Sociology 3a ● The Evaluation of Evidence
Summer Session 1 2019
Instructor: Andy Murray ● email: aimurray@ucsc.edu

Class Time:
Tues and Thurs 9:00 am–12:30 pm
J. Baskin Engineering 165

Office Hours:
Tues and Thurs 12:45–2:15 pm (or by appt.)
J. Baskin Engineering lobby

About the course:
The Evaluation of Evidence provides an overview of social science research methodologies. Understanding these methodologies is essential for conducting social research and is also beneficial for understanding how knowledge about the social world is proposed, produced, analyzed, and disseminated. After completing this course, you will be familiar with the major types of research methodologies and which types of research questions and data are best suited to each method.

A research methodology is a way of collecting and analyzing information about social phenomena to answer a particular question. Increasingly, researchers use not just one, but multiple methods and multiple kinds of data or evidence to answer research questions.

Our focus will be on understanding these basic principles of research. The purpose of the textbook is to provide you with a basic, foundational understanding of concepts, principles, and research design. The supplemental readings available in Canvas are designed to enhance your understanding of methods with real-world examples and illustrate exemplary models of research practices and research design.

Because this class operates on a condensed time scale in the summer, we will be using our class time as combined lecture and workshop time so that you are able to develop an effective research proposal in five weeks.

Course materials:
Required textbook:

In addition to the textbook, readings for this course include a series of PDF readings available through Canvas or online using your UCSC library access. We will cover the basics of searching for academic articles in the course. The textbook is available at BayTree Bookstore. A copy of the textbook has also been placed on reserve at McHenry Library.

With the exception of the first day, you are expected to read the materials ahead of class. We will be doing group activities and discussions based on these readings.
Library resource guide:
The Library has set up a resource guide specifically for our class with information that you will find helpful for writing your research proposal. See http://guides.library.ucsc.edu/socy3a. We will review some of this guide on the first day of class.

Academic integrity:
Academic integrity is vital for scholarship, exchange of ideas and work, and a shared understanding of knowledge. You will be expected to adhere to the UC Santa Cruz code of academic integrity in all course activities. You are expected to complete your own original work and to cite any and all sources appropriately. If you have any questions about academic integrity, please consult the university website: http://www.ue.ucsc.edu/academic_integrity.

Disability resources:
UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately during my office hours or by appointment, preferably within the first two weeks of the session. At this time, I would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.

Small Group Tutoring:
This course is supported by Small Group Tutoring (SGT). SGT supports students academically to advance educational equity by designing inclusive learning environments outside of the classroom. In SGT, you can expect the Tutor to facilitate cooperative group activities designed to have students work together on the course content and develop study skills for the course. SGT is offered at least three times each week for the entire quarter. The Tutor is an undergraduate student who took the class, did well, and is trained to facilitate group sessions to focus on students’ needs to succeed in the course. SGT is open to all students enrolled in the class and they must sign up on our online system: Slug Success. When students sign up for SGT, they are committing to attend every week. Students can begin signing up for tutoring on Tuesday, June 25th online on Slug Success and tutoring will begin Wednesday, June 26th.

Want SGT to be successful for you? Bring your books, lecture notes, questions, and be open to working collaboratively with your peers. You can sign up using this link: https://sserc.ucsc.edu/slug-success

Title IX Policy:
Please be aware that under the UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, faculty and student employees (including Teaching Assistants, Readers, Tutors, etc.) are “responsible employees” and are required to notify the Title IX Officer of any reports of incidents of sexual harassment and sexual violence (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, stalking, etc.) involving students. Academic freedom exceptions exist for disclosures made within a class discussion or assignment related to course content; under those conditions only, a report to the Title IX Officer is not required. The Campus Advocacy Resources and Education (CARE) Office
(831) 502-2273, care@ucsc.edu can provide confidential support, resources, and assist with academic accommodations. To report a possible Title IX Violation you can call (831) 459-2462 or use this online reporting link: https://ucsc-gme-advocate.symplicity.com/public_report/index.php/pid325202.

**Course Requirements and Grading:**
Your work this term includes class attendance and participation, weekly written homework assignments, and a research proposal.

- Attendance and participation: 25%
- Think like a researcher assignments (2): 20%
- Proposed research questions: 10%
- Research proposal part 1: 20%
- Research proposal final: 25%

You are expected to attend all class meetings and to complete assignments in a timely manner. Late assignments without approved extensions will receive a 10% deduction for each day they are late, up to a 50% maximum deduction.

**Assignment schedule:**
All course assignments will be submitted, graded, and returned via Canvas. Assignments are due by **11:59 pm** on the date listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment:</th>
<th>Due date:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think like a researcher 1</td>
<td>Sunday, June 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposed research questions</td>
<td>Friday, July 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research proposal part 1</td>
<td>Sunday, July 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Think like a researcher 2</td>
<td>Friday, July 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research proposal final</td>
<td>Friday, July 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra credit (CITI Human Subjects Training)</td>
<td>Friday, July 26</td>
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**Class and reading schedule:**
**Tuesday, 6/25: Thinking like a researcher**
- Sociology and social research in the ‘post-truth’ era:
Thursday, 6/27: Sociology and social science research

- Babbie, Chapter 1 “Human Inquiry and Science,” pp. 5-30
- Babbie, Chapter 2 “Paradigms, Theory and Social Research,” pp. 32-34, 44-59
- *In class: overview of research methodologies*

Tuesday, 7/2: Research design, research questions, and research ethics

- Babbie, Chapter 3 “Ethics and Politics of Research,” pp. 60-85
- Babbie, Chapter 4 “Research Design,” pp. 88-122
- American Sociological Association, “The Role of Ethics and Its Basic Tools,”
- *The Conversation*, “Human Experiments: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly,”
- Cameron, Abigail E. 2016. “The Unhappy Marriage of IRBs and Ethnography.”
- Read “Description of research proposal parts 1 and 2” (see below on syllabus)
- *In class: research questions and literature searches workshop*
- **For your reference:**
  - Additional resources on developing good research questions:
    - [https://cirt.gcu.edu/research/developmentresources/tutorials/question](https://cirt.gcu.edu/research/developmentresources/tutorials/question)
  - UC Santa Cruz Office of Research (ORCA) Institutional Review Board website:
    - [https://officeofresearch.ucsc.edu/compliance/services/irb.html](https://officeofresearch.ucsc.edu/compliance/services/irb.html)
    - How to complete CITI training for human subjects research:
      - [https://officeofresearch.ucsc.edu/compliance/services/irb06.06_citi-training-human-subjects.html](https://officeofresearch.ucsc.edu/compliance/services/irb06.06_citi-training-human-subjects.html)

Thursday 7/4: Measurement and sampling

*No class due to Independence Day holiday. Complete required readings and remember to submit your proposed research questions assignment by Friday, 7/5 at 11:59 pm.*

- Babbie, Chapter 5, “Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement,” pp. 123-154
- Babbie, Chapter 6, “Indexes, Scales, and Typologies,” pp. 155-158, 174-175 on Likert scaling
- Babbie, Chapter 7, “The Logic of Sampling,” pp. 182-194, 201-211
Tuesday 7/9: Qualitative research, proposing research

- **In class:** workshop and finalize research questions
- **In class:** review research proposal samples
- Babbie, Chapter 10 “Qualitative Field Research,” pp. 287-321
- Babbie, Chapter 13, “Qualitative Data Analysis,” pp. 381-410, also skim section on computer programs, pp. 393-399

Thursday, 7/11: Quantitative research

- Babbie, Chapter 14, “Quantitative Analysis,” pp. 411-431
- Babbie, Chapter 16, “Statistical Analyses,” pp. 460-479, also skim from p. 480 to end

Tuesday, 7/16: Experiments

- Babbie, Chapter 8 “Experiments,” pp. 224-245

Thursday, 7/18: Surveys

- Babbie, Chapter 9, “Survey Research,” pp. 246-286
- Additional Resources on survey writing:

- Explore the General Social Survey (GSS) website: https://gss.norc.org/

**Tuesday, 7/23: Unobtrusive research: content analysis, historical/archival research, analysis of existing statistics, meta-analysis; Evaluation research:**

- Babbie, Chapter 11, “Unobtrusive Research,” pp. 329-357

**Thursday, 7/25: Community-engaged and participatory action research**


**Description of “think like a researcher” writing assignments:**

Twice during the session, you will be required to write an assessment of one news article, magazine article, or blog post that uses findings from a research study to support an argument.

You may select an article on any topic, as long as it has relevance to sociology. Examples of good sources of material for the assignment are *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Guardian*, and *The Atlantic*. Other reputable news sources are also permitted.

For each assignment, you will write 2-3 pages (typed, double spaced) responding to the following prompts:

- Describe the argument in the article or blog post. Include a full citation in ASA citation style and, if appropriate, a web link (note: you can find an ASA style guide on the course Canvas page).
- What research study does the argument use to support it? Include a full citation. Can you find the actual study? If so, read it.
- What type of data are used in the study?
- What kind of research methodology is used in the study?
- What are the main findings reported?
• Do you think the study data and methods support the conclusions being drawn in the article or blog post?
• If you can find the study, does the article or blog post fairly represent the findings from the actual study?
• What other types of data and which types of research methods do you think could be used to enhance the argument?

Description of Research Proposal Parts 1 and 2
In this course we will not actually be conducting research, but we will be thinking about the kinds of research and research methods that interest us most. You will be required to write a proposal for a research study in two parts, due on separate dates. This research proposal could be used as a proposal for an undergraduate thesis or to apply for a grant to conduct the research.

For this assignment, our research proposals will include the following:

Part 1:
1. Title
2. Abstract
3. Problem statement
4. Review of the research literature
5. Study research questions
6. References

Part 2:
7. Study research design
   a. Data collection methods
   b. Selection of subjects
   c. Ethical concerns
8. Data analysis plans
9. Dissemination plans
10. References

The entire research proposal should be about 15 pages, including a references list. It should be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font, and page numbers on all pages. Your proposal should be free of typos and grammatical problems before it is submitted.

We will be using the American Sociological Association (ASA) manual of style. See the instructions for using this manual of style on Canvas or here: http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_forASA_Style.pdf.
Specific Instructions Part 1

Title: Give your project a succinct yet illustrative title. A title like “Juvenile Justice Today” doesn’t give enough information to know what you’re studying. A title like, “How the Juvenile Justice System Robs Kids of Their Youth” is more like the title you would give an opinion piece. A research proposal title would be, “Understanding the Role of Juvenile Probation on High School Completion.”

Abstract: No more than 200 words. Provide a brief explanation of the project’s purpose, what you will do in your project, and what you hope to gain from your project. (Tip: write this after you’ve written the other components in part 1.)

Problem statement: Usually about 2 pages long, this introduction to the proposal lays out the problem that will be addressed. You may select any problem related to sociological study. In the problem statement you will want to use statistics, examples, news articles, or other ways to convince the reader that this is an important topic. Citations to the research literature are appropriate here, but do not use the research literature as a motivator. The problem should be a social problem that can be addressed or understood better through research. Do not use direct quotations from articles or other source materials. Summarize the argument in your own words.

Literature review: About 2-3 pages, this part of the proposal lets you explain what research has been conducted on this topic to date and why your particular angle on the issue is warranted. You should cite at least 3 published articles or published books (more is better). Do not use direct quotations from articles or other source materials. Summarize the findings in your own words. Make sure every article or source you cite in the text is also listed in the references.

Research questions: This will be about 1-2 pages and will describe the specific questions you intend to ask in your research proposal, along with any sub-questions. Make sure to review the materials from the syllabus on how to ask a good research question. You can add any explanatory information here about why you’ve selected those questions and how they will add to the literature, why they will help to address the problem, and how they will help to inform policy or practice on the topic. If you are proposing a community-engaged research project, it would be important to mention that here. Think about the type of research methods you might want to use in devising your questions. While this is all hypothetical and you will not actually be conducting the research, I encourage you to design a study that you could realistically carry out. Plan for the best study you could possibly conduct.

References: At the end of the proposal you should have a section called References that includes a full citation to every source material you use in your proposal. The list should be alphabetized by last name. If you use two sources from the same author, put the more current one first. We will be using the American Sociological Association’s manual of style for the citations (see link above).
Specific Instructions Part 2

When you turn in your part 2 assignment, you must attach it to part 1 so that it looks like one full research proposal. You will have the opportunity to revise Part 1 when submitting Part 2. If you do, please clearly indicate what revisions you have made (we will discuss this more in class).

Research design: This is often the longest part of the research proposal. It could be 3-4 pages long. It is where you lay out how you will use research to study the questions you have proposed. You may use any of the research methodologies we discussed in class, and if your questions warrant, you may use more than one. More and more, researchers today use “multiple methods” so that they can validate the findings from say a survey with a set of more in-depth interviews with a selected set of respondents. In the research design section, you should have three main parts.

(1) Data collection. What forms of data will you plan to use? Are you using primary or secondary data? Is it qualitative or quantitative (or both)? Tell the reader a little about the data. For instance, if you are using an existing survey, what kinds of questions does it ask about? If you are conducting interviews, give some example questions you might focus on or some topic areas you will cover. Talk about any community engagement in your data collection plans.

(2) Research subjects. Who are your research subjects or what population will your research cover? If you are collecting your own data, how will you recruit these subjects? Is the study voluntary? Will you pay them for their time? How much? If you are using secondary data, what was the sample and when were the data collected? If you are doing a survey, how will you ensure that you have a large enough sample size and response rate for your analysis?

(3) Ethical concerns. What ethical protections will you put in place for your research subjects? Are your data anonymous (you don’t know who the subjects are—data are de-identified)? Are you promising confidentiality (you know who they are, but you won’t share their names or any individual-level information in your reporting)? Are you going to file an IRB? Are there ethical considerations in terms of how you are doing the research, like if you’re doing an experiment will people be denied services that could help them? How do you justify that?

Data analysis plans: This section should be 2-3 pages talking about your plans for data analysis. What kinds of analyses do you plan to do? Think about the data you’ve collected and what are the best ways to analyze it. This would be a good place to talk about things like subgroup analysis, reliability and validity, and any limitations of your approach. For instance, if you’re studying people in one community, a limitation might be that your findings are not generalizable to other communities with different characteristics.

Dissemination plans: This should be about a page. This is where you sell why it is that different audiences would be interested in learning about your findings. Who might benefit from seeing the results of your research? Would policymakers learn from it, or possibly service providers or practitioners? Do you plan to write a long report, a short brief, a series of short briefs, offer presentations (for whom)?
**References:** At the end of the proposal you should have a section called References that includes a full citation to every source material you use in your proposal. The list should be alphabetized by last name. If you use two sources from the same author, put the more current one first. We will be using the American Sociological Association’s manual of style for the citations (see link above).