2013) **due on October 15**; see <http://pacificsoc.org/2013.html> for information and the online application

Levine, Robert J. 1979. "Clarifying the Concepts of Research Ethics." *The Hastings Center Report* 9: 21-26. **JSTOR**

Taylor, Steven J. 1987. "Observing Abuse: Professional Ethics and Personal Morality in Field Research." *Qualitative Sociology* 10: 288-302. **Google Scholar**

Week 8, October 16 – Finding Existing, Appropriate Datasets

Week 9, October 23 – Obtaining Respondents, Securing Their Cooperation

Mullen, Ann L. 2010. "Note on Methodology," pp. 225-227 of *Degrees of Inequality: Culture, Class, and Gender in American Higher Education*, by Ann L. Mullen. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. **READER**

Mullen, Ann L. 2009. "Elite Destinations: Pathways to Attending an Ivy League University." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 30: 15-27. **Google Scholar**

Week 10, October 30 – Study Sharing Session 1

Draft Methods Section due, with revised Empirical Research Question section attached

Week 11, November 6 – Study Sharing Session 2

Week 12, November 13 – Study Sharing Session 3

Week 13, November 20 – Graduate Student Presentations

Revised Draft Methods Section due

Week 14, November 27 – Proposal Mechanics

RRR, Week 15, December 4

Final Proposal Due December 11, hardcopy only