

SOC 46A: Introduction to Social Research FQ2018

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Introduction to Social Research (SOC 46A) FQ 2018

Instructor Information:

Instructor	Email	Office Location & Hours
Zeke Baker	ejbaker@ucdavis.edu	SSH 292, Th 1:30-3:30 and by appt.
Teaching Assistants:	TAs e-mail:	TA Office Hours:
Rachel Nickens	renickens@ucdavis.edu	Rachel: SSH 278, Tues 9:45-11:45
Hannah Poore	hlpooe@ucdavis.edu	Hannah: SSH 288, Th 11-12; F 12-1

General Information

Lecture Details: Veimeyer Hall, Room 212, T/Th 12:10-1:30pm

Discussion Sections:

Section	TA	Discussion Section Time	Meeting Location
01	Rachel Nickens	Fri 11:00 AM - 11:50 AM	Wellman Hall 233
02	Rachel Nickens	Fri 12:10 PM - 1:00 PM	Wellman Hall 233
03	Hannah Poore	Fri 1:10 PM - 2:00 PM	Wellman Hall 233
04	Hannah Poore	Fri 2:10 PM - 3:00 PM	Wellman Hall 233

Course Website: canvas.ucdavis.edu/courses/269556

Required Texts:

Textbook: Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research* (14th Edition).

Available at the UC Davis Bookstore, or as a \$24 ebook rental: www.cengage.com/c/the-practice-of-social-research-14e-babbie/9781305104945?filterBy=Student [_\(http://www.cengage.com/c/the-practice-of-social-research-14e-babbie/9781305104945?filterBy=Student\)](http://www.cengage.com/c/the-practice-of-social-research-14e-babbie/9781305104945?filterBy=Student)

Textbook also available for similar price as ebook or hardcopy rent/purchase on Amazon at [this Link](#).

https://www.amazon.com/Practice-Social-Research-Earl-Babbie/dp/1305104943/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1537300065&sr=1-2&keywords=earl+babbie+the+practice+of+social+research%C2%A0

*Please note: earlier editions of the textbook (12th, 13th, but *not* earlier) are acceptable but not preferred.

Other assigned readings are available on the SOC 46A Canvas page, under "Files". Links to required online content are posted directly in the Syllabus.

Course Description

How can we know and understand social relationships and processes? Can we do so scientifically? If so, how do we know what counts as good evidence and a solid argument—or is social science simply a bundle of random ideas in a world of “alternative facts”?

The purpose of this course is to introduce the practice of rigorous sociological research. Students will learn the logic and tools that organize various research practices, including survey research and basic variable-based statistical analysis, experimental design, qualitative field research (interviews, ethnography), and historical-comparative research. By the end of the course, you will understand the logics of social inquiry and the benefits and challenges of different research methods in helping to answer questions about the social world in a scientific manner.

The course places each research method within its specific historical and theoretical contexts, and generally moves from theoretical underpinnings and assumptions to the practical techniques of data collection, analysis of evidence, reasoned interpretation, and argumentation. Before addressing specific research methods in this manner, however, we will initially explore what makes “science” different from other ways of learning things about the world around us, and what makes “sociological” research unique compared to other scientific research. We will also examine the political and ethical implications of social science research practices. We conclude the course by reflecting on a broad question: How can social science research advance the common good in our society today?

This course is designed for students with multiple career goals and interests. It will provide you with hands-on social research experience. Even if you don't plan to pursue careers that explicitly demand conducting formal research, everyone will *consume* a great deal of research over their lifetimes. This course aims to help you become critical consumers of research studies in popular media, future courses, academic literature, and in various workplace and professional environments. Course activities and assignments are structured, therefore, to help you develop widely applicable skills in critical thinking, evaluation of evidence and arguments, project design, independent and collaborative research, data analysis, and formal writing and research presentation.

Class Format and Team-Based Learning:

Class time will primarily be split between traditional lectures and team-based activities. “Teams” of 4-5 students are formed on Week 2 and will involve regular, in-class, team-based activities for the duration of the term. Your team will also form the basis of collaborative research preparation, actual research, and research presentation. “Team-based learning” is an established method through which to gain practical knowledge of research methods. The focus is on collaboration, mutual familiarity, dialogue, and accountability to fellow team members. You can expect team-based activities to draw from the week's readings/concepts, involve hands-on collaborative research prompts, and involve between 15-40 minutes of each meeting. I will encourage or solicit active participation during lectures. Some assignments will include evaluation of and by team members.

You are expected to come to each class having read assigned texts and having prepared notes. Be ready to ask questions, either during lectures or within team activities. Academic life means embracing the freedom to be curious, to reflect on and question assumptions, and to think critically—take hold of class time as such! In doing so, please be respectful of others. If I notice regular absences or lateness, distracting or inappropriate uses of digital technology, or offensive/discriminatory behavior, I will clearly address it. If you have questions, comments, or concerns related to the format of the course, please do not hesitate to contact the Instructor or the TA after lecture, via email, or during office hours.

Assignment Schedule

Due Date	Assignment	Points
10/16	Research Proposal	5 pts/ 5%

Due Date	Assignment	Points
10/30	Midterm Exam	15 pts/ 15%
12/4	Final Research Paper	25 pts/ 25%
12/6	Team Research Video	10 pts/ 10%
	Participation	10 pts/ 10%
TBD	Quizzes	10 pts/ 10%
12/13 at 1:00 pm	Final Exam	25 pts/ 25%
		Total: 100pts/ 100%

Course Schedule:

The following Course Schedule outlines how the course will unfold this quarter. The schedule may also be found on Canvas, under "Modules." Also on Canvas, readings are organized by Unit, under "Files." The table below identifies what readings must be completed *before* the lecture to which they correspond. Assignments that are due are also indicated. Regarding reading, you are expected to digest the broad outlines of each reading, with an emphasis on identifying and understanding key terms, concepts, and core ideas that organize the topic for that day's lecture. Reading is mandatory and important to success of quizzes, in-class activities, exams, and your research project.

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
<i>I. The Logic of Social Science Research</i>			
Week 1	9/27 (Meeting 1): Course Introduction	Read course syllabus prior to first meeting. Get your textbook.	
Week 2	10/2 (Meeting 2): What makes Sociology 'Scientific'?	Babbie, Ch. 1: "Human Inquiry and Science." Review: " Distinguishing Scholarly from Non-Scholarly Periodicals: A Checklist of Criteria " (http://guides.library.cornell.edu/print_content.php?pid=318840&sid=2613164&mode=g). (Cornell University Library 2013)	

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
	10/4 (Meeting 3): What is 'Method'? Paradigms in Sociological Methods	Babbie, Ch. 2: "Paradigms, Theory, and Social Research"	In Discussion Section: Organize Teams
Week 3	10/9 (Meeting 4): Ethical and Political Components of Social Research	Babbie, Ch. 3: "The Ethics and Politics of Social Research" Hammersley (1995), "Is Social Research Political?"	
	10/11 (Meeting 5): Designing a Research Study	Babbie, Ch. 4: "Research Design" Alford (1998), "Designing a Research Project," Ch. 2 in <i>Craft of Inquiry: Theories, Methods, Evidence</i>	
II. Foundations of Research Practices			
Week 4	10/16 (Meeting 6): Forming and Operationalizing Concepts	Babbie, Ch. 5: "Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement"	*Research Proposal Due
	10/18 (Meeting 7): Forms of Measurement in Social Research	Babbie, Ch. 6: "Indexes, Scales, and Typologies"	
Week 5	10/23 (Meeting 8): Locating Data and Sampling Techniques	Babbie, Ch. 7: "The Logic of Sampling"	

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
	10/25 (Meeting 9): From Evidence to Argument? Reading & Writing Social Research	Babbie, Ch. 17: "Reading and Writing Social Research"	
Week 6	10/30 MIDTERM EXAM	[no reading]	*Bring Scantron
III. Analytic Tools: Variable-based, Interpretive, and Historical Inquiry			
	(11/1) Meeting 11: Survey Research and Hypothesis Testing	Babbie, Ch. 9: "Survey Research" McCright and Dunlap (2011) "The Politicization of Climate Change and Polarization in the American Public's Views of Global Warming, 2001–2010" <i>The Sociological Quarterly</i> 52: 155–194.	
Week 7	11/6 (Meeting 12): Designing and Performing Experiments	Babbie, Ch. 8: "Experiments" Pager (2003) "The Mark of a Criminal Record" Listen to Pager's podcast: at this link (https://thesocietypages.org/methods/2015/05/22/devah-pager-on-experimental-audits/) .	
	11/8 (Meeting 13): Conducting Interviews	Marvasti (2004), <i>Qualitative Research in Sociology</i> , Ch. 2: "Interviews." Shapira and Simon (2018), "Learning to Need a Gun"	
Week 8	11/13 (Meeting 14): Ethnography and Participatory Research	Marvasti (2004), <i>Qualitative Research in Sociology</i> , Ch. 3: "Ethnography." AND Desmond (2006), "Becoming a Firefighter" OR Spencer (2013), "Sensing violence: An ethnography of mixed martial arts" and listen to podcast on 'observant participation' at this link. (https://thesocietypages.org/methods/2015/03/26/dale-c-spencer-on-observant-participation-and-becoming-a-mixed-martial-artist/)	

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
	11/15 (Meeting 15): Historical-Comparative Sociology	Weber (1905/1992), "Religious Foundations of Worldly Asceticism," Ch. 4 in <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> .	
Week 9	11/20 (Meeting 16): Case Studies and Discourse Analysis	Martin (1991), "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." <i>Signs</i> 16: 485-501.	
	11/22	Thanksgiving Break (no class!)	
IV: Public Sociology and the Sociological Vocation			
Week 10	11/27 (Meeting 18): Producing and Consuming Research in a 'Post-truth' Era?	Patricia Hill Collins (2013) "Truth-telling and Intellectual Activism." <i>Contexts</i> 12(1): 36-41. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) " Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election " <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 31(2): 211–236.	
	11/29 (Meeting 19): Social Research for the Public Good?	Michael Burawoy (2004) "For a Public Sociology." <i>American Sociological Review</i> (70)1: 4-28.	
Week 11	12/4 (Meeting 20): Final Review and Concluding Remarks	Interview with Cornel West, "Activism and the academy" (2018): video and abridged transcript available at this link (https://contexts.org/blog/cornel-west-video-interview/)	*Research Paper Due
	12/6 (Meeting 21): Film Festival!	[no reading]	

Week	Topic	Reading	Assignments
12/13 at 1:00 pm	Final Exam	[no reading]	*Bring blue book and Scantron to class

Assignment Guidelines

Quizzes will be multiple-choice and designed to evaluate individual students' basic engagement with course readings and core concepts. They may be either "pop" quizzes or announced during the prior lecture. You can expect at least two quizzes during the term. Quizzes cannot be retaken.

Exam Structure:

The Midterm and Final Exams will have different formats. Both exams will involve a Multiple Choice Section and a Short Answers/Definitions Section. The Midterm will *not* have any essay questions. The Final Exam will include a choice of *two* (out of three) Essay Questions. The final exam is cumulative. Although the final exam will draw primarily from material covered in the second half of the quarter, all course material is fair-game. You must bring a Scantron and pencils to the Midterm exam, and you must bring a Scantron and a Blue Book to the final exam.

Research Proposal Guidelines:

The research paper is a central component of this course, and it provides a way for you to practice concrete skills in data collection, analysis, and writing, and to make an original argument on the basis of your evidence and existing research. The research paper assignment begins with a brief *Research Proposal*.

The Research Proposal will be written collaboratively amongst your Team members. To receive credit, it must be submitted with all team member names who actively participated in the assignment.

The proposal should be roughly two paragraphs (200-300 words), followed by a brief description of team member tasks. It should begin with a title and subtitle for the project. The first paragraph must very clearly state the "research question." It should briefly discuss why this question is important: what practical or intellectual problem does this question help to address? In an additional paragraph, you must outline a concrete, proposed plan on how you will answer this question. What specific *method* will you employ (survey, interviews, participant-observation, experiment, historical/text-based, case study)? What forms of *data* you will use or collect, and how you plan to *analyze* this data in a way that effectively answers the research question?

The choice of topic is *open*, however, it *must focus on a topic of local/regional concern*. You must use course materials to help you outline your research project. In other words, it must be *research* conducted with a clear, recognizable method, and it must be a *sociological* topic. Part of the research process is isolating an aspect of a larger problem. With this in mind, please ensure your project is *feasible* to complete for the purposes of this course.

The proposal should conclude with a fair distribution of tasks, consented to by all team members. For example, if conducting an interview-based project, then the tasks of interviewing, transcribing/taking notes, and analyzing/coding should be shared. Likewise, reviewing existing research and preparing the poster should be shared.

Research Paper Guidelines:

The final research paper should be carefully planned, executed, and edited to demonstrate college-level research practices, clear use of research methods, and critical thinking. You must engage course materials (readings, lectures). In addition, you must draw on outside academic research in the topical area of your research project, evidenced by at least 2 academic articles or books, in addition to whatever primary or secondary data you collect. The final paper should be between 7-10 pages (inclusive of tables and

figures), double-spaced, with Times New Roman 12-pt font, 1" margins, and have no extra space between paragraphs. The paper should include an Abstract, which in one paragraph, states the research question/problem, the methods and data used, and the major results of the study. In-text references and a corresponding "References" section must be present, and should follow a standard citation style, with a preference for ASA-style essays (Style Guidelines: [here](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/formatting_in_sociology_asa_style/references_page_formatting.html) (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/formatting_in_sociology_asa_style/references_page_formatting.html)). Please see the Rubric for details on how the paper will be evaluated, and how points will be allocated.

Team Research Video Guidelines:

The video assignment provides the opportunity for your research team to engage a broader audience regarding your study, your findings and its implications. It also provides space for creativity outside of (but complementary to) the format of the individual research paper. The video will be 9-12 minutes in length, and must roughly correspond to the format of a Ted Talk (See this [Link](https://www.ted.com/talks), (<https://www.ted.com/talks>). Details and guidance on this assignment will be forthcoming. The final lecture and discussion section will host a Festival, during which students will have the opportunity to view and engage one another's work. The video assignment comprises 10% of your total grade, and half of the score will be the result of evaluations by your fellow team members.

Participation grades (like the video assignment) will be privately evaluated by each students' team members and reviewed by each team's corresponding Section TA.

Course Policies

Student Evaluation:

A Excellent (90%+ [of total points])

B Good (80-89%)

C Fair (70-79%)

D (Below 70%)

F (Very poor, not passing)

Course grading will be based on general University standards. **A passing grade requires completion of all major assignments and exams.** Grades are not given based on "need." If you must gain a particular grade in this course it is your responsibility to earn it. Per University policy, final grades can only be changed in cases of mathematical or clerical error. Grades of "**incomplete**" are only given to students who have completed at least 50% of the course requirements, have produced work of passing quality, and have good cause.

Rules for Written Work:

Written work must be turned in via the course website (link: [here](#)), and documents must be in either **WORD** or **PDF** format (no other formats will be accepted), double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, with 1" margins. Use a consistent, formal citations style (ASA style preferred: Style Guidelines [here](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/formatting_in_sociology_asa_style/references_page_formatting.html) (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/formatting_in_sociology_asa_style/references_page_formatting.html)). Submissions are "open" on the course website up until the beginning of class time on the due date. After this, the late submission policy applies.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a very serious issue and it violates central principles of social research (the very topic of this course): academic honesty and integrity. As stated in the UC Davis [Code of Academic Conduct](http://sja.ucdavis.edu/cac.html) (<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/cac.html>), it is each student's responsibility to know what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and how to avoid it. If you are confused, please consult the resources available at <http://ossja.ucdavis.edu/> (<http://ossja.ucdavis.edu/>), including [this pamphlet](http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf) (<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf>), which outlines examples of plagiarism. Written work is considered plagiarized if it directly copies words phrases or sentences from any other sources (books, articles and websites), without stating clearly where the ideas came from (e.g. author, year, page number). Even if you do state the origin of a quotation, you must use quotation marks "" to show that you are directly quoting someone else. Finally, you must not quote your own essays, as this is considered self-plagiarism.

Cheating or plagiarism of any kind will result in a grade of **0** for the assignment and referral to the Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs. In accordance with University policy, adjudicated cases of plagiarism may result in immediate failure of the course.

Late Assignments:

Late assignments will lose 5% (half a letter grade) for each day late (including weekends), for up to 7 days. After 7 days, you *cannot* submit a late paper and will receive a zero for the assignment, unless you have prior approval from the instructor or proof of a medical/family emergency. If you do encounter an emergency, communicate with the instructor or the TA by e-mail as immediately as possible. The poster presentation may not be substituted.

Emergency on Exam Day?

Make-up exams are available only in cases of a documented emergency, such as a serious illness or a death in the immediate family. If such an emergency occurs, please contact me as soon as reasonably possible to make alternative arrangements.







Email policy:

I try to respond to student emails within 48 hours. This means that I may not be able to answer last-minute questions about exams or assignments. Email is best reserved for short questions that can be answered in only a few sentences. If you have a question about course material that requires a more detailed response, please do not hesitate to come to my office hours or talk to me after class. The course TA holds the same email policy. We will not respond to questions that very clearly answerable in this syllabus.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with documented disabilities should see me as soon as possible to discuss and arrange accommodations. Students requesting exam accommodations must provide me with a letter from the Student Disability Center as soon as possible. Please read carefully the UC Davis exam policy for more information: <http://catalog.ucdavis.edu/academicinfo/exams.html> (<http://catalog.ucdavis.edu/academicinfo/exams.html>).

Course Summary:

Date	Details	
Tue Oct 16, 2018	 Research Proposal and Team Plan (https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/courses/269556/assignments/229398)	due by 12:00pm
Tue Oct 30, 2018	 Midterm Exam (https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/courses/269556/assignments/229547)	due by 12:10pm
Tue Dec 4, 2018	 Final Research Paper (https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/courses/269556/assignments/229479)	due by 12:00pm
Thu Dec 6, 2018	 Team Research Video (https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/courses/269556/assignments/229481)	due by 12:10pm
Thu Dec 13, 2018	 Final Exam (https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/courses/269556/assignments/229555)	due by 1:00pm
	 Quiz 1 (https://canvas.ucdavis.edu/courses/269556/assignments/229505)	