

Sociology 311.1

Methods of Sociological Inquiry

Fall 2017

Professor Orestes P. Hastings (Pat.Hastings@colostate.edu)

Office hours: Tue/Thu 3:30-5pm and by appointment in Clark B266

- From 3:30-4:15pm is drop-in hours (no appointment necessary)
- From 4:15-5:00pm you can schedule your very own meeting at <https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/ldmcc>
- Email me if you would like to meet and none of the available times work

GTA: Hawken Hanna (Hawken.Hanna@colostate.edu)

GTA Office Hours: Mon/Wed 9:30-10:30am & Thu 12:30-1:30pm in Clark B268

Lecture: Tuesday/Thursday 11am-12:15pm in Eddy 1

Website: <https://colostate.instructure.com/courses/52780>

Overview

This course is designed to introduce you to the methodological tools deployed by sociologists to conduct empirically grounded and theoretically engaged research. The course will cover the basic elements of research design, the role of theory in empirical research, the construction of sociological arguments, the ethics involved with human subjects research, and the analysis, interpretation, and presentation of data and results. Methodologically, this course will introduce you to the use of ethnography, interviews, surveys, experiments, comparative/historical methods, and social network analysis. The assignments will provide some hands-on experience “doing research” that will further your understanding of these methods.

Learning Goals

- Understand how sociological questions can be answered with data and research
- Be able to formulate research questions and evaluate research designs
- Know the basics of a number of methodological approaches and understand their different strengths and weaknesses
- Recognize the many challenges of conducting sociological research
- Understand the ethical considerations involved in doing human subjects research
- Develop skills for reading and critically thinking about empirical research

Snapshots at jasonlove.com



"I love our lunches out here, but I always get the feeling that we're being watched."

Evaluation

Your grade will be based on:

- In-class exercises/quizzes (15%)
- Project 1: Elements of Research (10%)
- Project 2: Survey (15%)
- Project 3: Ethnography (10%)
- Project 4: In-depth Interview (15%)
- Midterm exam on October 12, 2017 (15%)
- Final exam on December 12, 2017 (20%)

In-class exercises and quizzes (15%)

The readings are critical to your success in this class. You will be expected to complete the readings **before the class to which they are assigned**. We will discuss the readings together. In class, I will also present additional material and we will do some group work. Further, will discuss and sometimes work on the assignments. To get something out of this course, you need to do the readings and show up to class! To encourage you in this, I will have (at least) 7 in-class exercises or quizzes, some of which will be based on the readings. Your best 5 will each be worth 3% of your final grade. There will be no make-ups unless your absence has been excused ahead of time or you have a documentable emergency.

Research projects

There will be four projects. These projects will give you the opportunity to put into practice the ideas and tools that you will be reading about and discussing in class. For the most part they will require you to go out and collect your own data. As the semester progresses, more information will be given about each project when it is assigned. Some portion of class will also be devoted to working on these assignments, both individually and collaboratively. Each project will be due in class on the date specified in the Course Outline. A short description of each project is below:

Project 1: Elements of Research (10%)

I will provide you with a published article. Write a short paper discussing the conceptualization and operationalization in the article and identify the research question(s), hypotheses, unit of analysis, dependent variable, and key dependent variables. Copy/paste (or type) short passages from the article in your paper to justify your answers.

Project 2: Survey (15%)

Design a questionnaire that might be used in a survey to assess people's attitudes toward inequality. Collect at least 20 responses (via online, paper, or both). Write a short paper justifying your survey questionnaire (e.g., open vs closed-ended questions, question wording, and question order), presenting your results, and reflecting on the data collection process. Include your questionnaire as an appendix.

Syllabus – Sociology 311: Methods of Sociological Inquiry

Project 3: Ethnography (10%)

Attend either a sporting event or religious worship service (of your choice) as a participant observer. Pay attention to the venue, the interactions, and the rituals you observe. While at the location, unobtrusively write short notes to yourself, if you can. These will then form the basis for detailed field notes that you will write immediately after leaving the site. Write a short paper summarizing your observations and reflecting on the data collection process. Include your field notes as an appendix.

Project 4: In-depth Interview (15%)

Design an interview guide to collection information about someone’s experience of social mobility. Using this guide, conduct an in-depth interview with one person of your choosing. Record the interview and transcribe at least 30 minutes of it. Write a short paper that summarizes your findings and reflects on the interview process. Include both your interview guide and the transcript as appendices.

Exams (35%)

The exams will focus on evaluating your understanding of the main ideas and arguments, not how well you can memorize facts. A 3x5 note card (front and back) will be permitted. There will be a midterm and final exam, worth 15% and 20% of your final grade, respectively.

Grades

You will be graded on an A-F, +/- system, which will be awarded using the percentages in the table at right (fractions of a percent will be rounded to the nearest whole number). If you have any issues or concerns with your grades, please contact me as soon as possible. Incomplete grades will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Letter Grade	Percent Range
A+	97%-100%
A	93%-96%
A-	90%-92%
B+	87%-89%
B	83%-86%
B-	80%-82%
C+	77%-79%
C	70%-76%
D	60%-69%
F	Below 60%

Late Work and Excused Absences

Unexcused late work will be accepted up to 7 days past the original due date, but will be reduced by 5% for each day late. I understand that unfortunately personal and family emergencies do happen. Please contact me if something does come up, and we will work towards finding an appropriate solution.

If you are going to be at a University sponsored event or need accommodation to observe an established religious holiday, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can make adequate arrangements.

Materials

There is one required book for this course:

- Carr, Deborah, Elizabeth Heger Boyle, Benjamin Cornwell, Shelley Correll, Robert Crosnoe, Jeremy Freese, and Mary C. Waters. 2018. *The Art and Science of Social Research*. W. W. Norton. (ISBN: 9780393644791)

You **MUST** purchase this at the CSU bookstore. It is a brand-new book. So new, in fact, that it has been printed in black and white and is an “Advance Review Copy.” BUT, the cost is only \$33.25, which is an amazing deal! The remaining assigned readings will be posted on the course website. Again, I remind you that **you are expected to complete the readings before class**.

Other Important Matters

Laptops

NO LAPTOPS. Okay, if you really believe you will be a better student if you can use your laptop to take notes, talk to me. I may first try to convince you that you are better off not using a laptop. However, I will allow you to use one once we come to a verbal understanding that you will never ever use the laptop for non-class purposes during class.

In-Class Decorum

Please come to class on time and be ready to engage the material we are covering in class. Cell phones are not to be used during class. Colorado State University has stated five Principles of the Community: inclusion, integrity, respect, service and social justice (<http://diversity.colostate.edu/principles-of-community/>). Your conduct in this class should adhere to these to help us generate an open, tolerant, and respectful learning environment that we can all succeed in.

Time Outside of Class

This is a 3 credit class. Accordingly (and based on federal guidelines), you should plan to spend 2 hours outside of class for each hour of classroom time. If you find yourself consistently spending more than 6 hours outside of class per week on the assigned readings, projects, preparing for exams, etc, let me know.

Office hours

I encourage you to take advantage of my office hours. I am happy to discuss course material, the assignments, your sociological interests, or anything else that would be useful to you. You can either come during drop-in hours or sign up for specific time (<https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/lmcc>). Email me if you would like to meet and none of the available times work for you.

Syllabus – Sociology 311: Methods of Sociological Inquiry

Ethical Concerns in Sociological Research

All (future) social scientists should be aware of their ethical and professional obligations. Although your assigned projects for this course do not constitute “Human Subjects Research,” you should obviously ensure that no harm is done through them. We will discuss research ethics throughout the semester, including in the context of your projects.

Academic Integrity

The course will adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy of the Colorado State University General Catalog (<http://catalog.colostate.edu/general-catalog/policies/students-responsibilities/>) and the Student Conduct Code (<https://tilt.colostate.edu/integrity/knowTheCode/>). Do your own work. Don't cheat. Violations will be addressed through the appropriate University mechanisms.

Resources for Disabled Students

If you have a diagnosed learning or physical disability, which may require special accommodations, please talk to me at the beginning of the semester. The university's Resources for Disabled Students (<http://rds.colostate.edu/>) can also help facilitate your individual needs. I will work with you and the RDS to make sure that any individual needs are appropriately accommodated.

Support

Any student who may be the victim of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking or retaliation is encouraged to report to CSU through one or more of the following resources:

- Emergency Response 911
- Deputy Title IX Coordinator/Office of Support and Safety Assessment (970) 491-1350
- Colorado State University Police Department (non-emergency) (970) 491-6425

For counseling support and assistance, please see the CSU Health Network, which includes a variety of counseling services that can be accessed at: <http://health.colostate.edu/>. And, the Sexual Assault Victim Assistance Team is a confidential student resource that does not have a reporting requirement and that can be of great help to students who have experienced sexual assault. The web address is <http://www.wgac.colostate.edu/need-help-support>.

Need Help? CSU is a community that cares for you. If you are struggling with drugs or alcohol and/or experiencing depression, anxiety, overwhelming stress or thoughts of hurting yourself or others please know there is help available. Counseling Services has trained professionals who can help. Contact 970-491-6053 or go to <http://health.colostate.edu>. If you are concerned about a friend or peer, tell someone by calling 970-491-1350 to discuss your concerns with a professional who can discreetly connect the distressed individual with the proper resources (<http://supportandsafety.colostate.edu/tellsomeone>). Rams take care of Rams. Reach out and ask for help if you or someone you know is having a difficult time.

COURSE OUTLINE

In addition to the topics and readings listed below, we will also be regularly discussing the assignments and your ideas. If there are changes to this schedule, you will receive adequate notice.

#	Date	Topic(s)	Readings Due	Assignments Due
1	8/22	Introduction, Expectations, & Goals		
2	8/24	The Sociological Perspective; Types of Social Science Research; Unit of Analysis	ASSR pages 3-22	
3	8/29	Research Questions & Research Goals	ASSR 22-31 Lareau, Annette. 2002. "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families," <i>American Sociological Review</i>	
4	8/31	Theory & the Scientific Method; Inductive & Deductive approaches	ASSR 33-44	
5	9/5	Sociological Paradigms; Elements of Theory; Constructing Hypotheses	ASSR 45-65 Pager, Devah. 2016. "Are Firms That Discriminate More Likely to Go Out of Business?" <i>Sociological Science</i>	
6	9/7	Conceptualization & Operationalization; Types of Variables	ASSR 101-115	
7	9/12	Movie: <i>Obedience</i>		
8	9/14	Research Ethics	ASSR 67-99	
9	9/19	More on Operationalization; the Ecological Fallacy; Measurement	ASSR 116-131	DUE: Project #1: Elements of Research
10	9/21	Survey Research; Modes of Survey Administration	ASSR 193-214	
11	9/26	More on Survey Research; Types of Questions	ASSR 214-233	
12	9/28	Even more on Survey Research	Hastings, Orestes P. 2016. "Not a Lonely Crowd? Social Connectedness, Religious Service Attendance, and the Spiritual But Not Religious." <i>Social Science Research</i>	
13	10/3	Experiments; Laboratory, Field, and Natural Experiments	ASSR 235-255; Pager, Devah. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i>	DUE: Project #2 Surveys

Syllabus – Sociology 311: Methods of Sociological Inquiry

14	10/5	Evaluation Research	ASSR 273-301	
15	10/10	Midterm Synthesis and Review		
16	10/12	Midterm Exam		MIDTERM!
17	10/17	Ethnography	ASSR 305-339	
18	10/19	More Ethnography	Goffman, Alice. 2009. "On the Run: Wanted Men in a Philadelphia Ghetto." <i>American Sociological Review</i>	
19	10/24	In-Depth Interviews	ASSR 341-375	DUE: Project #3 Ethnography
20	10/26	More on Interviews	Rivera, Lauren. 2012. "Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms." <i>American Sociological Review</i>	
21	10/31	Saying vs Doing	Jerolmack, Colin and Shamus Khan. 2014. "Talk Is Cheap: Ethnography and the Attitudinal Fallacy." <i>Sociological Methods & Research</i> Vaisey, Stephen. 2014. "The "Attitudinal Fallacy" is a Fallacy: Why We Need Many Methods to Study Culture." <i>Sociological Methods & Research</i>	
22	11/2	Material-based methods	ASSR 377-397	
23	11/7	Secondary Data; the Census		
24	11/9	Historical & Comparative Sociology; Content Analysis	ASSR 397-421	
25	11/14	Social Network Analysis	ASSR 429-461	
26	11/16	Quantitative Data Analysis	ASSR pp 463-495 (skim)	
<i>No class November 21 or 23. Happy Thanksgiving!</i>				
27	11/28	Causality; Confounding; Mediation; Moderation	ASSR 497-533 (skim)	DUE: Project #4 Interview
28	11/30	Reliability & Validity	ASSR 133-155	
29	12/5	Sampling	ASSR 157-191	
30	12/7	Review & Synthesis		
	12/12	Final Exam (9:40-11:40am)		FINAL!