

SOC 357/C&E SOC 357:
Methods of Sociological Inquiry
Spring 2021
MW 9:55-10:45AM

Lectures:

<https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/95973590184?pwd=UHR1TFdxL0RBcn0zQW94dnllVy9lZz09>

Meeting ID: 959 7359 0184

Passcode: 4j280a

(Alternative links, including dial-in numbers, are available on Canvas)

Teaching Staff

Instructor:

Prof. Chaeyoon Lim

chaeyoon.lim@wisc.edu

Office hours: Tuesday 2pm-4pm or by appointment

(<https://uwmadison.zoom.us/my/chaeyoonlim>)

Teaching Assistants:

	Annaliese Grant	Kerem Morgul	Matthew Zinsli
E-mail	aegrant2@wisc.edu	morgul@wisc.edu	zinsli@wisc.edu
Sections	301 & 302	303 & 304	305 & 306
Office hours	2-4pm (Tu)	11am-12pm (MW)	3:30-5:30pm (M)

Overview

This is a basic course in how to do social science research and how to evaluate the research of others. It provides a general overview of the ways sociologists collect information about social phenomena with a special emphasis on what can be done to yield information that is trustworthy and useful for our theoretical understanding of social life. You will have the opportunity to practice a range of sociological methods and learn how to identify and evaluate how these methods are used in future sociological readings.

This course assumes no background in research methods or statistics. Over the course of the semester, you will be introduced to basic statistical concepts and the methods of statistical computing and will use these tools to analyze the data that you collect.

Learning objectives

Beyond the specific substantive and methodological contents I will cover in this course, I have designed this course to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of sociology:

- *Conduct Research and Analyze Data (quantitative or qualitative)* – you will have the opportunity to design your own research projects, collect your own data, and learn how to analyze and present your findings.
- *Critically Evaluate Published Research-* – in discussion section, you will read journal articles that use the methods that we study in class. Together, we will think about why social scientists use different methods to answer different questions, and how different research projects are structured.
- *Communicate Skillfully* – you will gain a research vocabulary that will help you think, write, and speak more critically about social science research.
- *Work effectively in groups* – assignments are designed to develop your group work skills.
- *Improve project management skills.*

Required readings

- There is no textbook required for this course. The lectures will be based on material compiled from various research methods textbooks and other sources. Taken together, the lecture slides (available on Canvas) are the course's main "textbook."
- In addition, there are assigned readings each week. Electronic copies of these readings will be posted on Canvas.

Software Resources

We will do some data analysis this semester with the aid of a software package called STATA. You can download and install STATA on your computer from the following website: https://software.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/ssl/csl_download.cgi (Log in with your Net ID).

Course handouts, on-line help files, tutorial videos, and instruction in lectures and section meetings will teach you how to use STATA gradually. Google search could also be very useful in learning STATA (e.g., "How do you recode a variable in Stata").

Course requirements

- Two data collection projects (45%)

You will conduct two data collection projects with your classmates.

1) Survey project (23%)

For this project, you will find a partner(s) in your section and together formulate a research question, develop and distribute an online survey questionnaire, analyze the data, and present your findings in class. You will also write a short report (approximately 1,000 words). All but the last step (i.e., writing a report) will be done as a team.

- Find a partner(s). I recommend that you work as a team of 2 or 3 persons. The exact size of the team will depend on the number of students in your section and your preference, but two would be ideal and three may be permitted. If you, for some reason, strongly prefer to do this project as an individual, please consult with your TA and me as early as possible.
- Research proposal and revision if necessary (5%): As a team you will write a research proposal, in which you a) formulate your research question; b) why you think this question is worth studying (“why should we care?”) c) identify and “operationalize” the key concepts; d) discuss which population you want to study (ideally); e) what you expect to find and why (“hypothesis”). Word count: approximately 500 words.
- Survey questionnaire and revision if necessary (5%): As a team you will develop a short survey questionnaire to measure the key concepts and other variables you may need for your analyses. At least one of the concepts should be a complex/multi-dimensional one that is measured using multiple questions (more about this later in class). You will use Qualtrics (an online survey platform) to distribute your survey. While there is no fixed number of respondents you need, I recommend that you collect the data from at least 20 respondents. You will analyze the survey responses using Stata (statistical software)
- Team presentation (3%): You and your partners will present your results in your section.
- Written report (10%): You will write a short report (no more than 1,000 words) that summarize and discuss your findings. Each member of the team will write this report individually. Along with the report, you will complete a short survey about the group dynamics in your team.

2) Qualitative interview project (22%)

For the second project, you and your teammates will conduct qualitative in-depth interviews. Again, this project will comprise several steps and each step will be graded separately. The team will work and be graded together for some steps of the projects but individually for others, including the project report. You may work on the same topic/research question from your survey project or find a new research topic/question.

- Find a partner(s): You can either continue to work with your partner(s) from the survey or find a new partner(s).
- Developing interview guides (5%): Your interview guide will include the followings: a) your research question; b) target population and sampling strategy; c) introductory remarks about your research and interview; d) at least five open-ended interview questions; e) concluding remarks.
- Interview coding and analysis (4%): Each member of the team will conduct at least one interview (lasting at least 25-30 minutes), select a five-minute segment from your interview and transcribe it, which then you will code. Submit the coded transcript.
- Team presentation (3%): Your team will make a brief presentation of your team's work in the section.
- Written report (10%): Write an individual report summarizing and reflecting on your experiences.

Please see the assignment section on Canvas for more information on two data collection projects.

- Data analysis exercises (5%)
You will learn how to use existing data to conduct sociological research with this exercise. Detailed instructions will be available in the assignment section on Canvas.
- Writing a "blog post" or "press release" (300 words maximum) and a Tweet (280 characters maximum) about a research article (5%)
- Complete online ethics certification (<https://research.wisc.edu/compliance-policy/human-research-protection-program/hrpp-training/citi-human-subjects-protections-hsp-training-instructions/>) (5%). More information is available in the assignment section of Canvas.
- Weekly quizzes (20%)

- At the end of each week, students will complete a quiz based on assigned readings and lectures of the week. The quiz will be administered through Canvas. The quizzes will mostly consist of true/false questions. Each quiz will consist of 10 questions. You will be given 20 minutes to complete the quiz. If you have completed the readings and attended the lectures, the quiz should take around 3-5 minutes to complete. If you have not submitted the quiz 20 minutes after you begin the quiz, Canvas will close the quiz and record your grade as a zero.
- **It is your responsibility to complete the quiz during the open window.** You will be given 60 hours to complete the quiz (e.g. Wednesday noon – Friday midnight), which is sufficient time for most students to find time in their schedule. If you forget to complete the quiz, it **will not be re-opened** for you after the quiz deadline. We can, however, negotiate the deadline for submitting your quiz **if you contact me before the quiz deadline.** Things happen; in the event that you have scheduled university-related travel, religious observations, severe illness, computer problems, or rescheduled work shifts, email me and I can extend your quiz submission deadline.
- Your lowest quiz score will be dropped from the final quiz grade.
- Participation (20%)
 - Discussion posts (10%)

In certain weeks, you will participate in discussions on selected readings on Canvas. The discussion prompts will be provided. You are also encouraged to read and comment on other students' postings.
 - Lecture (2.5%) & section (7.5%) attendance & participation

Grades

- Data collection projects (23% + 22% = 45%)
- Data analysis exercise (5%)
- Research writing ("blog post") exercise (5%)
- Online ethics certification (5%)
- Weekly quizzes (20%)
- Discussion posts (10%)
- Lecture and section attendance & participation (10%)

Final grades will be computed as follows: A=93-100, AB=86-92, B=80-85 BC=74-79, C=66-73, D=56-65, F=< 55. I may curve the grades up if necessary, but I never curve down.

Honors Credit:

If you are eligible to receive honors credit for SOC 357, it is your responsibility to make the appropriate course registration and to contact Professor Lim to find additional assignments.

Submission of work:

- All assignments must be submitted via Canvas.
- All submissions to Canvas are time-stamped and must be submitted on time in order to receive the full credit. Points will be subtracted for each day late.
- All questions about assignments and grading should first be directed toward your TA.

Accommodations: Please send the instructor and your TA an email by the end of the second week of the course if you are eligible for special arrangements or accommodations for testing, assignments, or other aspects of the course. This may be the case if English is your second language, you have a travel schedule from student athletics, or you experience a physical or psychological condition that makes it difficult for you to complete assignments without some modification of those tasks. Accommodations are provided for students who qualify for disability services through the [McBurney Center](#). Their website has detailed instructions about how to qualify. Provide the link to your accommodations to the instructor and your TA by the end of the second week of class.

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observances, send an email by the end of the second week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request accommodation; campus policy requires that religious observances be accommodated if you make a timely request early in the term. See the university's [web page](#) for details: <https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698>

Academic Integrity: As with all courses at the University of Wisconsin, you are expected to follow the University's rules and regulations pertaining to academic honesty and integrity. The standards are outlined by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) at <http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/> According to UWS 14, academic misconduct is defined as:

- seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- assists other students in any of these acts.

For a complete description of behaviors that violate the University's standards as well the disciplinary penalties and procedures, please see the Dean of Students [website](#). If you have questions about the rules for any of the assignments or exams, please ask your instructor or one of the TAs.

Departmental notice of grievance and appeal rights. The Department of Sociology regularly conducts student evaluations of all professors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the instructor or to the chair, 8128 Social Science (cschwart@ssc.wisc.edu).

Inclusivity at UW-Madison

Message from campus leaders:

“UW-Madison is committed to fostering a campus environment where every student can learn, feels safe and valued, and is able to thrive.” – Chancellor Rebecca Blank

“Diversity is a source of strength, creativity and innovation for our campus. We’re focused on listening to and learning from our students and community members and taking the right steps to improve the campus climate.” – Patrick Sims, Chief Diversity Officer

Working well with diverse individuals is critical to your success:

In our diverse society, being able to effectively interact and work in teams with people from many different backgrounds is critical to your success. Like leadership or critical thinking, learning how to work well with people from diverse backgrounds is a skill anyone can learn with practice. Badgers who build this skill in college are not only doing the right thing, they are also more successful in the job market and excel more quickly in their careers.

What your peers think:

A recent survey found that 87% of UW students agreed with this statement: “I embrace diversity and make sure that people from all backgrounds feel part of the UW-Madison community.” They also said they do their best to behave inclusively, though they sometimes worry about saying the wrong thing. While overt acts of discrimination occur at UW, recent research suggests these acts are committed by a small minority of individuals who differ radically from other students in terms of their attitudes and personalities.

What you can do:

Being inclusive is easy. By doing some simple things, you can improve our campus climate.

Do these things...	...but not these things
Have a conversation with a student who has a different background from you. Ask them about their experiences.	Assume you know about an individual's abilities and interests just because they belong to a certain social group.
Attend several activities, talks, or other diversity events per semester. Find an events list at bit.ly/UWdiverse .	Tell someone they conform to a positive stereotype about a group they belong to. Instead, give them a personal compliment!
Display the same level of warmth and enthusiasm when interacting with students from all social groups.	Tell someone their name is odd because you find hard to pronounce. Instead, learn how to say their name correctly.
Ask individuals from different social groups what terms or phrases they find offensive.	Tell someone they are different from "typical" members of a social group they belong to.
Choose students from different social groups for class projects and study groups.	Remain silent when you see others engage in discrimination. Speak up!

Questions about this page? Send an email! schwakopf@wisc.edu

Weekly schedule

NOTE: ***The schedule below may change.*** All announcements regarding schedule changes will be emailed to you, posted on Canvas, and/or announced in lecture or section. You are responsible for keeping up to date on these changes.

Week 1 (1/25-29) Introduction/Sociology as Science

Reading:

- The syllabus
- Chetty et al., “Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States: An Intergenerational Perspective” (pp.1-6)
- Desmond, “About This Project,” from *Evicted*

To-do's:

- Introduce yourself on Canvas by 1/31 (Instruction on Canvas)
- View & reply to at least a few of your classmate's introduction on Canvas (by 1/31)
- Read the syllabus carefully.
- Post your discussion on the Desmond reading on Canvas (by noon on 1/26)
- Complete the weekly quiz by Friday night (11:59pm on 1/29)

Lecture (1/25): Introduction

Section (1/25 - 1/26): Introduction

Lecture (1/27): Sociology as science

Section (1/27-1/28): Objectivity and values in social science research (Discussion of the Desmond reading)

Week 2 (2/1-5) Basic Elements of Sociological Research

Reading:

- Smith-Lovin and Moskovitz (pp.56-81)
- Jessica M. Calarco, “Avoiding Us versus Them: How Schools' Dependence on Privileged “Helicopter” Parents Influences Enforcement on Rules.”

To-do's:

- Find teammates for the project
- Brainstorm for the first data collection project (survey research). Use Google Scholar to find one or two articles that can help to formulate your research question and operationalize key concepts.
- Post your discussion on the Calarco article (noon on 1/31)
- Complete the weekly quiz by Friday night (11:59pm on 2/5)

Lecture (2/1) Formulating research question and hypothesis

Section (2/1-2/2): How to read and evaluate a research article (Calarco as an exemplar)

Lecture (2/3) Research design

Section (2/3-2/4): Formulating a research question & hypothesis; How to use the literature; How to use Google Scholar

Week 3 (2/8-12) Measurement

Reading:

- Bryman, pp.143-155
- Westbrook and Saperstein, “New categories are not enough: Rethinking the measurement of sex and gender in social surveys”
- Malcolm Gladwell, “The order of things”

To-do's:

- Post your discussion on Westbrook and Saperstein by noon on 2/7.
- Bring your team's ideas for the survey project to the section meeting on 2/10-2/11
- Complete the weekly quiz by Friday night (11:59pm on 2/12)
- Based on the discussion in the section, write up the research proposal for the first project, discussing 1) what your research question is; 2) why you find it interesting; 3) why you think it is worth studying; 4) what you expect to find. Submit your proposal by 11:59pm on 2/14.

Lecture (2/8) Measurement in sociological research

Section (2/8-2/9) Discuss Westbrook & Saperstein

Lecture (2/10) Measurement in quantitative research

Section (2/10-2/11) Discuss students' research proposal

Week 4 (2/15-19) Survey Research

Reading:

- Schaeffer and Presser, “The Science of Asking Questions” (pp.67-81)
- Salganik, Bit by Bit Ch3.5 “New ways of asking questions”
<https://www.bitbybitbook.com/en/1st-ed/asking-questions/how/> (pp.107-117 in the printed edition)

To-do's:

- Discuss with your teammates about the key concepts you need to measure and what questions you will use to measure them in survey.
- Explore the Qualtrics interface.
- Complete the weekly quiz by Friday night (11:59pm on 2/20)

Lecture (2/15) Basics of survey research

Section (2/15-2/16) How to write good survey questions?

Lecture (2/17) Survey questionnaire design

Section (2/17-2/18) How to write good survey questions? (continued); Qualtrics tutorial

Week 5 (2/22-26) Sampling

Reading:

- Bryman, pp.167-190
- Naomi Sugie, “Work as Foraging: A Smartphone Study of Job Search and Employment after Prison (focus on the key findings and their implications)
- Naomi Sugie, “Utilizing Smartphones to Study Disadvantaged and Hard-to-Reach Groups” (pp.458-469 only).

To-do's:

- Submit the first draft of your questionnaire by noon on 2/20. This will be discussed in the section meetings on 2/22-2/25.
- Post discussion on Sugie's "Work as Foraging" article by noon on 2/23.
- Complete the weekly quiz by Friday night (11:59pm on 2/26)

Lecture (2/22) Sampling I

Section (2/22-2/23) Review the questionnaires & plan for distribution

Lecture (2/24) Sampling II

Section (2/24-2/25) Review the questionnaires (if needed); Discuss Sugie's study (if time permits)

Week 6 (3/1-3/5) Quantitative Data Analysis

Reading:

- STATA handouts

To-do's:

- Based on the discussion and the feedback in the section meetings in week 5, revise the questionnaire and submit the revised draft by 11:59pm on 2/28.
- With your TA's approval, distribute the questionnaire and monitor responses.
- Prepare for survey data analysis.
- Practice Stata.
- Complete the weekly quiz by Friday night (11:59pm on 3/5)

Lecture (3/1) Describing and learning from quantitative data I

Section (3/1-3/2) STATA tutorial and practice

Lecture (3/3) Describing and learning from quantitative data II

Section (3/3-3/4) STATA tutorial and practice

Week 7 (3/8-3/12) Communicating Research; Research Ethics

Reading:

- Kieran Healy, Making Slides (<https://kieranhealy.org/blog/archives/2018/03/24/making-slides/>)
- Smith-Lovin and Moskovitz, Writing in Sociology: Brief Guide (pp.116-147; also recommend pp. 199-231)
- Sudhir Venkatesh, *Gang Leader for a Day* (pp.185-218)
- More resources available on Canvas

To-do's:

- Post discussion on Venkatesh by noon on 3/7.
- Complete the weekly quiz by Friday night (11:59pm on 3/12)
- Submit online ethics certification by 11:59pm 3/14
- Download the survey data from Qualtrics, import it into STATA, and begin to analyze the data.
- Submit your "press release" or "blog post" on the Sugie article (11:59pm 3/14).

Lecture (3/8) Communicating research: Writing & Presentation

Section (3/8-3/9) Ethical issues in studying human subjects (Discussion of the Venkatesh article).

Lecture (3/10): Ethics and politics of research

Section (3/10-3/11) Survey data analysis workshop; Tips for presentation

Week 8 (3/15-3/19) Causality and Experimental Research

Reading:

- Pearl and MacKenzi, *The Book of Why* (pp.23-36)
- Chambliss & Schutt, *Making Sense of the Social World* (pp.104-109, 114-121)
- Craig and Richeson, "More Diverse Yet Less Tolerant"

To-do's:

- Complete the weekly quiz by Friday night (11:59pm on 3/19)
- Prepare a brief team presentation on your survey findings (7-8 minutes) and submit your slides (due at 11:59pm on 3/14)
- Submit the report on your survey findings (due at 11:59pm on 3/21)

Lecture (3/15) Causality in Social Research

Section (3/15-3/16) Student presentations: Survey results

Lecture (3/17) Experimental Research Designs

Section (3/17-3/18) Student presentations: Survey results; Discussion of Craig and Richeson & experimental research (if time permits; if not, this will be done in week 9)

Week 9 (3/22-3/26) Sociological Research in the Age of "Big Data"

Reading:

- Salganik, *Bit by Bit* Ch 2.3 "Ten common characteristics of big data" (pp.17-41 in the printed edition)
- Raj Chetty, "Where is the land of opportunity?"
- Seth Stephens-Davidowitz, "Google Searches Can Help Us Find Emerging Covid-19 Outbreaks"

To-do's:

- Complete the weekly quiz by Friday night (11:59pm on 3/26)
- Explore socialexplorer.org and/or gapminder.org to find data about the US states or Wisconsin counties (socialexplorer.org) or countries (gapminder.org). Download the data about the variables you find most interesting and import it into STATA. Write a brief memo that describes the data you downloaded. (Detailed instructions on Canvas). Due at 11:59pm on 3/28.

Lecture (3/22) Observing and describing the world using “Big Data”

Section (3/22-3/23) Discussion of Craig and Richeson & experimental research (if not done in week 8); Working with administrative data

Lecture (3/24) Promises and challenges of Big Data social science

Section (3/24-3/25) Working with administrative data (help with the big data assignment)

Week 10 (3/29-4/2) Introduction to Qualitative Research

Reading:

- Mario Small on polarization and qualitative literacy
- Mario Small on how many cases do I need
- Robert Caro, Working (pp.101-108; 124-128)

To-do's:

- Post your discussion on Small (polarization and qualitative literacy) by Noon on 3/28
- Complete the weekly quiz by Friday night (11:59pm on 4/2)
- Brainstorm for the qualitative interview project. Bring your idea to the section meeting on 3/31-4/1 for discussion.

Lecture (3/29) What is qualitative research

Section (3/29-3/30) Discussion on Small articles

Lecture (3/31) Issues in qualitative research

Section (3/31-4/1) Brainstorming for the in-depth interview project

Week 11 (4/5-4/9) Qualitative Interview Methods

Reading:

- Allison Daminger. 2019. “The Cognitive Dimension of Household Labor”
- Schalet, Interviewing and telling a good story
- Kobayashi, Getting focus groups right

To-do's:

- Post your discussion on the Daminger article on Canvas by noon on 4/4
- Complete the weekly quiz by Friday night (11:59pm on 4/9)
- Submit the draft of your interview guide by 11:59pm on 4/11

Lecture (4/5) Qualitative/in-depth interviews

Section (4/5-4/6) Discussion on the Daminger article

Lecture (4/7) Focus-group interviews

Section (4/7-4/8) Preparing interview guide

Week 12 (4/12-4/16) Ethnographic Research

Reading:

- C.J. Pascoe. “Negotiating the Ethnographic Hallways”

- C.J. Pascoe. “Dude, You’re a Fag: Adolescent Masculinity and the Fag Discourse”

To-do’s:

- Post your discussion on the Pascoe article (“Dude...”) by noon on 4/13
- Complete the weekly quiz by Friday night (11:59pm on 4/16)

Lecture (4/12) Ethnographic research

Section (4/12-4/13) Interview practice

Lecture (4/14) Ethnographic research

Section (4/14-4/15) Pascoe article discussion

Week 13 (4/19-4/23) Analyzing Qualitative Data

Reading:

- Erik Blair. 2015. “A Reflexive Exploration of Two Qualitative Data Coding Techniques.” (focus on pp.16-27)
- Allison Daminger. 2019. “The Cognitive Dimension of Household Labor” (pp.616-625)

To-do’s:

- Complete the weekly quiz by Friday night (11:59pm on 4/23)
- Code and analyze your interview data (11:59pm on 4/25)

Lecture (4/19) Analyzing qualitative data

Section (4/19-4/20) Different ways of doing qualitative coding.

Lecture (4/21) Analyzing qualitative data

Section (4/21-4/22) Qualitative coding exercise

Week 14 (4/26-4/30) Content Analysis and Archival Research

Reading:

- Madison Van Oort and Kyle Green, “Analyzing Commercial”
- Fitzgerald and Cook-Martin, “Comparative Historical Research”

To-do’s:

- Complete the weekly quiz by Friday night (11:59pm on 4/30)
- Prepare a short team presentation based on your interview data (submit your slides by 11:59pm on 4/25)
- Submit your report on interview data by 11:59pm on 5/2

Lecture (4/26) Analyzing cultural contents

Section (4/26-4/27) Student presentations: Findings from the in-depth interview

Lecture (4/28) Archival research

Section (4/28-4/29) Student presentations: Findings from the in-depth interview