

SOC750 – Methods and Designs of Sociological Research

Fall 2023

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Office Hours: Monday, 4:00-6:00pm, 8111 Sewell Social Sciences

Seminars: Wednesday, 3:00-5:30pm, 8108 Sewell Social Sciences

Credit Hours: 3

Requisites

Graduate/professional standing; Soc/C&E Soc 357 and 361 or equivalent (or instructor's permission)

Course Description and Objectives

This course has two main goals. It first offers an overview of the major research methods that provide the core of contemporary empirical inquiry into social phenomena. These methods enable us to offer descriptions and draw inferences about human life from observations of it. Sociologists use an extraordinarily diverse set of methods – which is fitting given the extraordinary diversity of the research questions they pursue – and the course strives to explore this diversity. Among the specific methodologies we will consider are experiments, surveys, interviews, ethnographies, empirical categorization, simulations, and the analysis of text data. The underlying idea is to make you a better sociologist: one that can read and criticize the work produced in various corners of the discipline, and one that can identify the methods best appropriate to addressing your substantive research questions. Note that I am not an expert in most of these methods, nor is it my goal to make you an expert in any one of them. There are many courses taught at UW-Madison that can do that for any method that you expect to use. This course is most emphatically not intended as a substitute for the more specialized methodological training that your dissertation will likely demand.

The course's second goal is to reflect on the design of sociological research. By design we here mean the articulation of research interest or question, data, and method. This articulation is most critical when it comes to crafting powerful sociological arguments

that are supported by empirical evidence. Our interest in research designs will enable us to discuss the identification of revealing and answerable questions, the measurement and operationalization of concepts, as well as issues of sampling, generalization, inference, or causality.

To achieve these two goals, we will use a case study approach. Every week, we will discuss a selection of exemplar readings that illustrate the use of specific methods, alongside a series of other readings that reflect on methodological issues more broadly. By critically reviewing the implementation of methods in exemplar readings, we will see these methods in action, which will enable us to cover issues of research design, to get a sense of what each method can and cannot do for us, and of the kind of questions it can be applied to. You might find this “dissection” of existing research challenging at first, but my hope is that by the end of the semester you will be fluent in this exercise, and that it will help you to think more rigorously and creatively about your own methodological and design decisions.

Course Style and Format

The course is a discussion-based seminar (though I might step in and lecture on a few occasions), and as such participation and dialogue are essential. In each session, I will briefly set the stage by providing some context for the readings. We will then move on to a guided discussion of the readings and of your reactions to them. To help steer in-class discussion, you will post your reactions to the weeks’ readings on our online discussion board ahead of class (see below). Most importantly, every week, you will write a critical review of the *exemplar readings* for that week, informed by your reading of the *expected readings*. This review will be posted on Canvas ahead of time (more on this exercise below). After the first couple of weeks, I will select one or two students to lead our discussions. Discussion leaders will be expected to read all online board postings and all exemplar reviews for the week they are responsible for, and to use these to steer our in-class exchanges. When engaging in collective class discussions, listen carefully and courteously, respond respectfully, treat others as you would like to be treated. Remember that the course structure means that your level of commitment will largely determine the course’s success and the quality of your learning experience.

Course Requirements

Assessment for this class will be as follows:

In-class and online participation. I expect you to do the assigned readings, attend class regularly, and participate actively both in class and online. Weekly, you are asked to post on our Canvas discussion board a short reaction to the week’s readings (distinct from your critical review of exemplar readings) and/or to the concerns others raised already. This reaction should cover issues you would most like to see considered in our in-class discussion, including anything you are not too clear about and would like to be discussed more in class. It is also a good place for discussing (1) how the readings relate to things discussed in prior classes, (2) specific connections between the readings and other studies you know about from other courses or your own research, (3) questions the readings raised for you about how research is conducted more generally, or about how this broad type of research is done more specifically, and (4) any specific questions you

may have considered with your study group if you join one. I encourage you to respond to each other as well on the discussion board. This type of discussion is important since there is limited “airtime” during the seminar.

Reviews of exemplar readings. An unusual but essential part of the course is the critical review of *exemplar readings*, or exemplars. You are required to post a minimum of seven of these reviews over the course of the semester, but you are expected to prepare for *all* discussion of exemplars. I will grade your submitted reviews of exemplar readings and retain your three best grades as a basis for your assessment. Reviews of exemplar readings should not exceed 1,300 words. They are due by 6:00pm on the Monday preceding our Wednesday session and are submitted through Canvas. No review is due for week 1, though I expect you to do the reading for this week!

Reviews of exemplar readings should deal with all exemplars assigned in a week, either separately or by building bridges or making comparisons between readings if you think this makes sense. In your reviews, you should assume I have read the articles you are reviewing, meaning that you should only provide a very brief summary of what you believe the authors were attempting to do, before focusing your attention on the methodological and research design aspects in these readings. These may include (1) clearly identifying the methods and data used in a piece, (2) reflecting on how well these data operationalized the concepts researchers were trying to address, (3) analyzing how exemplars deal with issues of reliability, validity, generalizability, or causal inference, (4) describing things you find praiseworthy about what the researchers did, things you thought they could or should have done differently, or methodological choices you believe they should have said more about, (5) assessing the clarity and accuracy of the presentation of the analysis, *etc.* As we will do throughout this course, you are encouraged to consider these issues from the perspective of *rigor* (how much should we trust the conclusions the authors draw? how do the design and implementation of methods in a piece contribute to this?) as well as from the perspective of *creativity* (to what extent do researchers’ chosen design and methods enable them to come up with original insights or new conceptualizations of the social world? could other methodological approaches have provided further insights into the problem at stake?).

To inform your review of exemplar readings, every week you will be able to rely on a list of *expected readings* discussing that week’s methods or methodological issues. While you will not be writing on these “non-exemplar” pieces, you are expected to read them. In fact, you will be much more successful in reviewing exemplars if you complete these expected readings ahead of time, since exemplars are chosen to incorporate issues raised in those readings.

Personal assignments. Over the course of the semester, you will turn in three written assignments (about 1,000 words each). These are intended to have you put the skills you will be acquiring to work in a way that serves your own research interests. These assignments are due at the end of weeks 4, 8 and 12, and they are described at greater length in the weekly schedule below.

Final paper. The final paper (maximum length 3,000 words) is a more substantial exercise in which you will present a research project of your own (thesis, dissertation, other) in terms of the methodological and research design issues explored in the course. You can think of this final paper as a research proposal that delineates the articulation of theory, data, and methods in your project, as well as specific moves this project makes to improve this articulation and enhance your overall research design. This paper should demonstrate how the material we covered together

helped you to think through some methodological and design issues raised by your project. Your third personal assignment (see description in the weekly schedule below) will be a first step toward writing this final paper. Your final paper is due by the Monday following our final meeting.

Grading. The grading structure for this course will be roughly as follows: 20% in-class and online participation; 30% weekly exemplar reviews; 30% personal assignments; 20% final paper.

Citizenship

You are expected to show good citizenship in the classroom. When engaging in collective class discussions or peer-mentorship, listen carefully and courteously, respond respectfully, treat others as you would like to be treated.

Technology Policy

Please turn off your cell phone and store it during class. When using a laptop, please use it only for note-taking or consulting electronic copies of our readings.

Weekly Schedule¹

Week 1 (Wed. 09/06) – No class this day

I unfortunately need to cancel class this week to attend an important appointment. We will make up for this session because we meet on Wednesdays and the semester both starts and ends on a Wednesday.

Week 2 (Wed. 09/13) – Introduction: Some Ideas about Explanation in Sociology

Expected readings

Abbott, Andrew. 2004. "Ideas and Puzzles." Chapter 7 in *Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for Social Sciences*. New York: Norton (p. 211-248).

Leifer, Eric. 1992. "Denying the Data: Learning from the Accomplished Sciences." *Sociological Forum* 7: 283-299.

Lieberson, Stanley, and Freda Lynn. 1998. "Barking Up the Wrong Branch: Scientific Alternatives to the Current Model of Sociological Science." *Annual Review of Sociology* 28: 1-19.

Recommended readings

Ferree, Myra Marx. 2004. "An Essay on the Art of Reviewing: Some Guidelines for New Reviewers."

Presser, Stanley. 2022. "The Role of Doubt in Conceiving Research: Reflections from a Career Shaped by a Dissertation." *Annual Review of Sociology* 48:1-21.

Week 3 (Wed. 09/20) – Building on Prior Research to Make Contributions

Exemplar readings

Lin, Ken-Hou, and Jennifer Lundquist. 2013. "Mate Selection in Cyberspace: The Intersection of Race, Gender, and Education." *American Journal of Sociology* 119: 183-215.

Auspurg, Katrin, and Josef Bruderl. 2021. "Has the Credibility of the Social Sciences Been Credibly Destroyed? Reanalyzing the 'Many Analysts, One Data Set' Project." *Socius* 7: 1-14.

Expected readings

Becker, Howard S. 1986. "Terrorized by the Literature." in *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (p. 135-149).

¹ The schedule and readings are subject to minor modifications to allow for flexibility in the specific content and timing of the course.

- Hirschman, Daniel. 2016. "Stylized Facts in the Social Sciences." *Sociological Science* 3: 604-626.
- Oliver, Pamela. 2019. "Citing More Broadly."
- Hargens, Lowell. 2000. "Using the Literature: Reference Networks, Reference Contexts, and the Social Structure of Scholarship." *American Sociological Review* 65: 846-865.
- Freese, Jeremy, and David Peterson, 2017. "Replication in Social Science." *Annual Review of Sociology* 43: 147-165.
- Pratt, Michael G., Sarah Kaplan, and Richard Whittington. 2019. "Editorial Essay: The Tumult over Transparency: Decoupling Transparency from Replication in Establishing Trustworthy Qualitative Research." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 65: 1-19.

Assignment 1: Identifying Extensions of Previous Work (due by the end of Week 4, Fri. 09/29)

Find one empirical article in your research area published since 2013 that explicitly extends or challenges a classic study in the area. The classic study should be empirical (have a basis in data and a method for analyzing data), and the extension or challenge should be addressing at least one of the empirical findings of the classic. In your assignment, you will discuss how the extension or challenge builds upon the earlier study. In completing this assignment, you should strive to:

- (1) Show that the earlier study offered an influential and credible claim (or claims) for the second to address;
- (2) Discuss what the extension actually preserves of the original design and what it changes (whether for better or worse, in your view);
- (3) Explain the theoretical assumptions and rhetorical strategies that allow the authors of the second study to say they are studying the "same thing" as the first, but "better." How do they portray their results (as an extension, modification, limitation, rebuttal, etc.)?
- (4) Evaluate whether the extension or challenge is persuasive, or whether you may interpret the authors' results differently than they do (e.g., as not studying the same thing, as not measuring it as well as the first study did, as failing to replicate a key aspect of the first study's scope conditions, etc.).

Week 4 (Wed. 09/27) – Hypothesis Testing with Observational Data: Significance, Statistical and Otherwise

Exemplar readings

- Fox, Cybelle. 2004. "The Changing Color of Welfare? How Whites' Attitudes toward Latinos Influence their Support for Welfare." *American Journal of Sociology* 110: 580-625.
- Loftus, Jeni. 2001. "America's Liberalization in Attitudes Toward Homosexuality, 1973-1998." *American Sociological Review* 66: 762-782.

Expected readings

- Freedman, David A. 1991. "Statistical Models and Shoe Leather." *Sociological Methodology* 21: 291-313.
- Schwab, Andreas, Eric Anderson, William Starbuck and Fiona Fidler, 2011. "Researchers Should Make Thoughtful Assessments Instead of Null-Hypothesis Significance Tests." *Organization Science* 22: 1105-1120.
- Leahey, Erin 2005. "Alphas and Asterisks: the Development of Statistical Testing Standards in Sociology." *Social Forces* 84: 1-24.
- Gelman, Andrew, and John Carlin, 2017. "Some Natural Solutions to the p-Value Communication Problem—and Why They Won't Work," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 112:519, 899- 901.
- Ronald L. Wasserstein, and Nicole A. Lazar. 2016. "The ASA's Statement on *p*-Values: Context, Process, and Purpose." *The American Statistician* 70: 129-133.

Week 5 (Wed. 10/04) – Experiments and Quasi-Experiments

Exemplar readings

- Salganik, Matthew J., Peter S. Dodds, and Duncan J. Watts. 2006. "Experimental Study of Inequality and Unpredictability in an Artificial Cultural Market." *Science* 311: 854–856.
- Legewie, Joscha. 2013. "Terrorist Events and Attitudes toward Immigrants: A Natural Experiment." *American Journal of Sociology* 118: 1199-1245.
- Quadlin, Natasha. 2018. "The Mark of a Woman's Record: Gender and Academic Performance in Hiring." *American Sociological Review* 83: 331-360.

Expected readings

- Jackson, Michelle and D.R. Cox 2013 "Principles of Experimental Design and their Application in Sociology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 39: 27–49.
- Sampson, Robert, 2010. "Gold Standard Myths: Observations on the Experimental Turn in Quantitative Criminology." *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 26: 489–500 (a critical take).
- Falk, Amin and James Heckman. 2009. "Lab Experiments are a Major Source of Knowledge in Social Sciences", *Science* 326: 535-538.
- Sekhon, Jasjeet S., and Rocio Titiunik. 2012. "When Natural Experiments Are Neither Natural Nor Experiments." *American Political Science Review* 106: 35-57.
- Deaton, Angus, and Nancy Cartwright. 2018. "Understanding and Misunderstanding Randomized Controlled Trials." *Social Science and Medicine* 210: 2-21.
- Baldassarri, Delia, and Maria Abascal. 2017. "Field Experiments Across the Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 43: 41-73.

Week 6 (Wed. 10/11) – Suicide: Double Feature Session: Styles of Explanation / Issues of Measurement

Exemplar readings

- Bearman, Peter. 1991. "The Social Structure of Suicide." *Sociological Forum* 6: 501-524.
- Timmermans, Stefan. 2005. "Suicide Determination and the Professional Authority of Medical Examiners." *American Sociological Review* 70: 311-333.
- Bollen, Kenneth, and David Phillips. 1982. "Imitative Suicides: A National Study of the Effects of Television News Stories." *American Sociological Review* 47: 802-809.

Expected readings

- Tilly, Charles. 2002. "Event Catalogs as Theories." *Sociological Theory* 20: 248-254.
- Desrosières, Alain. 2001. "How 'Real' are Statistics? Four Possible Attitudes." *Social Research* 68: 339-355.
- Maxwell, Joseph A. 1996. "Validity: How Might You Be Wrong?" p. 86-98 in *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Background reading

- Durkheim, Emile. 2006 [1897]. *On Suicide*. New York: Penguin. (I will assume that you have a good command of that book's content; if you think you don't, it is a good read for sociologists!).

Week 7 (Wed. 10/18) – Surveys and Interviews: Asking Questions, Interpreting Answers

Exemplar readings

(The first two exemplars work together; consider them a whole to analyze)

- McPherson, Miller, Lynn Smith-Lovin and Matthew E. Brashears. 2006. "Social Isolation in America: Changes in Core Discussion Networks over Two Decades." *American Sociological Review* 71: 353-375.
- Fischer, Claude S. 2009. "The 2004 GSS Finding of Shrunk Networks: An Artifact?" *American Sociological Review* 74: 657-669.
- Ford, Jessie. 2021. "Unwanted Sex on Campus: The Overlooked Role of Interactional Pressures and Gendered Sexual Scripts." *Qualitative Sociology* 44: 31-53.
- Damaske, Sarah. 2020. "Job Loss and Attempts to Return to Work: Complicating Inequalities across Gender and Class." *Gender & Society* 34: 7-30.

Expected readings

- Jerolmack, Colin, and Shamus Khan. 2014. "Talk is Cheap: Ethnography and the Attitudinal Fallacy." *Sociological Methods and Research* 43: 178-209.
- Small, Mario L., and Jenna M. Cook. 2021. "Using Interviews to Understand Why: Challenges and Strategies in the Study of Motivated Action." *Sociological Methods and Research*.
- Becker, Howard S. 1998. "Sampling." pp. 67-108. *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While You're Doing It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Small, Mario 2009. "How Many Cases Do I Need?' On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-based Research." *Ethnography*, 10: 5-38.
- Stanley Presser et al. 2004. "Methods for Testing and Evaluating Survey Questions" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 68: 109-131.
- Schaeffer, Nora Cate and Stanley Presser. 2003. "The Science of Asking Questions." *Annual Review of Sociology* 9: 65-88.

Assignment 2: Operationalizing Concepts (due by the end of Week 8, Fri. 10/27)

In this assignment, you will identify a concept that has yet to be operationalized in a project of yours (dissertation, thesis, or other). You will start by discussing why this concept is important to your project, and you will then identify some data that you think can operationalize it. These data could be existing quantitative data or any sort of data (whether texts, observations of interactions or behaviors, archival records) that you think could validly and creatively capture your not-yet-operationalized concept. After presenting your concept and the data you are thinking of, you will discuss: (1) what in your data makes it a valid operationalization for this concept; (2) what steps you could take to make your measure as reliable as possible, or to demonstrate its reliability. If there are data that you have already collected or want to collect on the occasion of this assignment, please feel free to do so, and then you can take actual steps to examine these data's reliability and validity, but do not make this a big project. Your write up of this assignment should be no more than 1,000 words.

Week 8 (Wed. 10/25) – Ethnography and Research Ethics

Exemplar readings

- Torres, Stacy. 2020. "For a Younger Crowd: Place, Belonging, and Exclusion among Older Adults Facing Neighborhood Change." *Qualitative Sociology* 43: 1-20.
- Duneier, Mitchell. 2000. *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Katz, Jack 2007. "Toward a Natural History of Ethical Censorship." *Law & Society Review* 41: 797- 810.

Expected readings

- Duneier, Mitchell. 2011. "How Not to Lie With Ethnography." *Sociological Methodology* 41: 1-11.
- Katz, Jack. 1997. "Ethnography's Warrants." *Sociological Methods and Research* 25: 391-423.
- Hoeyer, Klaus, Lisa Dahlager, and Niels Lynøe. 2005. "Conflicting Notions of Research Ethics: The Mutually Challenging Traditions of Social Scientists and Medical Researchers." *Social Science and Medicine* 61: 1741-1749.
- Blee, Kathleen and Ashley Currier, 2011. "Ethics Beyond the IRB: An Introductory Essay." *Qualitative Sociology* 34: 401-413.
- ASA Code of Ethics (online at Canvas and asanet.org)

Recommended readings (illustrating different approaches to ethnographic analysis)

- Adler, Patricia, and Peter Adler. 2008. "Of Rhetoric and Representation: The Four Faces of Ethnography." *Sociological Quarterly* 49: 1-30.
- Charmaz, Kathy 2000. "Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods." p. 509-535 in Norman Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd edition). Sage.
- Burawoy, Michael. 2009. *The Extended Case Method*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Prologue and Introduction. (Origins and applications of one now-classic approach)
- Campbell, Marie and Frances Gregor, *Mapping Social Relations: A Primer in Institutional Ethnography*, Chapter 1 "Finding a Place to Begin" (p. 11-44). (Applying Dorothy Smith's somewhat different approach).

Homework: Do the UW ethics training & certification (if you haven't already). This is not easy (it takes about 2 hours). It requires that you know UW's IRB guidelines and can answer the questions about them.

Week 9 (Wed. 11/01) – Time

Exemplar readings

- Abbott, Andrew. 1990. "Conceptions of Time and Events in Social Science Methods: Causal and Narrative Approaches." *Historical Methods* 23: 140-150.
- Stovel, Katherine, Michael Savage, and Peter Bearman. 1996. "Ascription into Achievement: Models of Career Systems at Lloyds Bank, 1890-1970." *American Journal of Sociology* 102: 358-399.
- Ermakoff, Ivan. 2015. "The Structure of Contingency." *American Journal of Sociology* 121: 64-125.

Expected readings

- Pierson, Paul. 2000. "Not Just What, but When: Timing and Sequence in Political Processes." *Studies in American Political Development* 14: 72-92.

- Wu, Lawrence L. 2000. "Some Comment on 'Sequence Analysis and Optimal Matching Methods in Sociology: Review and Prospect.'" *Sociological Methods and Research* 29: 41-64.
- Ermakoff, Ivan. 2019. "Causality and History: Modes of Causal Investigation in Historical Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 45: 581-606.
- Lara-Millan, Armando, Brian Sargent, and Sunmin Kim. 2020. "Theorizing with Archives: Contingency, Mistakes, and Plausible Alternatives." *Qualitative Sociology* 43: 345-365.

Week 10 (Wed. 11/08) – Empirical Categorization (and What it May Do for Us)

Exemplar readings

- Accominotti, Fabien. 2009. "Creativity from Interaction: Artistic Movements and the Creativity Careers of Modern Artists." *Poetics* 37: 267-294.
- Anheier, Helmut K., Jürgen Gerhards and Frank P. Romo. 1995. "Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields: Examining Bourdieu's Social Topography." *American Journal of Sociology* 100: 859-903.
- Savage, Mike, Fiona Devine, Niall Cunningham, Mark Taylor, Yaojun Li, Johs Hjellbrekke, Brigitte Le Roux, Sam Friedman and Andrew Miles. 2013. "A New Model of Social Class? Findings from the BBC's Great British Class Survey Experiment." *Sociology* 47: 221-250.

Expected readings (if you want to familiarize yourself with blockmodeling and/or latent class analysis)

- Doreian, Patrick. 1999. "An Intuitive Introduction to Blockmodeling with Examples." *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology* 61: 5-34.
- Porcu, Mariano, and Francesca Giambona. 2016. "Introduction to Latent Class Analysis with Applications." *The Journal of Early Adolescence* 37: 129-158.

Week 11 (Wed. 11/15) – Simulations and Formal Modeling

Exemplars readings

- Bruch, Elizabeth E., and Robert D. Mare. 2006. "Neighborhood Choice and Neighborhood Change." *American Journal of Sociology* 112: 667-709.
- Gould, Roger. 2002. "The Origins of Status Hierarchies: A Formal Theory and Empirical Test." *American Journal of Sociology* 107: 1143-1178.

Expected readings

- Bruch, Elizabeth E., and Jon Atwell. 2013. "Agent-Based Models in Empirical Social Research." *Sociological Methods and Research* 44(2): 186-221.

Hedström, Peter, and Petri Ylikoski. 2010. "Causal Mechanisms in the Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36: 49-67.

Gross, Neil. 2009. "A Pragmatist Theory of Social Mechanisms." *American Sociological Review* 74: 358-379.

Assignment 3: Peer-Mentoring Preliminary Versions of your Final Papers (due by the end of Week 12, Fri. 11/24)

By the end of Week 12, you will post a preliminary version of your final paper for our class, describing a research project that you are working on and explaining how this project articulates your theoretical question, data and methods into a successful research design. Ahead of our Week 13 and 14 sessions, you will also read your classmates submissions. Building on this preparation, our Week 13 and 14 meetings will be peer-mentoring sessions in which we will collectively workshop your pre-posted project descriptions. In these sessions you will be expected to provide constructive feedback based on the course material and aimed at generating methodological and design suggestions for your peers. This will give you an opportunity to receive feedback before writing up your final paper.

Week 12 (Wed. 11/22) – No Class this Week (Thanksgiving)

Week 13 (Wed. 11/29) – Peer-Mentoring Session I

Week 14 (Wed. 12/06) – Peer-Mentoring Session II

Week 15 (Wed. 12/13) – Analyzing Texts: Quantitative and Not So Quantitative Approaches

Exemplar readings

Scarborough, William, and Allison S. Helmuth. 2021. "How Cultural Environments Shape Online Sentiment Toward Social Movements: Place Character and Support for Feminism." *Sociological Forum* 36: 426-447.

Kozlowski, Austin C., Matt Taddy, James A. Evans. 2019. "The Geometry of Culture: Analyzing the Meanings of Class through Word Embeddings." *American Sociological Review* 84: 905-949.

Griswold, Wendy. 1987. "The Fabrication of Meaning: Literary Interpretation in the United States, Great Britain and the West Indies." *American Journal of Sociology* 92: 1077-1117.

Expected readings

- Prior, Lindsay. 2004. "Following in Foucault's Footsteps: Text and Context in Qualitative Research." p. 317-333 in Sharlene Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy (ed.), *Approaches to Qualitative Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- DiMaggio, Paul, Manish Nag, and David Blei. 2013. "Exploiting Affinities between Topic Modeling and the Sociological Perspective on Culture: Applications to Newspaper Coverage of U.S. Government Arts Funding." *Poetics* 41: 570-606.
- Nelson, Laura K. 2017. "Computational Grounded Theory: A Methodological Framework." *Sociological Methods and Research* 49: 3-42.
- Bail, Christopher. 2014. "The Cultural Environment: Measuring Culture with Big Data." *Theory and Society* 43: 465-482.

Recommended reading (for an accessible look into the machinery of topic modeling)

- Blei, David. 2012. "Probabilistic Topic Models: A Review Essay." *Communications of the ACM*.