SOC 394 RESEARCH PRACTICUM
Fall 2016 Project Descriptions

Project Title: Data Practices Among American Indian Tribes
Researcher: Desi Rodriguez-Lonebear (Dual PhD Candidate)

This project explores the data divide among American Indian tribes and tribal communities. Through the development and collection of a tribal data practices survey, it seeks to understand what types of data or information tribes currently use, how tribes access, collect, manage, and report these data, and what kinds of data they need. The student will assist in editing the survey questions, piloting the survey, collecting the survey, and potentially engage in preliminary data cleaning and database development.

Project title: Media discourse on end-of-life in the U.S.
Researcher: Simone Rambotti (PhD Candidate)

This project examines the discourse on end-of-life crises (e.g. the cases of Nancy Cruzan and Terri Schiavo) on American media. Social sciences have surprisingly neglected these events. In fact, analyses of media reporting of coma and permanent vegetative state are almost entirely confined to neurologists and other medical scientists. This is rather unfortunate, as two fundamental changes make this endeavor especially salient: first, the advancement in medical science and technology, which increased the human capacity to intervene in the process of dying, and second, the unprecedented levels of population ageing all over the world, which forces many individuals to face ethical dilemmas as they approach late life and end of life. These can be highly divisive topics, which reveal deep ideological divides, which in turn can affect the political feasibility to implement health policies. The students will assist in developing a coding scheme, and coding the textual data. Students will learn advanced research methods, such as multinomial logistic regression analysis, and network analysis.

Project title: Environmental Governance and the Salmon Industry in Chile
Researcher: Ricardo Rivas (PhD Candidate)

Farmed salmon is a very important economic activity in Chile. At the global level, this country is the second exporter of salmon after Norway. Aquaculture and this industry in specific has a high environmental impact. This research is trying to shed light on how a developing country like Chile has managed environmental issues under a neoliberal economic regime. The sociopolitical process that triggered a new aquaculture legislation in 2009 is analyzed using theoretical frameworks coming from environmental sociology and international political economy. The students will searching for relevant pieces of news in two trade journals. (The student will be given specific key words and periods of time.) Students will also convert each piece of news in a suitable format and classify each piece of news according to the criteria given by the researcher. Students will analyze the collected material and apply defined codes using software for qualitative analysis (MAXQDA).
Project title: Restorative Themes in the Troubled Teen Industry
Researcher: Andrew Davis (PhD Candidate)

In the last twenty years, a multi-billion dollar industry has emerged for America’s troubled upper-class youth. At the core of this industry are therapeutic boarding schools (TBS) – new residential programs that mix therapy with elite education and activities. These schools tend to theme themselves in particular ways that convey messages about the organization to potential customers. In an “experience economy,” these programs sell not only rehabilitation, but also a set of experiences that facilitate self-transformation and identity change. This project examines these themes systematically and explores the extent to which they signal legitimate ways of restoring damaged, or “spoiled,” identities through survivalist, back-to-nature settings and therapeutic models. We will collect data from the schools listed on the National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs directory via the program websites and phone-interviews with program staff. The primary responsibilities of the undergraduate RA will be to assist in the collection and coding of web content. In addition, we will involve the research assistant in integral aspects of data analysis. As such, the undergraduate RA can expect to improve his/her skills in data collection and analysis as well as research design.

To register for SOC 394, please contact Raquel Fareio at pinar@email.arizona.edu or 520-621-3531.