

Emory University

RESEARCH METHODS & MODELS: DESIGN

SOC 501; Fall 2020  
Mondays, 9:40 – 12:40

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Office Hours  
Mondays, 1:30 – 3:30

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Mindful of current debates social science methodologies, the course takes a practical, “hands-on” approach to research methods. We begin with a consideration of the fundamental contributions of such scholars as Jane Addams, W.E.B. Du Bois, Max Weber, and Ida B. Wells-Barnett. From there, we trace the proliferation of methodologies that have led to the mixed-methods and digital approaches of the present. In the process, we also draw upon examples offered by Emory Sociology graduate students past and present (those marked below with a \* by their names). Their contributions should provide you with both a model of scholarship and a source of encouraging inspiration.

The current incarnation of this seminar also builds on how Dr. Irene Browne has taught it in previous semesters. Hence, with the assistance of the instructor, your advisor, and your peers, you will identify a research question that could develop into a viable second year paper. Through staged assignments throughout the semester, you will design a project to answer your research question—setting up the literature review and methodological design. You will submit that detailed proposal by the end of the semester. As a requirement for our class, you also must become certified in human subjects research at Emory by taking the online CITI course *by September 14*.

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**A) Attendance**

You are strongly encouraged to attend each weekly seminar, especially because we will use class time to integrate the assigned readings and to present additional information not found in the readings.

Of course, given the current pandemic, some students might become sick or will need to go into isolation or quarantine. If you feel ill or fear that you are sick, please understand that **I will be flexible about attendance**. Thus, do not put yourself at risk for fear of missing a class.

As we navigate this semester together, let us also stay in touch.

## **B| Office Hours and Appointment**

I will be holding “virtual” office hours via Zoom on Mondays from 1:30 to 3:30 pm (Atlanta time – Eastern Standard Time). The Zoom link for office hours is as at the following link: <https://emory.zoom.us/j/94647323595>

Please use my Calendly link to sign up for a specific time: <https://calendly.com/tdowd-1-office-hours>

I will have other meetings times as needed, please email me to arrange those.

## **C| Seminar Participation and Discussion**

Active participation requires adequate preparation. You therefore must read the assigned materials before class.

Such careful preparation will improve the quality of our seminar discussion. Of course, this discussion should be both informed and respectful; moreover, it should be a forum wherein all can raise questions, explore ideas, and express misgivings.

## **D| Assignments (Thanks to Dr. Irene Browne for inspiring these)**

### ***D1) IRB Certification*** (prerequisite for passing course)

All students are required to take the online CITI exam and become certified in human subjects research by **September 14, 2020**. Here are the steps:

1. Go to the Emory IRB website, [www.irb.emory.edu](http://www.irb.emory.edu).
2. Towards the top of the screen, click onto “Education” tab.
3. Click onto “Courses” on the panel at the left side of the screen.
4. Click onto “CITI training.”
5. Click onto “Log onto CITI.” This will take you to the online CITI training site.
6. Register on the CITI site.
7. Take the Social and Behavioral Focus course.
8. Note that you can take each quiz multiple times if you do not pass.
9. When you have passed the course (all of the Social Science modules), print your CITI certification document and give a copy to me.

Note that if you intend to use the data that you collect this semester for a publication or as part of a larger research project, you must receive approval for the study from the IRB by submitting an IRB protocol. To fulfill the requirements for SOC 501, you only need to complete the CITI certification – not a full IRB protocol.

## ***D2) Meetings***

You will work on a proposal for a research project of your own during this course. One of the key aspects of this is picking a project topic that is feasible and that offers a contribution. You will pick that project in consultation with your advisor and with me. This means the following:

1. You are required to schedule a meeting with your faculty advisor to discuss the topic of your research project. You should have that meeting before **September 21, 2020**. This step corresponds with *Memo 1*.
2. Your advisor will need to approve (via email) your research question and the methods that you will employ. This step corresponds with *Memo 4*.
3. You will also schedule two meetings with me to discuss your project. The first meeting should be early in the semester (as you formulate your research question) and the later meeting as you move on to setting up the empirical portion of your project. This corresponds with both *Memos 2 and 3*.

## ***D3) Memos***

You will have 4 memos that move you along on the research proposal. You can see below the dates for when each assignment is distributed and then due. The logic of the assignments are as follows:

1. Identifying a relevant topic
2. Identifying particular research questions
3. Identifying the relevant literature
4. Identifying the methodological approach

## ***D4) Final Project Proposal***

This will culminate from your efforts in Memos 1 through 4. For graduate students, this proposal should set you up for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year paper. For undergraduates, this proposal should set you up for an honors thesis or independent study conducted under faculty supervision.

## **E) Final Grade**

My starting assumption is that you will earn an “A” in this seminar. If you do the work and contribute to the class, then all is fine. If you fall below expectations, I will let you know, so that you can adjust accordingly. Of course, if you are having difficulties, please contact me. In short, while my feedback will be detailed, my grading will be done in qualitative fashion (e.g., A, A-, B+, B, etc.).

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## **COURSE RESOURCES**

We will be drawing upon four books for the bulk of our readings, books that I will provide for the class. They are as follows:

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Tukufu Zuberi. Editors. 2008. *White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Aldon D. Morris. 2015. *The Scholar Denied: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Matthew J. Salganik. 2018. *Bit by Bit: Social Research in the Digital Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Richard Swedberg. 2014. *The Art of Social Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

We will read additional papers, articles or chapter in addition to those books. Those will be posted on our Canvas site for SOC 501.

If you have any special needs, please contact me at the beginning of the semester, and we will discuss the necessary arrangements (for additional information, visit the Emory Office of Accessibility Services website; see <http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/index.html>).

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## ABOUT THE COURSE READINGS

The readings for this class do not constitute an exhaustive review of all possible methods. Rather, they are “gateway” readings that introduce you to the importance (and joys!) of sociological methodology. They should give you a grounding for becoming the sociologist you will be. For many of you, that will include enrollment in later courses that go into depth regarding some of the methods encountered in this course – such as qualitative methods, network analysis, or digital sociologies.

The readings should also drive home a key point: “methodology” entails more than things like statistics. Instead, it is a key element in your scholarship – one that involves linking theory to empirics in compelling fashion. In other words, “methodology” is not just a thing, it is also an ongoing activity.

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## COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to Revision)

**August 24: Introductions**

**August 31: Thinking about the Roots of Sociology and Its Methods**

\*John Bernau. 2018. “Text Analysis with JSTOR Archives.” *Socius* 4:1-2.

Patricia Hill Collins. 2016. “Du Bois’ Contested Legacy.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39: 1398-1406.

Patricia Madoo Lengerman and Gillian Niebrugge. 2007. *The Women Founders: Sociology and Sociological Theory, 1830-1930*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press. Chapters 1, 3, and 5.

Morris 2015. Preface, Introduction, Chapters 1 through 3 and Chapter 8.

[Why is it important to understand the roots of contemporary sociology and its methodologies? How is knowledge production and reception intertwined with broader patterns of inequality?]

- **Memo #1 Distributed**

***September 7: Thinking about the “Puzzle” and Research Questions***

\*Tressie McMillan Cottom. 2017. *Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-Profit Colleges in the New Economy*. New York: The New Press. Introduction, Chapters 1 and 4.

Ashley Mears. 2017. “Puzzling in Sociology: On Doing and Undoing Theoretical Puzzles.” *Sociological Theory* 35: 138-146.

Salganik 2018. Preface and Chapter 1.

Swedberg 2014. Chapters 1 and 2.

[How do you identify a relevant topic, as well as research questions? How do you translate initial observations of everyday life into an argument?]

- **Memo #1 Due**

***September 14: Thinking about Categories / Concepts and Their Usages***

Angela Dixon and Edward Telles. 2017. “Skin Color and Colorism: Global Research, Concepts, and Measurement.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 43: 405-424.

\*Nikki Khanna. 2007. “‘If You’re Half Black, You’re Just Black’: Reflected Appraisals and the Persistence of the One-Drop Rule.” *Sociological Quarterly* 51: 96-121.

Swedberg 2014. Chapters 3 through 5.

Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008. Chapters 2, 3, and 7.

[What are variables? How are they distinct from categories, let alone “social constructions”? How does your usage of them shape your understandings?]

- **IRB Certification Due**
- **Visit from Dr. Rob O’Reilly (Numeric Data Services Leader, Emory Centry for Digital Scholarship)**

### ***September 21: Thinking about Explanations***

Hae Yeon Choo and Myra Marx Ferree. 2010. "Practicing Intersectionality in Sociological Research: A Critical Analysis of Inclusions, Interactions, and Institutions in the Study of Inequalities." *Sociological Theory* 28: 129-149.

Mustafa Emirbayer. 1997. "Manifesto for a Relational Sociology." *American Journal of Sociology* 103: 281-317.

\*Marisela Martinez-Cola. 2019. "Visibly Invisible: Tribal Crit and Native American Segregated Schooling." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* forthcoming.

Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008. Chapters 8, 9, & 20.

[In constructing an argument – an explanation – what do you include and what do you leave unaddressed? How do you balance those?]

- **Due Date for First Advisor Meeting**
- **Memo #2 Distributed**

### ***September 28: Writing a Research Proposal***

Howard S. Becker. 2007. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Book, Thesis, or Article*. Second Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1, 7, and 8.

Phillipa Chong. 2015. "Playing Nice, Being Mean, and the Space in Between: Book Critics and the Difficulties of Writing Bad Reviews." Pages 133-146 in *Moments of Valuation: Exploring Sites of Dissonance*, edited by Ariane Berthoin Antal, Michael Hutter, and David Stark. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

"Michèle Lamont Discusses Her New Book, *How Professors Think*."

[https://www.nsf.gov/news/news\\_videos.jsp?cntn\\_id=114497&media\\_id=64862&org=NSF](https://www.nsf.gov/news/news_videos.jsp?cntn_id=114497&media_id=64862&org=NSF)

Swedberg 2014. Selections.

[How do you take all your ideas and package them coherently? How do you deal with criticism, review, and revisions?]

- **Memo #2 Due**
- **Visit from Dr. Michael Vaughn (Post-Doctoral Fellow; Columbia University)**

### ***October 5: Doing Digital Research***

Salagnik 2018. Chapters 2 and 5.

René D. Flores. 2017. "Do Anti-Immigrant Laws Shape Public Sentiment? A Study of Arizona's SB 1070 Using Twitter Data." *American Journal of Sociology* 123: 333-384.

\*Ju Hyun Park. 2020. *Gender and Networks of Success: The Cases of Classical and Film Composers*. Unpublished dissertation; Department of Sociology, Emory University. Chapter 2.

Cassidy Puckett. 2020. "Digital Adaptability: A New Measure for Digital Inequality." *Social Science Computer Review* forthcoming.

[How do you take advantage of the proliferation of digital information in your own research? What types of questions and data does that information allow?]

- **Visit From Dr. Ju Hyun Park (Visiting Assistant Professor, Emory Sociology)**

### ***October 12: Doing Quantitative Research (e.g., Surveys)***

\*Anne-Kathrin Kronberg. 2013. "Stay or Leave? Externalization of Job Mobility and the Effect on the U.S. Gender Earning Gap, 1979-2009." *Social Forces* 91: 1117-1146.

Howard Schuman. 2002. "Sense and Nonsense about Surveys." *Contexts* 1: 40-47.

Weisberg, Herbert. 2005. *The Total Survey Error Approach*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 5, 6 & 8.

Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008. Chapters 12 through 15.

[How do survey researchers address issues of "representativeness?" What types of claims can you make when drawing upon surveys and other forms of secondary data? What claims can you not make?]

- **Memo #3 Distributed**

### ***October 19: Doing Quantitative Research (e.g., "Surveys-Plus")***

Paul DiMaggio. 2014. "Cultural Networks." Pages 256-300 In J. Scott & P.J. Carrington (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Social Network Analysis*, edited by J. Scott and P.J. Carrington. London: Sage.

Stephen J. Mezas and Elizabeth Boyle. 2005. "Blind Trust: Market Control, Legal Environments, and the Dynamics of Competitive Intensity in the Early Film Industry, 1893-1920." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 50: 1-34.

\*Stephanie Spaid Miedema, Regine Haardörfer, Corey L.M. Keyes, and Kathryn M. Yount. 2019. "Does Socio-Structural Context Matter? A Multilevel Test of Sexual Minority Stigma and Depressive Symptoms in Four Asia-Pacific Countries." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 60: 416-433.

Alyasah Sewell. 2016. "The Racism-Race Reification Process: A Mesolevel Political Economic Framework for Understanding Racial Health Disparities." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 2: 402-432.

[How can you use survey data and other secondary data to address the "multi-leveled" nature of social phenomena, as well as the interconnections that occur between individuals and groups?]

**October 26: Doing Qualitative Research (e.g., Intensive Interviews)**

Salganik 2018. Chapter 3.

Mario Luis Small. 2009. "'How Many Cases Do I Need?': On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research." *Ethnography* 10: 5-38.

\*Katharine Tatum and Irene Browne. 2019. "The Best of Both Worlds: One-Up Assimilation Strategies among Middle Class Immigrants." *Poetics* 75: 101317.

Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008. Chapters 10 & 11.

[Why is important to talk to people about their "sense-making"? What is the difference between statistical generalization that survey researchers emphasize and the theoretical generalization that qualitative researchers emphasize?]

- **Memo #3 Due**

**November 2: Doing Qualitative Research (e.g., Ethnography)**

Jordanna Matlon. 2014. "'Elsewhere: An Essay on Borderland Ethnography in the Informal African City.'" *Ethnography* 16: 145-165.

National Science Foundation. 2008. *Workshop on Interdisciplinary Standards for Systematic Qualitative Research*. Report prepared by: Michèle Lamont, Harvard University; Patricia White, National Science Foundation for the National Science Foundation: Cultural Anthropology, Law and Social Science, Political Science, and Sociology Programs.

\*Jennifer L. Nelson. 2019. "How Organizational Minorities Form and Use Social Ties: Evidence from Teachers in Majority-White and Majority-Black Schools." *American Journal of Sociology* 125: 382-430.

Roy Suddaby. 2006. "What Grounded Theory is Not." *Academy of Management Journal* 49: 633-642.

[How does attention to “lived” social life allow you to delve deeply into sociological concerns? How does inductive and deductive reasoning play out in ethnography and other forms of qualitative research?]

- **Memo #4 Distributed**

***November 9: Doing Experimental Research***

Maria Abascal. 2015. “Us and Them: Black-White Relations in the Wake of Hispanic Population Growth.” *American Sociological Review* 80:789-813.

\*Stuart J. Hysom. 2009. “Status Valued Goal Objects and Performance Expectations.” *Social Forces* 87: 1623-1648.

Devah Pager. 2007. “The Use of Field Experiments for Studies of Employment Discrimination: Contributions, Critiques, and Directions for the Future.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 609 (1): 104-133.

Salganik 2018. Chapter 4.

[What are the hallmarks of a good experimental design? How do experiments allow us to speak to issues of causality in a way that some other methods do not?]

***November 16: Doing Content Analysis***

Noah Askin and Michael Mauskopf. 2017. “What Makes Popular Culture Popular? Product Features and Optimal Differentiation in Music.” *American Sociological Review* 82: 910-944.

Roberto Franzosi. 2008. “Content Analysis: Objective, Systematic, and Quantitative Description of Content.” Pages xxi-l in *Content Analysis*, edited by R. Franzosi. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Giselinde Kuipers. 2015. “Beauty and Distinction? The Evaluation of Appearance and Cultural Capital in Five European Countries.” *Poetics* 38-51.

\*Michael Patrick Vaughn. 2019. “Supermodel of the World: The Influence of Legitimacy on Genre and Creativity in Drag Music Videos.” *Social Psychology Quarterly* 82: 431-452.

[What is the difference between the “meaning” of media content and its formal elements? How do you approach both of those? How do you get at underlying patterns of media content?]

- **Memo #4 Due**

***November 23: Being Ethical and Wrapping Up***

Salganik 2018. Chapters 6 and 7.

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE DECEMBER 7<sup>th</sup>**