

Sociology 397a
Poverty in Tucson Field Workshop
Meeting Times: Tuesday & Thursday 12:30-1:45
Location: Modern Languages 210

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Teaching Assistant:
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Course Description

Tucson has one of the highest poverty rates among major metropolitan areas in the United States. Together with the City of Tucson, the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and the nonprofit community of Tucson, this course aims to improve our understanding of the living standards of the poor in Tucson and help identify strategies for Tucson to better alleviate the problem of poverty. Students enrolled in this course will participate in the data collection and analysis for this collaborative project. Students will gain valuable skills such as how to conduct an in-person interview, how to record and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data, how to work as a member of a team, how to work with people from a variety of backgrounds, and more generally how to answer a question of interest in a systematic and evidence-based manner. These skills will be useful to students interested in pursuing a wide range of careers in public services, nonprofits, public policy, politics, marketing, business, and academia.

The course explores poverty and related problems of inequality and vulnerability in American cities, and in Tucson in particular, through a combination of in-class instruction and first-hand research experience. The course is structured in four parts. Part 1 involves traditional instruction in the classroom and covers topics related to urban poverty in America. In addition, Part 1 will introduce students to survey research and train them to be effective survey fieldworkers. Part 2 involves fieldwork, where students will be responsible for soliciting randomly identified households to participate in the project and conducting interviews with willing participants. Part 3 returns to the classroom, where we will spend time in small groups discussing the findings and preparing to report on the data. Part 4 concludes the course, with practice presentations of data reports in the classroom followed by participation in a community forum where students report on the experiences and findings to the public.

Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to better understand the problem of poverty in Tucson. We will work to accomplish that objective several ways, including by improving your understanding of social, economic, and political issues related to poverty, introducing you to the work of sociologists in the field and training you to conduct field work, and working with various actors and institutions in the city of Tucson by providing data to aid them in their efforts to address poverty. Participating in this course will require substantial work outside of the classroom and in doing so will provide opportunities to develop critical skills for interacting with diverse populations. Completion of this course will aid in your development of critical thinking, complex reasoning, primary research, and written and oral communication skills.

Grading

Course grades will be determined as follows:

Requirement	Time Period	Percentage
Human subjects protection training*	Completed by January 30 th	Required
Attendance and classroom participation	January 6 th -February 12 th and April 1 st -April 23 rd	10%
Exam	January 29 th	10%
Field interviews	February 16 th -March 27 th	50%
Data compilation, organization, and analysis	April 31 st	15%
Group presentations	TBD	15%

Human Subjects Protecting Training

Students will be required to complete two online trainings, CITI's Basic Human Subjects in the Social Sciences training and the Conflict of Interest training. All researchers are UA are required to do so. If the two requiring trainings are not completed (Basic Human Subjects in the Social Sciences and Conflict of Interest) by January 30th, students will be administratively dropped from the course.

Attendance and Participation

This course is organized as a hybrid of traditional classroom instruction and first-hand field research. For the first 6 weeks of the course, class will meet as officially scheduled. Field work follows for 7 weeks. Beginning on April 1st, we will return to the classroom to examine the data from the field. During these time periods, you can miss 2 (two) class periods without losing any points. Absences pre-approved by the Dean of Students office, including holidays or special events observed by organized religions and

verified illnesses, will not count against you if you provide sufficient documentation. For the 7 weeks in the field (which includes Spring Break), you are responsible for managing your fieldwork in your two-person team and reporting to the Teaching Assistant.

In addition to your attendance, active participation is required. For instance, we will engage in several role playing exercises during our training on field methods. Students are required to actively engage with classroom discussions and activities. Records of participation generated through in-class activities will be kept and evaluated to determine your Attendance and Participation grade.

Exam

At the end of Part 1 of the course, January 21st, students will be given a take home exam on the topic of poverty in Tucson. Questions may include multiple choice and short and long essay forms. The take home exam is due in class, on Tuesday, January 26th.

Field Interviews

Students will be assigned to teams of two based on availability, access to transportation, language skills, and safety concerns. Each team will be assigned to a neighborhood within the City of Tucson. Each team will be provided with a list of addresses within that neighborhood from which the team will be expected to conduct 12 interviews. The interviews must be conducted as a team with one team member conducting the interview and the other taking notes; these responsibilities should be altered between the two team members.

Students will be evaluated for this portion in the course in three ways. First, the team will be given a single grade based on the number of interviews conducted:

- **12 Interviews = A;**
- **10-11 Interviews = B;**
- **8-10 Interviews = C;**
- **6-7 Interviews = D;**
- **< 6 Interviews = E).**

Second, a series of evaluations will be conducted in 2 ways: 1) Each team member will be asked to evaluate his/her own contribution and his/her team member's contribution to the field work. 2) The preceptors will each conduct two evaluations with each team, first a preliminary evaluation to help the teams get started and a later final evaluation of your efforts. These forums will be evaluated by the instructor and teaching assistant in calculating your individual grade for the Field Interviews.

Third, while in the field you will keep a regular log of your activities. If in the event your team spends the requisite number of hours in the field and fail to obtain the 12 interviews due to a highly unusual refusal or non-response rate, your log will document that you tried. Remember that you will be expected to spend 6-9 hours in the field a week for six weeks. That is a minimum of 36 hours, in which obtaining 12 interviews has been calculated to be reasonably possible. If you are unable to obtain those 12 but are able to document your time in the field, we will review your grade and make the required adjustments. Together these three methods of evaluation will result in a grade for each team member.

Data compilation, Organization, and Analysis

In addition to collecting the goal of 12 interviews, you will be required to enter data on those interviews, including preparing and submitting audio files and their transcriptions to D2L, entering data in an online Qualtrics web survey, and completing interview logs and related paperwork. The quality and completeness of these records will be checked and used to evaluate your work. Quality Control checks will be randomly performed to ensure that your work is complete and accurate. Any falsification of field logs, interview materials, or data will result in an immediate failure in the course and reporting to the Dean of Students office.

Group Posters and Community Forum

At the end of the course, your census tract group – a combination of three-four two-person teams – will be responsible for preparing a poster summary on your findings. 50% of your Group Presentation grade will come in the form of a practice run in the last week of the course. Your team will present a poster with a 10-15 summary speech to the entire class. Dr. Mayer will give you feedback, from which you will have to improve your poster and send it back to him digitally.

50% of this grade will come from a presentation made in the Community Forum, which will be open to the public and involve a question and answer section. The Community Forum will be held on Thursday, May 12th from 1-4pm at Habitat for Humanity, Tucson up Mountain Ave. from campus. All students' friends and family who may be in town for graduation are welcome. This is a required event. Students may have conflicting finals scheduled at the same time. If this is the case, an excuse from the Dean of Students' Office will be provided so that students can attend the Forum.

Honors Credit

If you would like to receive Honors credit for this course, please consult with the instructor within the first two weeks of the course.

Academic Integrity

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded effort must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Any falsification of a student's interview log, interviews, or data log will result in a failure for the course and possible sanctions from the Dean of Students Office. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies-and-codes/code-academic-integrity>

Classroom and Field Behavior

Students are expected to observe the UA Student Code of Conduct as it pertains to classroom behavior (<http://azregents.asu.edu/rrc/Policy%20Manual/5-308-Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct.pdf>) and should be familiar with UA politics against threatening behavior by students (<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/accountability/disruptive-student-behavior>). Furthermore, as representatives of the University engaging in fieldwork in the City of Tucson, we expect you to act in a professional manner and uphold the standards of behavior set for University of Arizona students.

Special Needs and Accommodations

It is the University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let the instructor know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to establish reasonable accommodations.

Please be aware that the accessible table and chairs in this room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not usable.

Course Materials

One book is required for this course and is available as an electronic book through the Library:

Iceland, John. 2013. *Poverty in America: A Handbook 3rd Edition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Course Costs

We expect that you will spend somewhere in the range of \$20-\$40 dollars in fuel costs for transportation to and from your surveyed households. This course does not require that you purchase any textbooks, which would likely cost more than our anticipated costs for fuel. We will work with you to identify the most efficient routes to lower your expenses.

Course Schedule

Part 1: In the Classroom

The first three weeks of the course will serve as an introduction to the problem of poverty and its related effects on the City of Tucson. The following three weeks will serve as training and preparation for conducting the fieldwork. Please come to class having completed the assigned readings and prepared to actively participate in discussion.

Week One: Introduction to Poverty

January 13th: *Reading: Iceland, John. Poverty in America. Chapters 1 and 3.*

Week Two: Understanding Poverty

January 19th: *Reading: Iceland, John. Poverty in America. Chapters 4 and 5.*

January 21th: *Reading: Iceland, John. Poverty in America. Chapters 6 and 7.*

Take Home Exam Handed Out

Week Three: Survey Methods

January 27th: Introduction to Survey Work

Reading: <http://mailer.fsu.edu/~slosh/MethodsInterviewersManual.html>

Take Home Exam Due

January 29nd: Introduction to Informed Consent / Review of Survey Instrument

Reading: <http://ocr.arizona.edu/hspp/manual>

January 30th: Due: Online Completion of CITI Human Subjects Training

Week Four: Preparing for the Field

February 2nd: Solicitation Guidelines and Probing/Feedback

February 4th: Survey Demonstrations and Practice

Week Five: Practice in the Field

February 9th: Final Protocol Review and Tract Assignments

February 11th: No Class – Each Team Must Complete 1 Interview Before 2/16

Week Six: Let's Get Started

February 16th: Census Tract Team Meetings, Locations TBD

February 18th: Final Wrap and Field Work Overview

Part 2: Fieldwork

Part 2 of this course involves fieldwork conducted independently in teams of two. You will be assigned a group and provided with a list of household addresses to contact and request participation in the survey. You will coordinate with the Teaching Assistant to receive the necessary materials and equipment weekly. You will be responsible for keeping individual logs on your activities in the field.

Each group will be required to check in with the teaching assistant at least once during Part 2. Unless otherwise scheduled during the semester, either the instructor or the teaching assistant will be in our scheduled classroom at the designated time for these check ins. Please schedule your meeting at least one week in advance to ensure that there is enough time. These meetings will allow you to discuss any challenges you are experiencing in the field. Both the teaching assistant and instructor will regularly be available by email and potentially phone/text for emergencies, but these scheduled meetings will allow for more discussion.

Week Seven: Field Work (February 23rd – 27th)

Goals: Obtain Two Interviews per Team

Transcribe One Interview

Week Eight: Field Work (March 2nd -6th)

Goals: Obtain Two Interviews per Team

Transcribe One Interview

Week Nine: Field Work (March 9th – 13th)

Goals: Obtain Two Interviews per Team

Transcribe One Interview

Week Ten: Spring Break (March 16th – 20th)

No Classes

Week Eleven: Field Work (March 23rd – March 27th)

Goals: Obtain Two Interviews per Team

Transcribe One Interview

Week Twelve: Field Work (March 30th – April 3rd)

Goals: Obtain Two Interviews per Team

Transcribe One Interview

Week Thirteen: Field Work (April 6th – 10th)

Goals: Obtain Two Interviews per Team

Transcribe One Interview

Part 3: Data Analysis

Part 3 of the course will bring students back into the classroom. If additional interviews still need to be completed, students must do so outside the normal class meeting time. Once we return to the classroom, we will begin discussion of students' findings from the field and break up into small groups to begin preparing analyses of the data.

Week Fourteen: Data Discussion

April 14th: Reporting on Field Experiences

April 16nd: Organizing Data and Understanding Results

Week Fifteen: Thematic Groups

April 21th: Identification of Thematic Groups

April 23th: Working in Groups to Identify Key Ideas

Week Sixteen: Data Analysis

April 28th: Basics of Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

April 30th: Last Group Prep Day

Part 4: Presentation Prep

For Finals Week, we will have practice group presentations in preparation for the community forum where students will present to the general public the results of their field research. Participation in the group presentations is mandatory, as is participation at the community forum.

Week Seventeen: Preparing Presentations for the City

May 4th: Group Presentations

Final Reviews due to Instructor by May 9th

Finals Week: Community Forum

May 12th: Habitat for Humanity Tucson,