SOCIOLOGY 128

### MODELS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

FALL 2014

Instructor: Paul Y. Chang (paulchang@fas.harvard.edu)

Office Hours: Monday 2:00-3:00; William James Hall 608

Teaching Fellows: Matthew Clair (clair@fas.harvard.edu)

Charlotte Lloyd (charlottelloyd@fas.harvard.edu)

Alix Winter (awinter@fas.harvard.edu)

Schedule: Lecture:

Monday and Wednesday: 10:00-11:00am, William James Hall, Room B1

Sections:

Wednesday: 12-1pm, Sever Hall, Room 304

Wednesday: 4-5pm, Sever Hall, Room 305

Wednesday: 5-6pm, Sever Hall, Room 305

Thursday: 10-11am, William James Hall, Room 501

Thursday: 11am-12pm, William James Hall, Room 501

Course Description

This course introduces students to core methodological concepts and strategies used in social science research including: research design, sampling and measurement, experiments, survey analysis, content analysis, network analysis, ethnography, and in-depth interviewing. In the course we will discuss and develop the analytic skills necessary to interrogate epistemological assumptions in published research specifically and truth-claims generally. In addition to critically evaluating previous research, students will collect and analyze their own data based on the different methods discussed in class. By the end of the course, students should have acquired valuable research tools widely applicable in academic and professional settings.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Data Assignments (3 total) 30% (10% each)

Midterm Exam 25%

Final Group Research Paper 30%

Section Attendance and Participation 15%

Course Reading Materials

All readings available on course iSite

Policy on Laptops (and smartphones)

Perhaps the only justification for research is whether it positively contributes to our society. What’s the point of research if we don’t make good use of it? In a recent article published in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Anne Curzan explains why she asks students not use laptops in the classroom. Below are some relevant quotes from her article:

*“First, if you have your laptop open, it is almost impossible not to check email or briefly surf the Internet, even if you don’t mean to or have told yourself that you won’t. I have the same impulse if I have my laptop open in a meeting. The problem is that studies indicate that*[*this kind of multitasking impairs learning*](http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2013/05/multitasking_while_studying_divided_attention_and_technological_gadgets.html)*; once we are on email/the web, we are no longer paying very good attention to what is happening in class.”*

*“A*[*study*](http://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/04/22/0956797614524581.abstract)*(Mueller and Oppenheimer 2014) that came out in June—and which got a lot of buzz in the mainstream press—suggests that taking notes by hand rather than typing them on a laptop improves comprehension of the material. While students taking notes on a laptop (and only taking notes—they were not allowed to multitask) wrote down more of the material covered in class, they were often typing what the instructor said verbatim, which seems to have led to less processing of the material. The students taking notes by hand had to do more synthesizing and condensing as they wrote because they could not get everything down. As a result, they learned the material better.”*

*“You’re not bothering anyone (one could argue) as you quietly do your email or check Facebook. Here’s the problem with that theory: From what we can tell, you are actually damaging the learning environment for others, even if you’re being quiet about it.*[*A study published in 2013*](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131512002254) *(Sana, Weston, and Cepeda 2013) found that not only did the multitasking student in a classroom do worse on a postclass test on the material, so did the peers who could see the computer. In other words, the off-task laptop use distracted not just the laptop user but also the group of students behind the laptop user.”*

With that in mind we encourage students to not bring laptops to class. You may if you feel strongly that your laptop is essential to note-taking and other activities related to learning the materials for the class, but please be cognizant of the potential to distract yourself and others.

Policy on Collaboration

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc), you must also acknowledge this assistance.

LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Wed. 9/3): Introduction to the Course

Week 2 (Mon. 9/8 and Wed. 9/10): Power and Epistemology

Readings:

1. Weber, Max. 1949. “‘Objectivity’ in Social Science and Social Policy.” Pp. 49-112” in *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, translated and edited by Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch. New York: The Free Press.
2. Foucault, Michel. 1984. “Truth and Power.” Pp. 51-75 in *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books.

Week 3 (Mon. 9/15 and Wed. 9/17): Scientific Method, Article Structure, and Ethics

Readings:

1. White, Lynn. 2005. “Writes of Passage: Writing an Empirical Journal Article.” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67: 791-798.
2. Cole, Wade. 2005. “Sovereignty Relinquished? Explaining Commitment to the International Human Rights Covenants, 1966-1999.” *American Sociological Review* 70: 472-495.
3. Rosaldo, Renato. 1993. “Narrative Analysis.” Pp. 127-143 in *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* by Renato Rosaldo. Boston: Beacon Press.

Week 4 (Mon. 9/22 and Wed. 9/24): Measurement

Readings:

1. Western, Bruce. 2006. “Invisible Inequality.” Pp. 85-107 in *Punishment and Inequality in America.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
2. Villarreal, Andres. 2014. “Ethnic Identification and Its Consequences for Measuring Inequality in Mexico.” *American Sociological Review* 79(4): 775-806.

Week 5 (Mon. 9/29 and Wed. 10/1): Sampling

Readings:

1. Becker, Howard. S. 1998. “Sampling.” Pp. 67-108 in *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While You’re Doing It.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
2. McCarthy, John D., Clark McPhail, and Jackie Smith. 1996. “Images of Protest: Dimensions of Selection Bias in Media Coverage of Washington Demonstrations, 1982-1991.” *American Sociological Review* 61: 478-499.

Week 6 (Mon. 10/6 and Wed. 10/8): Ethnography and Interviewing

Readings:

1. Waters, Mary C. 1999. “Appendix: Notes on Methodology.” Pp. 347-372 in *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
2. Goffman, Alice. 2009. “On the Run: Wanted Men in a Philadelphia Ghetto.” *American Sociological Review* 74(3): 339-357.
3. Edin, Kathryn and Maria Kefalas. 2005. “‘Before We Had a Baby . . .’” Pp. 27-49 in *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood before Marriage*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 7 (Wed. 10/15): Content Analysis

\*NO CLASS MONDAY, OCTOBER 13

\*DATA ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 5PM

Readings:

1. Berg, Bruce L. 2006. “An Introduction to Content Analysis.” Pp. 238-267 in *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Allyn & Bacon.
2. Weston, Cynthia, Terry Gandell, Jacinthe Beauchamp, Lynn McAlpine, Carol Wiseman, and Cathy Beauchamp. 2001. “Analyzing Interview Data: The Development and Evolution of a Coding System.” *Qualitative Sociology* 24(3): 381-400.

Week 8 (Mon. 10/20 and Wed. 10/22): Survey Analysis

\*DATA ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 5PM

Readings:

1. Garip, Filiz. 2012. “Discovering Diverse Mechanisms of Migration: The Mexico-U.S. Stream from 1970 to 2000.” *Population and Development Review* 38: 393-433.
2. Greeley, Andrew M. and Michael Hout. 1999. “Americans’ Increasing Belief in Life after Death.” *American Sociological Review* 64: 813-835.
3. Fischer, Claude S. 2009. “The 2004 GSS Finding of Shrunken Social Networks: An Artifact?” *American Sociological Review* 74(4): 657-669.

Week 9 (Mon. 10/27 and Wed. 10/29): Basic Quantitative Analysis and MIDTERM EXAM

Readings (watch tutorials for MS Excel pivot tables):

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=peNTp5fuKFg
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ldm3LH4b0z0

\*MIDTERM EXAMINATION, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29

Week 10 (Mon. 11/3 and Wed. 11/5): Experiments

\*DATA ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 5PM

Readings:

1. Correll, Shelley. J. 2004. “Constraints into Preferences: Gender, Status, and Emerging Career Aspirations.” *American Sociological Review* 69(1): 93-13.
2. Pager, Devah. 2003. “The Mark of a Criminal Record.” *American Journal of Sociology* 108: 937-975.

Week 11 (Mon. 11/10 and Wed. 11/12): Social Network Analysis

Readings:

1. Pp. 1-23 (“Introduction” and “Mathematical Foundations”) in Borgatti, Stephen P., Martin G. Everett, and Jeffrey C. Johnson. 2013. *Analyzing Social Networks*. Los Angeles: Sage.
2. Bearman, Peter S., James Moody, and Katherine Stovel. 2004. “Chains of Affection: The Structure of Adolescent Romantic and Sexual Networks.” *American Journal of Sociology* 110: 44-91.
3. Cacioppo, John T., James H. Fowler, and Nicholas A. Christakis. 2009. “Alone in the Crowd: The Structure and Spread of Loneliness in a Large Social Network.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97(6): 977-991.

Week 12 (Mon. 11/17 and Wed. 11/19): Comparative Historical Analysis

Readings:

1. Skocpol, Theda. 1984. “Sociology’s Historical Imagination.” Pp. 1-21 in *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*, edited by Theda Skocpol. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Brinton, Mary, Yean-Ju Lee, and William L. Parish. 1995. “Married Women’s Employment in Rapidly Industrializing Societies: Examples from East Asia.” *American Journal of Sociology* 100: 1099-1130.
3. Nunn, Nathan. 2008. “The Long-Term Effects of Africa’s Slave Trades.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* February:139-176

Week 13 (Mon. 11/24): Mixed Methods

Readings:

1. Pearce, Lisa D. 2012. “Mixed Methods Inquiry in Sociology.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 56(6): 829-848.
2. Desmond, Matthew. 2012. “Eviction and the Reproduction of Urban Poverty,” *American Journal of Sociology* 118: 88-133.

Week 14 (Mon. 12/1 and Wed. 12/3): Wrap Up

Week 14-15: Reading Period 12/4 – 12/10:

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE DECEMBER 10, 2014