

Sociology 575: Advanced Social Research Methods

University of Arizona
Spring 2014
T/TH 12:30-1:45
Social Sciences 415

"Because of [sociology's] complex and contradictory intellectual heritage, it is impossible to expect consensus within the field; the best that can be hoped for is a creative tension between different paradigms of inquiry."

- Robert Alford, *The Craft of Inquiry* (1998:14)

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INSTRUCTOR: Erin Leahey  
OFFICE: Social Science 429

PHONE: 621-9351  
EMAIL: leahey@arizona.edu  
OFFICE HOURS: T/TH 1:45-2:30

Welcome to the world of research methods! Popular thought holds that research methodology is difficult and dull. I beg to differ, and in this course I hope to relay to you my passion about research design and issues surrounding research practice. I think it is one of the most creative components of scholarship, one in which thoughts and ideas are translated into workable plans. Every research question can be addressed in a variety of ways, so there is a lot of room for researcher discretion. In this course we will learn about the craft of social science research through reading, discussion, presentations, and classroom exercises. You will be asked to demonstrate this knowledge throughout the course by critiquing particular aspects of methodology (internal validity, sampling, and measurement) in journal articles recently published in leading sociology journals. At the end of the course, your final assignment will be to write a research proposal on a topic of your choosing *or* write a more encompassing critique of a published article that I assign.

## Course Reading

You and your fellow students will get much more out of this course if you do your best to thoroughly absorb the readings assigned for each class *before* coming to class. This will allow you to participate fully and ensure lively discussion, debate, and fun. Many readings for the course can be found in these books:

Royce A. Singleton and Bruce C. Straights (2005). *Approaches to Social Research* (4th edition). New York: Oxford University Press.

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph Williams (2008). *The Craft of Research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Robert Groves, Floyd Fowler, Miack Couper, James Lepowski, Eleanor Singer, and Roger Tourangeau (2004). *Survey Methodology*. Wiley and Sons. Hoboken, NJ.

All additional readings are available through D2L. Please bring readings to class.

### Student-led Classes (SLC)

Throughout the semester, we will have student-led classes on research practice (including professional and ethical issues in sociology) on the following dates:

Thursday, February 6<sup>th</sup> – Distance between Researcher and Subject(s)

Thursday, March 27<sup>th</sup> – Transparency & Disclosure

Thursday, April 10<sup>th</sup> – Peer Review

### Important Due Dates

Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup> – Internal Validity Application Paper Due

Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> – External Validity Application Paper Due

Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> – Measurement Application Paper Due

Tuesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> – Final paper/proposal due at 10am

### Grading

Final grades will be determined as follows:

Preparation and Participation: 20%

Critical Perspective Presentation 5%

Student-led class: 10%

Application Papers: 45% (15% each)

Final paper or proposal: 20%

## **SCHEDULE OF TOPICS**

Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup> – Introduction

Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup> – Overview

Singleton and Straights, Chapter 2, "The Nature of Science"

King, Keohane, and Verba, pp. 7-9 (section 1.1.2)

Stanley Lieberman (1992). "Einstein, Renoir, and Greeley: Some Thoughts about Evidence in Sociology: 1991 Presidential Address." *American Sociological Review* 57(1): 1-15.

Thursday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> – Theoretical Framing, Significance, and Reviews of Literature  
Singleton and Straights, 3<sup>rd</sup>: 92-94; 4<sup>th</sup>: 69-72; 5<sup>th</sup>: 108-111  
Segments (front end only) of application paper articles:

Bruce G. Link, Richard M. Carpiano, and Margaret M. Weden (2013). "Can  
Honorific Awards Give Us Clues about the Connection between  
Socioeconomic Status and Mortality?" *American Sociological Review*  
78(2): only pages 192-200.

Catherine J. Turco (2010). "Cultural Foundations of Tokenism: Evidence from  
the Leveraged Buyout Industry." *American Sociological Review* 75 (6):  
only pages 894-897.

Matthew Baggetta, Hahrie Han, and Kenneth T. Andrews (2013). "Leading  
Associations: How Individual Characteristics and Team Dynamics  
Generate Committed Leaders." *American Sociological Review* 78(4): only  
pages 544-550.

### **Internal Validity**

Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup> – Causal Reasoning and Inference  
Singleton and Straights, 3<sup>rd</sup>: 65-85; 4<sup>th</sup>: 43-64; 5<sup>th</sup>: 79-104  
Stanley Lieberson and Joel Horwich (2008). "Implication Analysis: A Pragmatic  
Proposal for Linking Theory and Data in the Social Sciences."  
*Sociological Methodology* 38(1):291-313.  
CPP1: Freedman, David. 1991. "Statistical Models and Shoe Leather."  
*Sociological Methodology* 21: 291-313.

Thursday, January 30<sup>th</sup> – Experimental Designs  
Singleton and Straights, 3<sup>rd</sup>: 179-94 & 210-226; 4<sup>th</sup>: 155-71 & 187-206; 5<sup>th</sup>: 195-  
213 & 230-250  
Correll, Shelley (2004). "Constraints into Preferences: Gender, Status, and  
Emerging Career Aspirations." *American Sociological Review* 69 (1):  
93-113.

Tuesday, February 4<sup>th</sup> – Field Experiments

Singleton and Straights, 3<sup>rd</sup>: 201-206; 4<sup>th</sup>: 178-182; 5<sup>th</sup>: 220-226

Devah Pager, Bruce Western, and Bart Bonikowski (2009). Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment. *American Sociological Review* 74(5):777-799.

Devah Pager (2009): "Fields Experiments for Studies of Discrimination," pp 38-60 in Eszter Hargittai (ed) Research Confidential: Solutions to Problems Most Social Scientists Pretend they Never Have. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

CPP2 : Devah Pager (2007). "The Use of Field Experiments for Studies of Employment Discrimination: Contributions, Critiques, and Directions for the Future," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 609: 104-133.

Thursday, February 6<sup>th</sup> – SLC: Distance between Researcher and Subject(s)

Tuesday, February 11<sup>th</sup> – Quasi-experimental Designs (Observational Studies)

King, Keohane, and Verba, pp. 168-207

Thomas Cook and Donald Campbell (1979). *Quasi Experimentation*. Chicago: Rand McNally Publishing Company. Pp. 50-59.

CPP3: Stanley Lieberson (1985). *Making it Count: The Improvement of Social Research and Theory*. University of California Press. Chapter 3 & 4.

Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup> – Qualitative Research

James Mahoney (2000). "Strategies of Causal Inference in Small-N Analysis." *Sociological Methods Research* 28(4): 387-424.

Howard Becker (1958). "Problems of Inference and Proof in Participant Observation." *American Sociological Review* 23(6): 652-660.

King, Keohane, and Verba, pp. 34-74; 208-228

Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> – Selectivity

Barbara Geddes (1990). "How the Cases you Choose Affect the Answers you Get." *Political Analysis* 31(4): 465-476.

King, Keohane, and Verba, pp. 115-139

Thursday, February 20<sup>th</sup> – no class

Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> – Mechanisms

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

Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup> – Internal Validity Application Paper Due

Bruce G. Link, Richard M. Carpiano, and Margaret M. Weden (2013). "Can Honorific Awards Give Us Clues about the Connection between Socioeconomic Status and Mortality?" *American Sociological Review* 78(2): 192-212.

### External Validity

Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> – Sampling: Overview and Rationale

Singleton and Straights, 3<sup>rd</sup>: 135-141; 4<sup>th</sup>: 111-118; 5<sup>th</sup>: 150-158

Robert Groves et al. (2004). *Survey Methodology*. John Wiley and Sons. Hoboken, NJ. Chp 3: "Target Populations, Sampling Frames, and Coverage Error."

CPP4: Morris Zelditch, Jr. 1961. "Can you Really Study an Army in the Laboratory?" pp. 528-539 in Amitai Etzioni (ed) *A Sociological Reader on Complex Organizations*. Holt, Reinhart, and Winston.

Thursday, March 6<sup>th</sup> – Probability Sampling Procedures

Singleton and Straights, 3<sup>rd</sup>: 141-172; 4<sup>th</sup>: 118-147; 5<sup>th</sup>: 158-188

Thomas Cook and Donald Campbell (1979). "External Validity." Pp. 70-80 in *Quasi Experimentation*. Chicago: Rand McNally Publishing Company.

Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> – Sample Selectivity, Response & Coverage

Floyd Fowler (2009). "Nonresponse," Chapter 4 in *Survey Research Methods*. Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.

King, Keohane, and Verba, Chapter 4 (review pp. 114-139, read 139-149)

Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup> – Non-probability Sampling and Case Selection

Singleton and Straights, 3<sup>rd</sup>: 331-337, 4<sup>th</sup>: 312-14, 321-25, 5<sup>th</sup>: 360-62, 369-374

Mitchell Duneier (2011). "How Not to Lie with Ethnography." *Sociological Methodology*, 41:1-11.

Mario Small (2008). "Lost in Translation: How Not to Make Qualitative Research More Scientific." *National Science Foundation*. Pp. 165-71 in Michèle Lamont and Patricia White (eds.), *Workshop on Interdisciplinary Standards for Systematic Qualitative Research*. Washington, DC: National Science Foundation.

CPP5: Mario Small (2009). "How Many Cases Do I Need? On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-based Research." *Ethnography* 10(1): 5-38.

~ SPRING BREAK, ENJOY! ~

Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> – External Validity Application Paper Due

Catherine J. Turco (2010). "Cultural Foundations of Tokenism: Evidence from the Leveraged Buyout Industry." *American Sociological Review* 75 (6): 894-913.

Thursday, March 27<sup>th</sup> – SLC: Transparency & Disclosure

### **Concepts & Measures**

Tuesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> – Measurement: Overview

Singleton and Straights, 3<sup>rd</sup>: 99-113; 4<sup>th</sup>: 76-90; 5<sup>th</sup>: 115-130

Howard Becker (1998). Tricks of the Trade. Chapter 4: "Concepts"

Thursday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> – Questionnaire Design

Singleton & Straights, "Survey Instrumentation." chp10 in 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>; chp 9 in 4<sup>th</sup> ed

Nora Cate Schaeffer and Stanley Presser (2003). "The Science of Asking

Questions." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 29: 65-88.

Tuesday, April 8<sup>th</sup> – Researcher Influence and Design Effects

Singleton and Straights, 3<sup>rd</sup>: 194-201; 4<sup>th</sup>: 171-178; 5<sup>th</sup>: 213-220

Robert Groves et al. (2004). Survey Methodology. "Survey Interviewing," chp 9

Anthony Paik (2013). "Social Isolation in America: An Artifact." *American Sociological Review*. 78(3): 339-360.

Thursday, April 10<sup>th</sup> – SLC: Peer Review

Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> – Validity and Reliability

Singleton and Straights, 3<sup>rd</sup>: 113-129; 4<sup>th</sup>: 90-107; 5<sup>th</sup>: 130-147

King, Keohane, and Verba, pp. 150-168

Howard Schuman (2008). Method and Meaning in Polls and Surveys. Chapter

2: "The Primordial Distinction between Open and Closed Attitude

Questions." Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

CPP6: Richard Lewontin (2000). "Sex, Lies, and Social Science," pp. 229-269 in *It Ain't Necessarily So: The Dream of the Human Genome and Other Illusions*.

New York: New York Review of Books (including responses/rejoinders).

Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup> – Qualitative Measurement

Weston, Cynthia, Terry Gandell, Jacinthe Beauchamp, Lynn McAlpine, Carol Wiseman, and Cathy Beauchamp. 2001. "Analyzing Interview Data: The Development and Evolution of a Coding System." *Qualitative Sociology* 24(3): 381-400.

Allison J. Pugh (2013). "What good are interviews for thinking about culture? Demystifying interpretive analysis." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 1(1): 42-68.

CPP7: Stephen Vaisey (2013). "Is interviewing compatible with the dual-process model of culture?" *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*. doi: 10.1057/ajcs.2013.8

Allison J. Pugh (2013). "The divining rod of talk: Emotions, contradictions and the limits of research." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*. doi: 0.1057/ajcs.2013.15

Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> – Measurement Application Paper Due

Matthew Baggetta, Hahrie Han, and Kenneth T. Andrews (2013). "Leading Associations: How Individual Characteristics and Team Dynamics Generate Committed Leaders." *American Sociological Review* 78(4): 544-573.

Thursday, April 24<sup>th</sup> – no class

### **Mixing Methods**

Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup> – Inherent Tensions and Perceived Challenges

Lisa Pearce (2002) "Integrating Survey & Ethnographic Methods For Systematic Anomalous Case Analysis." *Sociological Methodology*, 32(1): 103-132.

CPP8: Leahey, Erin (2007). "Convergence and Confidentiality? Limits to the Implementation of Mixed Methodology." *Social Science Research* 36(1): 149-158.

### **Embarking on your own Research**

Thursday, May 1<sup>st</sup> – Developing Good Research Questions

King, Keohane, and Verba, pp. 12-19

Booth et al. chapters 3 & 4

Robert K. Merton (1982). "Notes on Problem-Finding in Sociology," Chapter 2 in Rosenblatt and Gieryn (eds) *Social Research and the Practicing Profession*. Lanham, MD: University Press.

Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup> – Claims and Evidence

Booth et al. chp 7-11 (pp. 103-169)