SECOND-YEAR RESEARCH PAPER SEMINAR
(Wednesday, 12:30 – 3:30 p.m., Tarbutton Hall 206)

Instructor: Dr. Karen A. Hegtvedt
Office: Tarbutton Hall, Room 227
Hours: Mon. 2:30-4 p.m. & by appointment
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Course Objectives

“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.”
--Zora Neale Hurston

“The function of sociology, as of every science, is to reveal that which is hidden.”
--Pierre Bourdieu

As sociologists, we are given license to poke and pry with a purpose. In doing so, we may reveal that which is hidden, thereby creating new knowledge. The intent of the second-year research paper is to formalize the poking and prying that you have begun in one of your initial research investigations. No longer are you simply a consumer of knowledge; rather, with this endeavor you become a producer of it.

This seminar focuses on assisting you in completing your second-year research paper. Towards that end, the seminar covers issues inherent in packaging the research that you have undertaken for others to consume. We focus on the conceptual and pragmatic issues associated with empirical research. These fundamental issues include: construction of literature reviews; identification of the contribution of a research project; translation of theoretical questions and concerns into empirical projects; and the design and implementation of empirical studies.

To illustrate these issues, students share their own research projects. As we discuss the fundamental issues noted above, students will present corresponding components of their projects. The goal of doing so is to ensure that students make substantial progress on their research. Throughout the course, students will receive feedback from classmates and the instructor on components of their research and thus ensure ongoing dialogue about each project. By the end of the semester, students will be familiar with the research endeavor, have grappled with issues relevant to their projects, and finalizing their second-year research paper.

Course Resources

Course Website (via Canvas)

All course materials (announcements, syllabus, readings, etc.) will be available via the Canvas website for this course. Students will use this website to post their materials for discussion and may use it for communicating with each other.
Jones Program in Ethics

This course will touch upon several aspects of issues related to the responsible conduct of research. The Laney Graduate School’s Jones Program in Ethics (JPE) is an integral part of the curriculum of doctoral programs at Emory. Both required elements of the program and unique events can be found at: http://www.gs.emory.edu/professional-development/jpe/index.html. The syllabus highlights parts of the course relevant to the JPE curriculum.

Emory Writing Center

The mission of the writing center is to support the development of writers of all levels, across all disciplines. A representative of The Writing Center will visit the class early in the semester to talk about writing research papers. If you feel the need for help with your writing as you are developing sections of your paper, please take advantage of the resources of The Writing Center. Students in the past have found their assistance very helpful.

ASA Style Guide

Although I recognize that you may be submitting your manuscripts to outlets other than those published by the American Sociological Association, as sociologists you should all be familiar with the ASA style. The “Guide” is a small book, available for purchase, but you can get quick tips are here:


Course Requirements

1. Attendance

You are, of course, expected to attend class regularly. If you should foresee missing a class session due to illness, please notify me so that we do not delay the start of class waiting for you. Missing more than two class sessions may jeopardize your grade for the class.

2. Participation

Active participation requires adequate preparation. Students must read the assigned materials before class and develop their own assessment of the material. Such careful preparation ensures greater quality in class discussion. The weekly reading material will often include the work of classmates, as described below. Class discussion should be both informed and respectful.

3. Readings

Given that this is neither a methodology nor a theory course, the readings are geared toward helping students as they complete their own research. As a result, the readings fall into
three broad categories: 1) reflection pieces on different aspects of graduate training and research; 2) empirical articles from which we will focus on specific aspects or sections; and 3) sections of your own research papers.

3. Presentations

For most classes, students will present some draft section of his or her research paper in class: introduction, literature review, methods, findings, discussion and conclusion. **Students should post their files to Canvas by 4:00 p.m. on the Friday prior to the meeting during which the class will discuss their work.** (Please label all of your files with your surname or your initials, followed by a description of the content, e.g., Hegvedt, Outline.) Advisors are welcome to attend particular sessions when their student presents a critical part of his or her paper. We will set a schedule and determine the structure for these presentations early in the semester.

4. Critiques

Other students will serve as reviewers for their peers’ presentations and paper sections. In the course of class discussion, students can raise questions, explore ideas, and express misgivings. The goal is to provide constructive criticism that ensures improvement of paper. While most of the critiques will be delivered orally, in some instances reviewers may offer authors written critiques (e.g., in the form of marginalia on a paper, or a list of summary comments). We will determine which critiques should be in writing (composing written critiques helps to learn skills necessary for reviewing journal submissions).

Students should share with their advisor components of the paper as they are completed for this class. Feedback from advisors should be incorporated into the final paper as well.

5. Final Paper

Each student will submit a final paper by **Wednesday, May 3, 4 p.m.** Submit a hard copy to my mailbox and send a copy electronically to class members and me. Although this paper may not be the final version of the graduate program’s research paper requirement, it should be a version that incorporates the feedback received throughout the semester and thereby represents significant movement towards completion of this requirement.

6. Grading

All final grades will take the form of either “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory.” As long as students meet the above requirements responsibly, they will receive “Satisfactory.”

**Course Outline**

For most weeks, students will give presentations based on the assignment described in the previous week. Thus, listed below are the dates of presentations and the assignments that will provide the basis of the presentation for the following week.
January 11: *Introductions, Overview of the Course, and Synopses of Research Papers*

*Presentation: Overview of intended research projects*
*Assignment: Select a key published article/chapter guiding your research project*

January 18: *Considering the Graduate School Experience* (JPE: Collaboration)

*Presentation: Key published article/chapter guiding your research project*
*Assignment: Outline of research paper*


*Presentations: Outline of research paper*
*Assignment: Composition of introduction to research paper*

“Research Paper Requirement” section of the Department of Sociology’s Graduate Handbook.


February 1: *Writing an Introduction and Framing the Paper*

*Presentations: Introduction to research paper*
*Assignment: Composition of background sections of research paper*


February 8: *Building an Argument I: Literature Review and Hypotheses*
Presentations: Background sections


Correll 2004 (up to “The Experiment”)

February 15: Building an Argument II: Theory

Presentations: Background sections

Lareau 1987 (up to “Research Methodology”)

February 22: Considering the Art of Writing

Guest Presentation: Writing Center Fellow
Assignment: Composition of methods section of research paper


March 1: Presenting the Methods Section (JPE: Data Practices)

Presentations: Methods sections
Assignment: Composition of results of analyses

Lareau 1987 (“Research Methodology”)

Correll 2004 (from “The Experiment” up to “Results and Discussion”)

March 8: Spring Break, No Class

March 15: Sorting through the Findings

Presentations: Results of analyses
Assignment: Revisions to results of analyses


**March 22: Sorting through the Findings**

*Presentations: Results of analyses*


**March 29: Submitting for Publication and Responding to Reviews** (JPE: Authorship and Peer Review)

*Guest Presentation: The paper submission process and experience*

*Assignment: Composition of the discussion/conclusion sections of research paper*


**April 5: Presenting the Results and Drawing Conclusions**

*Presentations: Results and discussion/conclusion sections*

*Assignment: Revisions of discussion/conclusion sections*

Lareau 1987 (from “Teachers’ Requests for Parental Involvement” to the end)

**April 12: Presenting the Results and Drawing Conclusions**

*Presentations: Results and discussion/conclusion sections*

*Assignment: Outline plans for finalizing papers*

Correll 2004 (from “Results and Discussion” to the end)

**April 19: Final Papers**

*Presentations: Plans for finalizing papers*

**Final papers are due Tuesday, May 03 at 4:00 p.m.** (per instructions above)