

SOCIOL 5: EVALUATION OF EVIDENCE (SPRING 2022)

Instructor: Danya Lagos (dlagos@berkeley.edu)

Office Location: Social Sciences Building #480

Office Hours: Thursdays, 10AM-12PM (calendly.com/dlagos)

Course Description: People today are barraged by information - a torrent of facts, opinions, and analyses that appear in books, in newspapers and magazines, on radio stations, through television broadcasts, on computer screens, and on phones. The pressure to make sense of that information has never been greater. This course will introduce you to the major types of data and analysis used by sociologists, and seeks to make students better consumers of social scientific research reported by the media or used in political or policymaking debates. This course will give you an overview of the tools used by social scientists and a sense of what distinguishes good research from bad. By the end of the semester, you will be able to assess the soundness of research by evaluating research designs and data collection strategies in light of research questions and theory.

Lecture: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30PM-1:59PM at Li Ka Shing Center #245

Discussion Sections: Twice per week, either M/W or T/Th, starting Jan. 31

Remote Sessions: Given campus policies in response to the Omicron variant, we will be conducting the first two weeks of our course remotely via Zoom (see links and details below) during the scheduled class times of 12:30-1:59PM. I will make recordings of these sessions available remotely via bCourses. **Starting on January 31, all lectures and discussions will be conducted in-person, unless campus policies change. Attendance at lectures is optional, and the lectures will continue to be streamed live on Zoom using the following link even after January 31st, but attendance at all discussion sections is mandatory unless otherwise noted by your GSI.**

<https://berkeley.zoom.us/j/94519726370?pwd=RFdNQzV1WVovOUE2NjRRVTBGeThWZz09>

Meeting ID: 945 1972 6370

Passcode: 275176

REQUIRED READINGS

The textbook is required: Deborah Carr, et al. 2017. *The Art and Science of Social Research*. New York: W.W. Norton. It is available at the ASUC bookstore. ISBN 978-0393911589. You may also use the more recent version of this textbook, published in 2020, but some chapter numbers will be different. Supplemental readings will be posted on bCourses.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be evaluated and graded based on two examinations, four research projects, ten online quizzes, and their participation in discussion section. The table at the end of this section notes the due dates for each assignment and the percentage of the final grade that each assignment is worth.

Exams: There will be two online, open-book examinations that can be taken remotely but must be completed individually. The midterm exam will be held on Tuesday, March 1 during the normal class time (12:30PM-1:59PM). The final will be held on Thursday, May 12 from 3PM-6PM (Location TBD). For students who would like to take the exam in-person, you may come in to take the exam on your own laptop or tablet during these times.

Projects: A key part of understanding research methods is through learning-by-doing, that is, applying textbook or lecture knowledge to the real world. Late projects will be graded down a full letter grade for each day late (e.g., An A- becomes a B-).

Quizzes: I will post 6 quizzes to bCourses over the semester. Each quiz will ask 5 multiple-choice questions based on lecture and readings. My aim is to keep you on track with course material. Your lowest score will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Participation in Discussion Section: Discussion sections are an indispensable part of the course. They provide you with opportunities to ask questions about the readings or lectures, and otherwise engage the material actively, which is hard to carry off in a large lecture. Sections are led by Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs). Section meetings and your GSI's office hours are your main points of contact. Each GSI has a mailbox in Social Sciences Building #410. The course GSIs are:

TIME SLOT AND NUMBER	GSI	LOCATION
M, W 9AM-9:59AM (108)	Benjamin Fields	Evans 31
M, W 10AM-10:59AM (109)	Thomas Gepts	Social Sciences Building 475
M, W 11AM-11:59AM (110)	Thomas Gepts	Hearst Gym 245
M, W 11AM-11:59AM (107)	Benjamin Fields	Social Sciences Building 420
M, W 2PM-2:59PM (111)	Allison Brooke	Social Sciences Building 174
M, W 3PM-3:59PM (112)	Allison Brooke	Social Sciences Building 174

T, Th 9AM-9:59AM (102)	Ángel Ross	Social Sciences Building 420
T, Th 10AM-10:59AM (103)	Will Rathje	Anthro / Art Practice 115
T, Th 11AM-11:59AM (101)	Ángel Ross	Dwinelle 262
T, Th 11AM-11:59AM (104)	Will Rathje	Haviland 12
T, Th 3PM-3:59PM (105)	Diego Aristizabal	Social Sciences Building 54
T, Th 4PM-4:59PM (106)	Diego Aristizabal	Social Sciences Building 54

Your GSI will assign 10% of your grade, based on your participation in section, lecture, and office hours. Participation involves attending section meetings, contributing to discussions, asking pertinent questions, and answering questions asked by GSIs. The quality of your contribution is far more important than the quantity.

ASSIGNMENTS, WEIGHTS, AND DUE DATES

Assignment	% of Grade	Due Dates
Quizzes (6)	10 (Lowest grade dropped)	January 27; February 8; February 22; March 15; April 19; April 26 (all at 11:59PM)
Project 1	10	February 15, 11:59PM
Midterm Exam	20	March 1, 12:30PM-1:59PM
Project 2	20	April 12, 11:59PM
Project 3	10	April 28, 11:59PM
Final Exam	20	May 12, 3PM-6PM
Participation in Discussion Section	10	Semester-Basis

COURSE POLICIES

Readings and Lecture: Students will be responsible for both material in the readings and material covered in lecture. I will post audio recordings and slides from lectures on the bCourses site. The slides are designed to be rhetorical aids and not comprehensive records of all that was said in class. Please do all the readings in a timely fashion. Each lecture date has a few readings associated with it. You will get the most out of lectures if you do these readings before the class for which they are assigned.

Accommodation: I will provide accommodation to any student who provides me with a written letter from a DSP Specialist. We must make arrangements for DSP proctoring for the exams far in advance. So, please arrange for DSP to send this letter as early in the semester as possible. If you do not have a written letter from a DSP specialist but need some form accommodation, please let me know and I will do whatever possible to provide it. I will also provide accommodation for observation of religious holidays. University policy is that such requests should be made by the second week of the semester. Please submit them by email to me, cc'ing your GSI.

Late Work: The precise due dates and where the assignments should be handed in are noted in the course. Projects turned in late will be penalized one letter grade for every day late (e.g. one day late makes a B a C). Quizzes will not be accepted late. Exams will be given on the posted dates (March 1st and May 12). If you know now that you will have a conflict with the scheduled exam times, either do not take this course or speak with me as soon as possible so that we can work out an accommodation. If you have a true unforeseen emergency that prevents you from attending the exam, contact Professor Lagos and your GSI as soon as possible to discuss an accommodation.

Honor Code: The student community at UC Berkeley has adopted the following Honor Code: "As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others. "The expectation is that you will adhere to this code. Read the entire [Berkeley Honor Code](#) for more information.

Collaboration and Independence: Reviewing lecture and reading materials can be enjoyable and enriching things to do with fellow students. This is recommended. However, all assignments are to be completed independently and should be the result of one's own independent work.

Email: Email should not be used for substantive questions about the reading or course materials. Please ask such questions in class or sign-up for office hours. I will endeavor to respond to other email messages within 48 hours during weekdays.

Office Hours: Office hours are a good time to just introduce yourself, to talk about ideas that you find particularly engaging or difficult, or to discuss problems that you may be having in the course. My office hours are held on Thursdays from 10AM-12PM in Social Sciences Building #480, but you can also choose to sign up for Zoom-based office hours. You may sign up at calendly.com/dlagos. Please sign up for a single 15-minute block at a time. Your GSI will also hold office hours.

Technology Policy: You are permitted to use a laptop during class for the purpose of note taking or consulting the readings. Please do not use your cell phone during class. Please do not text, chat, surf the web, read the news, or watch videos during class! This behavior is distracting to other students sitting around you. If you do choose to use a laptop, please sit in the back of the classroom so that your use of this technology will not distract others.

COURSE READING SCHEDULE

[1] COURSE OVERVIEW, LOGISTICS (TUES, 18 JAN)

What are the goals of this course? What do I have to do to get a good grade? What should I do if I'm on the waiting list?

[2] WHAT IS SCIENCE? WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY? (THURS, 20 JAN)

What is social science? What does science do?

ASSR Chapter 1: The Art and Science of Social Research: An Introduction

[3] THE CREATION OF SOCIOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE (TUES, 25 JAN)

How is scientific knowledge organized? What are the elements of scientific theories? How does scientific knowledge evolve?

ASSR Chapter 2: Research Foundations: Linking Sociological Theory to Research

[4] ETHICS (THURS, 27 JAN)

How can we be sure to conduct research ethically? What special requirements for ethics must we fulfill if our research involves human subjects?

ASSR Chapter 3: Ethical Issues in Social Science Research

QUIZ #1 DUE AT 11:59PM

[5] INDUCTIVE RESEARCH: GENERATING HYPOTHESES (TUES, 1 FEB)

Why can we say that Becker's article takes an inductive sociological approach? What role does theory play in his argument? In what ways does he provide an example of pure inductive research, and in what way does he deviate from pure induction? How might you build on Becker's findings to study drug users today?

Howard S. Becker. (1953). "Becoming a Marihuana User." *American Journal of Sociology* 59(3): 235-242

[6] DEDUCTIVE RESEARCH: TESTING HYPOTHESES (THURS, 3 FEB)

How do sociologists test predictions derived from theory? How do they relate empirical observations to theoretical concepts? How do we know that X causes Y?

Gretta Krippner. (2000). "How to Read a (Quantitative) Journal Article." [LINK](#)

Freese, Jeremy, Brian Powell, and Lala Carr Steelman. (1999). "Rebel Without a Cause or Effect: Birth Order and Social Attitudes." *American Sociological Review* 64(2), 207-231

[7] DEDUCTIVE RESEARCH: TESTING HYPOTHESES (TUES, 8 FEB)

How is Frymer and Grumbach's article an example of a deductive approach? Identify one of the theories they discuss and the related hypotheses. How do they test these hypotheses?

Frymer, Paul and Jacob M. Grumbach. (2021). "Labor Unions and White Racial Politics." *American Journal of Political Science* 65(1), 225-240

QUIZ #2 DUE AT 11:59PM

[8]: ABDUCTIVE RESEARCH: BUILDING THEORY (THURS, 10 FEB)

What are some alternatives to inductive and deductive research, and how do they work?

ASSR Chapter 16: Analysis of Qualitative Data

Brown, Eliza and Mary Patrick. (2018). "Time, Anticipation, and the Life Course: Egg Freezing as Temporarily Disentangling Romance and Reproduction." *American Sociological Review* 83(5), 959-982

Guest Speaker: Eliza Brown, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at UC Berkeley Sociology

[9]: MEASUREMENT: CONCEPTUALIZATION (TUES, 15 FEB)

How do we translate theoretical concepts into observable phenomena we can measure?

ASSR Chapter 4: From Concepts to Models: Hypotheses, Operationalization, and Measurement

Lagos, Danya. (2019). "Hearing Gender: Voice-Based Gender Classification Processes and Transgender Health." *American Sociological Review* 84(5), 801-827

PROJECT #1 DUE AT 11:59PM

[10] MEASUREMENT: VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY (THURS, 17 FEB)

How do we know that our measures of theoretical concepts are valid and reliable? Why and when do sociologists use composite measures? What is an index? How do you construct one?

ASSR Chapter 5: Evaluating Research: Reliability and Validity

Brocic, Miloš and Andrew Miles. (2021). "College and the 'Culture War': Assessing Higher Education's Influence on Moral Attitudes." *American Sociological Review* 86(5), 856-895

NO SECTION MEETINGS ON MON, 21 FEB OR TUES, 22 FEB

[11] SAMPLING (TUES, 22 FEB)

What should our unit of analysis be? How should we select units to observe? From what universe or population should we sample? How many observations should we take?

ASSR Chapter 6: Sampling Strategies

Herring, Chris. (2019). Complaint-Oriented Policing: Regulating Homelessness in Public Space. *American Sociological Review* 84(5), 769-800

[12] MID-TERM REVIEW (THURS, 24 FEB)

QUIZ #3 DUE AT 11:59PM

OPTIONAL * HIGHLY RECOMMENDED* SECTION MEETINGS ON MON, 28 FEB OR TUES, 1 MAR

[13] MID-TERM REVIEW (TUES, 1 MAR)

NO SECTION MEETINGS ON WEDS, 2 MAR OR THURS, 3 MAR

[14]: IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM (THURS, 3 MAR)

[15] SURVEYS (TUES, 8 MAR)

ASSR Chapter 7: Survey Research

[16] EXPERIMENTS (THURS, 10 MAR)

ASSR Chapter 8: Experimental Research

Abascal, Maria. (2020). Contraction as a Response to Group Threat: Demographic Decline and Whites' Classification of People Who are Ambiguously White. *American Sociological Review*, 85(2), 298-322

[17] ARCHIVES AND RECORDS (TUES, 15 MARCH)

ASSR Chapter 12: Materials-Based Methods

DeSoucey, Michaela and Miranda R. Waggoner. (2022). "Another Person's Peril: Peanut Allergy, Risk Perceptions, and Social Responsibility." *American Sociological Review*, Forthcoming.

QUIZ #4 DUE AT 11:59PM

[18] COMPUTATIONAL METHODS (THURS, 17 MAR)

Edelmann, Achim, Wolff, Tom, Montagne, Danielle, & Bail, Christopher A. (2020). Computational Social Science and Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 46, 61-81.

Wetts, Rachel. (2020). Models and Morals: Elite-Oriented and Value-Neutral Discourse Dominates American Organizations' Framings of Climate Change. *Social Forces* 98(3), 1339-1979

SPRING BREAK: 22 MAR AND 24 MAR

[19] STATISTICS I (TUES, 29 MAR)

ASSR Chapter 14: Univariate and Bivariate Analysis of Quantitative Data

[20] STATISTICS II (THURS, 31 MAR)

ASSR Chapter 14: Univariate and Bivariate Analysis of Quantitative Data

NO CLASS ON TUES, 5 APR

[21]: STATISTICS III (THURS, 7 APR)

ASSR Chapter 15: Multivariate and Advanced Quantitative Methods

[22] ETHNOGRAPHY (TUES, 12 APR)

ASSR Chapter 10: Ethnography

Mears, Ashley. (2015). "Working for Free in the VIP: Relational Work and the Production of Consent." *American Sociological Review* 80(6), 1099-1122

PROJECT 2 DUE AT 11:59PM

[23] IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS (THURS, 14 APR)

ASSR Chapter 11: In-Depth Interviewing

Randles, Jennifer. (2021). "Willing to Do Anything for My Kids?: Inventive Mothering, Diapers, and the Inequalities of Carework." *American Sociological Review* 86(1), 35-59

[24] COMPARING THE DIFFERENT WAYS TO GATHER DATA (TUES, 19 APR)

Small, Mario Luis. (2009). "How Many Cases Do I need?' On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research." *Ethnography* 10(1), 5-38

Khan, Shamus and Colin Jerolmack. "Saying Meritocracy and Doing Privilege." *The Sociological Quarterly* 54(1), 9-19

QUIZ #5 DUE AT 11:59PM

[25] YOU, THE RESEARCHER (THURS, 21 APR)

Hughes, Cayce C. (2018). Not Out in the Field: Studying Privacy and Disclosure as an Invisible (Trans) Man. Chapter 6 in *Other, Please Specify: Queer Methods in Sociology*. Eds. D’Lane Compton, Tey Meadow, and Kristen Schilt. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, p. 111-125

Moore, Mignon R. (2018). Challenges, Triumphs, and Praxis: Collecting Qualitative Data on Less Visible and Marginalized Populations. Chapter 10 in *Other, Please Specify: Queer Methods in Sociology*. Eds. D’Lane Compton, Tey Meadow, and Kristen Schilt. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, p. 169-184

[26] COMMUNICATING RESEARCH FINDINGS (TUES, 26 APR)

ASSR Chapter 17: Communicating Social Science Research Findings

QUIZ #6 DUE AT 11:59PM

[27] SUMMING UP (THURS, 28 APR)

PROJECT 3 DUE AT 11:59PM

[28] OPTIONAL REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM (TUES, 3 MAY)

[29] FINAL EXAM – THURSDAY, 12 MAY FROM 3PM-6PM

RESEARCH PROJECTS

PROJECT 1: IDENTIFYING INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VARIABLES

DUE FEBRUARY 15. 10% OF FINAL GRADE

Go to bCourses and download this research article:

G. Cristina Mora, Reuben Perez, and Nicholas Vargas. (2022). “Who Identifies as ‘Latinx’? The Generational Politics of Ethnoracial Labels. *Social Forces*.

Begin by telling us what kind of data the author analyzes. Then, identify 1 dependent variable and 1 independent variable. Make sure that these 2 variables are predicted to be related to each other. Copy and paste (or type) into a word document one or more short passages from the article to justify your choices of variables. Explain, in your own words, (1) why the author expects that this independent and dependent variable are related and (2) how the independent variable is actually related to the dependent variable. This project should be 2 pages maximum.

PROJECT 2: WORKING WITH QUANTITATIVE DATA

DUE APRIL 12. 20% OF FINAL GRADE

Go to https://gssdataexplorer.norc.org/d/users/sign_up and create an account.

Using this tool, you will do the following:

- Looking through the “search variables” tool, identify and choose two variables that represent measures you are interested in for gathering data on your research question. One of these variables should be independent and the other should be dependent.
- Using GSS data for the most recent year that has both of your chosen variables, create two tables, one for each variable, showing the actual distribution of observations, the central tendency, and the dispersion.
- Create one table (cross tab) that shows the bivariate association between the two variables you chose.
- Each table should be clearly labeled and should allow your reader to clearly understand what the data means.

After creating these three tables, write a 2-3 page report that discusses the following:

- Explain the rationale behind choosing your two variables and how the data will help you understand your research question.
- Describe the nature of the two variables you chose. What kind of variables are they and what is the level of measurement used to quantify the variables?
- Describe the central tendency of both variables. Use appropriate measures and also discuss what it means.

- Describe the association between the two variables. What does the data show about this relationship?
- In the end, what conclusions, if any, can you draw from the data you gathered as it pertains to your research question? What would you do next if you were to gather more survey data from the GSS to continue exploring your research question? Explain this in some detail.

PROJECT 3: APPLY THE LESSONS TO A QUESTION YOU CARE ABOUT

DUE APRIL 28. 10% OF FINAL GRADE

Write a 2-3 page report that addresses the following:

What is a question that you care about that could be answered through sociological research? Based on what we've learned in the class, what research design would be most appropriate way to get to the bottom of this question, and why? Describe other methodological approaches that would not be ideal for your project and why they are not as good as the method you have selected.

Articulate a main hypothesis, identify a source of data that would be ideal for answering your question, whether it exists or not, and describe what potential obstacles you might face in answering the question as a researcher.