SOCY 561 – Real World Research Experience
Spring 2025 – Sloan 109   Class Time: Tu/Th 11:40-12:55

Professor: jimi adams (jimi.adams@sc.edu)
Office: Sloan 216
Office Hours: Th 115-215pm (drop in, or by appointment - https://calendly.com/jimiadams)
                    NOTE: Drop-in hours will be in person only. Appointments can be virtual (a link
                    will be auto-generated) or in person.

Course Description

In this course, we will continue to develop the logic and corresponding toolkits of sociological methods through applied, hands-on research experience. This will entail a combination of research design and data analysis projects, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. We will collectively identify a course-wide research topic, then subdivide that topic into individual and small-group projects that address specific research questions pertaining to the overarching theme. In turn, we will (1) identify existing data sources, and (2) design, then collect original data to examine those questions from triangulated perspectives. Primary outputs of this work will include (a) written research reports and (b) presentation elements. Along the way, class meeting sessions will focus on learning and refining particular skills expected to be used in the conduct of these projects.

Objectives

By the end of the semester, participants will be able to:
- Develop sociological research **question**(s) to be answered with appropriate methods and analysis.
- Enhance and apply research **skillsets** that incorporate both qualitative and quantitative approaches.
- Provide and make use of peer **feedback** on in-progress conduct of research.
- C**ommunicate** each of those in clear, concise, and accurate written *and* oral formats.

Assigned Readings

All required readings and supplemental materials will be available via Blackboard.

Course Structure & Requirements

Class sessions will entail a mix of lecture, discussion, and active learning approaches. Typically, this will be broken into didactic elements on Tuesdays, followed by applied elements on Thursdays (though this schedule may be adjusted periodically to accommodate scheduling needs). While only some aspects of your in-class participation will be graded (as parts of the "Project Precursors" portion of your grade) others will indirectly (but likely *substantially*) influence your success in the course (e.g., in developing the skills necessary for required elements of your research projects). As such, you should come to *each* class prepared (i.e., having completed the assigned readings and any other preparation elements) and ready to actively participate in these sessions.

NOTE: For any graduate students enrolled in the course, the primary elements will be the same as for undergraduates, however they will each entail further requirements for graduate students in completing those elements. These differentiations will be provided on the individual assignment descriptions.

Requirements

I – Project Precursor Elements (100 points total)

   A. **Periodic "Precursor" Written Elements (40 points total)** – You will submit several preliminary elements that provide scaffolding for your final papers. These will be graded only for *completion*, but you will receive feedback on them that you are expected to incorporate into your final papers to optimize its potential (i.e., consider these as draft versions of components of your final paper that *should* be revised before the final submission). Due dates and requirements for these will be detailed in Blackboard and/or in-class as they arise.

   B. **Preliminary Literature Review (30 points)** – One of those preliminary elements will be a literature review that provides the motivation for your research question(s) to be addressed.

   C. **Preliminary Project Presentation (30 points)** – You will compile a presentation (e.g., in PowerPoint), then record a narrated presentation of the "front end" of your research project. A "front end" is essentially a proposal of your planned research project that provides its: motivation(s), question, and planned research approaches. These will be posted for your classmates to view and provide (structured) feedback on *before* you are completing your work for the semester. In addition to evaluation of the presentation itself, you are also expected to incorporate this feedback (and that which you receive from me) into your final paper.

   II – **Final Research Paper (150 points total)** –
   You will compose a single research paper as your final product from this course, which accounts for the majority of your course grade. All other elements are meant to provide the scaffolding for a successful completion of this product. Its evaluation will entail separate elements for each of the following:

   D. **Overarching Framing (30 points)** – While there will be separate elements representing your 2 primary research approaches, you will also be expected to combine those into a single, coherent paper. This element will primarily be evaluated based on:

      1. Well-reasoned & written Background & Literature Review, motivating the project.
      2. Appropriate conclusions from evaluation of the research approach and findings.
      3. Incorporation of feedback from preliminary elements of your project.
      4. Adequately synthesizes across the various components of the paper.

   E. **Qualitative Component of Research Project (60 points)** – You will incorporate as part of your final paper a write-up of your employed qualitative research design and analysis. This element will be evaluated primarily based on how well the paper:

      1. Clearly describes the qualitative component of your research strategy *and* analysis.
      2. Appropriately selected and designed the qualitative approach for answering the question this element addresses.
      3. Incorporates a proper self-evaluation of the evidence available from this element.

   F. **Quantitative Component of Research Project (60 points)** – You will incorporate as part of your final paper a write-up of your employed quantitative research design and analysis. This element will be evaluated primarily based on how well the paper:

      1. Clearly describes the quantitative component of your research strategy *and* analysis.
      2. Appropriately selected and designed the quantitative approach for answering the question this element addresses.
      3. Incorporates a proper self-evaluation of the evidence available from this element.

Grading

Grading Expectations:
Grades you earn will reflect how thoroughly your work demonstrates the particular assignment requirements *and* overall course aims, which will correspond to the following sets of expectations:

- A   Work that, **in addition to** meeting an assignment's **minimum requirements**, also *consistently* reflects **engagement** with other material from the course where appropriate & in ways that **exceed course objectives** will earn grades in the A range.
- B   Work that, **in addition to** meeting an assignment's **minimum requirements**, also *occasionally* reflects **engagement** with other material from the course where appropriate, in ways that **meet course objectives** will earn grades in the B range.
- C   Work that **addresses only** an assignment's **minimum requirements** will earn grades in the C range.
- D   Work that **incompletely addresses** an assignment's **minimum requirements** will earn grades in the D range.
- F   Work that **fails to address** an assignment's **minimum requirements** will earn grades in the F range.

Please note now that there are NO extra credit opportunities in this course. For this course to be successful and for you to be successful in this course, we need everyone keeping up with requirements throughout the semester.

Final Grade Computation:
Your final grade will be determined by summing the number of points earned from each of the above categories. Letter grades will be determined from your point total as follows:

Letter Grade	Points Range	Letter Grade	Points Range	Letter Grade	Points Range
A	231+	C+	194-199	D	151-168
B+	220-230	C	176-193		
B	200-219	D+	169-175		

Any student accumulating 150 or fewer points will receive an F for the course.

Course Expectations

What we all can expect from each other:
Behave in a manner reflecting common courtesies. Show up to office hours or other appointments as scheduled. Maintain professionalism in all electronic communication (e.g., email/Blackboard messages). Put forth our best efforts to maintain a productive and welcoming course.

What I expect from you:
1 – *Make a concerted effort to bring the best you can to the course.* This means doing readings each week, completing required assignments on time, putting forth effort into the evaluated elements of the course. It also means taking ownership over the grades you earn.
2 – *Treat others in the class with respect.* This includes simple norms of regular interaction in an online forum and thoughtfully considering the contributions of others. At times we'll potentially cover material of a sensitive nature; being able to respect other's expressed opinions makes critical discourse possible.

Personal Computers Use: Personal electronics may be used only for legitimate classroom purposes, such as taking notes, downloading class information, or working on an in-class exercise.

What you can expect from me:
1 – *Make a concerted effort to bring the best I can to the course.* This means leading a class appropriate to its level, selecting "up to date" material that helps illustrate the course's key aims (though I'll aim to keep covid from over-taking our course, even despite its direct relevance), regularly being available for interaction via Blackboard & office hours, and adapting as is appropriate for the needs of the class.
2 – *Treat others in the class with respect.* This includes being prepared for class, returning graded materials in a timely manner with useful feedback, seeking to be impartial in the assessment of student work, while holding it to the standards of the course and college. It also means fostering an environment where diverse perspectives can comfortably be shared in class.

Due Dates & Late Assignments:
- All Project Elements (Precursors, Presentation, and Final Paper) are due at their respective dates/times listed on Blackboard (either immediately before class sessions, or EoD). If late, they will be deducted 25% if they are 5 minutes to 24 hours late, 50% if 24-48 hours late, and will not be accepted if more than 48 hours late.
- Any In-class exercise elements will be due to Blackboard no later than 11:59pm, Fridays of the week when they occur in class.

Course Communication:
- *The Syllabus* has answers to the most common questions pertaining to the course. Be sure check the syllabus first, before asking me about due-dates, assignment requirements, etc.
- *Office Hours* are available to add to your experience in this course. **Please make use of them.** These are meant to supplement required course work and in-class elements. As such, while I am happy to discuss course materials or other aspects of sociology/academia in general with you during this time, they should not be viewed as an opportunity to ask, "What did I miss in class?" (You should find peers in the class with whom you can share notes for that purpose.)
- *Blackboard* will be used for the majority of communication in this course. You can find a copy of the syllabus, additional assigned readings, and all assignments there. I will also post any lecture notes after each class. To make your experience in this course successful, you should expect to make this resource a *regular* part of your preparation for this course.
- *E-mail* should be used for quick communications (things that can be responded to in no more than a few sentences); use office hours for anything requiring more depth. You should only use your USC email account for communication related to this course; I will not read/reply to emails from your personal accounts (e.g., Yahoo!, Hotmail, etc; honestly they very regularly get filtered from my inbox). Please consider e-mail as subject to the same standards of communication as you would all other forms written material in this course (i.e., you should use complete sentences, proper punctuation, etc.). I will typically respond to email within ***48 hours***.

University, CAS, and other Important Administrative Policies

Academic Integrity. You are expected to practice the highest possible standards of academic integrity. Any deviation from this expectation will result in a minimum academic penalty of your failing the assignment (i.e., receiving a zero) and will result in additional disciplinary measures. This includes improper citation of sources, using another student's work and any other form of academic misrepresentation.

Plagiarism. Using the words or ideas of another as if they were one's own is a serious form of academic dishonesty. If another person's complete sentence, syntax, key words, or the specific or unique ideas and information are used, one must give that person credit through proper citation.

Please remember that avoiding plagiarism is only a minimal threshold for maintaining academic integrity. Additionally, the first tenet of the Carolinian Creed is, "I will practice personal and academic integrity." There are useful resources on what this entails available for you at:

- Carolinian Creed (http://www.sa.sc.edu/creed)
- Academic Responsibility (http://www.sc.edu/policies/staf625.pdf)
- Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (https://www.sa.sc.edu/academicintegrity/)

If you remain unsure what this means for your successful participation in and completion of assignments in this course, ask, don't assume.

Accommodations for Disabilities and Other Personal Circumstances - Please notify me if you believe you will have trouble completing course assignments or meeting course requirements for any reason, including, but not limited to: disabilities; family circumstances; poor health; or economic hardship. All discussions will be confidential. I will make reasonable accommodations to ensure your inclusion and success in the course. Students with disabilities can contact the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC: http://www.sa.sc.edu/sds/) at 803-777-6142, sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu, or at LeConte College, Room 112A for additional assistance.

Student Success Center – In partnership with USC faculty, the Student Success Center (SSC; www.sc.edu/success) offers a number of free programs to assist you in better understanding your course material and to aid you on your path to success. SSC programs are facilitated by professional staff, graduate students, and trained undergraduate peer leaders who have previously excelled in their courses. Resources available to you in this course include:

- Peer Tutoring: You can make a one-on-one appointment with a peer tutor. Drop-in Tutoring and Online Tutoring may also be available for this course. Visit their website for a full schedule of times, locations, and courses.
- Peer Writing: Improve your college-level writing skills by bringing writing assignments from any of your classes to a Peer Writing Tutor. Similar to Tutoring, you can visit the website to make an appointment, and to view the full schedule of available drop-in hours and locations.
- Success Consultations: In Success Consultations, SSC staff assist you in developing study skills, setting goals, and connecting to a variety of campus resources. Throughout the semester, I may communicate with the SSC via Success Connect, an online referral system, regarding your progress in the course. If contacted by the SSC, please schedule a Success Consultation. Success Connect referrals are not punitive and any information shared by me is confidential and subject to FERPA regulations.

Writing Center – This course has many of writing assignments. The University Writing Center (http://artsandsciences.sc.edu/write/university-writing-center) is open to help any USC student needing assistance with a writing project at any stage of development.

Counseling Services - The University offers counseling and crisis services as well as outreach services, self-help, and frequently asked questions:
https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_health_services/medical-services/counseling-and-psychiatry/index.php

Grades of Incomplete: The current university policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course. Incomplete grades are given only in situations where unexpected emergencies prevent a student from completing the course. Students have up to one year (three semesters) to complete course requirements. Dr. adams is the final authority on whether you qualify for an incomplete. Incomplete work must be finished within the time allowed or the "I" will automatically be recorded as an "F" on your transcript.

Course Schedule Overview

NOTE: this schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and on Blackboard.

Week 1   Jan 14, 16   Introductions, Formulating Questions, and Mixed-Methods Research
Week 2   Jan 21, 23   Conducting a Literature Review & Identifying Existing Data Sources
Week 3   Jan 28, 30   Overview of R & Data Pre-Processing
            Assignment Due: Memo – Research Questions

Week 4   Feb 4, 6   Fielding a Survey
Week 5   Feb 11, 13   Descriptive Statistics
            Assignment Due: Draft Literature Review

Week 6   Feb 18, 20   Bivariate Statistics
            Assignment Due: Memo – Identifying Secondary Data Source & Key Components

Week 7   Feb 25, 27   Designing Interview Guides
Week 8   Mar 4, 6   Conducting Interviews
            Assignment Due: Memo – Dependent & (candidate) Predictor Variable Statistics

Week 9   Mar 18, 20   Transcribing Interviews
            Assignment Due: Draft Interview Guide (**approval required *before* conducting interviews**)

Week 10   Mar 25, 27   Regression Analyses
            Assignment Due: Recorded Presentation

Week 11   Apr 1, 3   Coding Text Data
Week 12   Apr 8, 10   Navigating Peer Review
            Assignment Due: Peer Presentation Feedback

Week 13   Apr 15, 17   Writing Up Quantitative Analyses
            Assignment Due: Memo – Summary Themes from Qualitative Evidence

Week 14   Apr 22, 24   Writing Up Qualitative Analyses

Thursday May 1   Final Paper Due @1230 (to Blackboard)

Required Readings List (pdfs available on Blackboard):

Bryan, Jenny. 2019. "R Basics and Workflows." Chapter 2 in *STAT 545*. Available from
        https://stat545.com/r-basics.html.
Calarco, Jessica. 2019. "Article Writing 101." Available from: https://www.jessicacalarco.com/teaching-
        resources-1/2019/8/30/article-writing-101.
Davies, Christine. 2020. "A Quick Guide to Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences." Available from
        https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/a-quick-guide-to-quantitative-research-in-the-
        social-sciences.
Fogarty, Brian J. 2023. "Variables And Manipulation." Chapter 5 in *Quantitative Social Science Data with
        R: An Introduction*. SAGE.
Freese, Jeremy. 2009. "Secondary Analysis of Large Social Surveys." Pp. 238-261 in *Research
        Confidential*, edited by E. Hargittai. University of Michigan Press.
Gerson, Kathleen & Sarah Damaske. 2020. "Constructing an Interview Guide: Creating a Flexible
        Structure." Pp. 66–99 in *The Science and Art of Interviewing*. Oxford University Press.
Hargittai, Eszter. 2010. "Digital Na(t)Ives? Variation in Internet Skills and Uses among Members of the
        'Net Generation.'" *Sociological Inquiry* 80(1):92–113. doi: 10.1111/j.1475-682X.2009.00317.x.
Kellstedt, Paul M., Guy D. Whitten, and Steven A. Tuch. 2022. "Two-Variable Regression Models." Pp.
        177–200 in *The Fundamentals of Social Research*. Cambridge University Press.
Knopf, Jeffrey W. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review." *Political Science & Politics* 39(1):127–32.
Lareau, Annette. 2021. "How to Conduct a Good Interview: Dig Deep." Pp. 91–139 in *Listening to People:
        A Practical Guide to Interviewing, Participant Observation, Data Analysis, and Writing It All Up*.
        University of Chicago Press.
Leech, Nancy L., and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie. 2009. "A Typology of Mixed Methods Research Designs."
        Quality & Quantity 43(2):265–75. doi: 10.1007/s11135-007-9105-3.
Lingard, Lorelei, and Chris Watling. 2016. "It's a Story, Not a Study: Writing an Effective Research Paper."
        Academic Medicine 91(12):e12. doi: 10.1097/ACM.0000000000001389.
Point, Sébastien, and Yehuda Baruch. 2023. "(Re)Thinking Transcription Strategies: Current Challenges
        and Future Research Directions." *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 39(2):101272. doi:
        10.1016/j.scaman.2023.101272.
Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2019. "Using Quantitative Methods to Study Covariation." Pp.
        147–68 in *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. SAGE.
Simons-Morton, Bruce, Ana F. Abraido-Lanza, Jay M. Bernhardt, Antoinette Schoenthaler, Amanda
        Schnitzer, and John P. Allegrante. 2012. "Demystifying Peer Review." *Health Education* 39(1):3–
        7.
Timmermans, Stefan, and Iddo Tavory. 2022. "Writing It down, Writing It Up." Pp. 133–54 in *Data
        Analysis in Qualitative Research: Theorizing with Abductive Analysis*.
Weiss, Robert S. 1994. "Analysis of Data." Chapter 6 in *Learning from Strangers: The art and method of
        qualitative interview studies*. Free Press.
Wickham, Hadley, Mine Cetinkaya-Rundel, and Garrett Grolemund. 2023. "Exploratory Data Analysis."
        Chapter 10 in *R for Data Science: Import, Tidy, Transform, Visualize, and Model Data*. O'Reilly.
        Available from https://r4ds.hadley.nz/eda.