**SOC-S558**

**Class number 3191**

**Advanced Research Techniques, Koji Chavez**

**Thursday 9:00 AM — 11:15 AM**

**Sheldon Stryker Room, SISR 201**

**Office hours:** Thursday 11:15-12:45 PM (same room)

**Virtual office hours option**: [calendly.com/kochavez/20min](http://calendly.com/kochavez/20min)

**Email:** [kochavez@iu.edu](mailto:kochavez@iu.edu)

**Course description**: This course is designed to acquaint you with major issues in the design of sociological research, and the collection and analysis of sociologically-relevant data. We will begin by addressing core concepts in research design that cut across methods: developing a question, causality, sampling, measurement, and research ethics. We will then turn to a discussion of issues that pertain to specific data collection and analysis techniques. By its nature, this course provides an overview of several topics rather than in-depth coverage of a few; several useful methods, including focus groups and demographic techniques will not be covered.

**Course organization**: Most class sessions will involve a combination of structured, formal presentation, individual and group exercises, and class discussion. For each topic, I will begin by presenting material that defines the scope of the topic, synthesizes and outlines the positions taken by the authors of the readings, and introduces contemporary debates. We will then discuss those debates, often in the context of a discussion of relevant empirical research. I encourage you to participate actively throughout the course—ask questions, challenge what class members (including me) have said, relate the material to your own research projects. The more we all participate, the more interesting the class will be.

**Course objectives**:

1. To introduce common elements of research design that transcend specific data collection approaches.
2. To provide a basic overview of the goals, procedures, strengths, and limitations of major sociological approaches to data collection.
3. To provide a forum for the discussion of controversies about sociological research, including debates about specific design and data collection decisions.
4. To teach you how to formulate researchable questions, design research projects appropriate to answering them, and present your plans effectively.
5. To improve your skills in reading and critiquing sociological research.
6. To provide insight into what the discipline of sociology is by exploring how it is practiced.

**Course requirements**: I expect all class members to complete the required readings for each week before class and to come prepared for class discussion. Written requirements include weekly responses to the readings (included in your class participation grade), three formal written assignments (collectively worth 30% of your final grade), and a research proposal (worth 50% of your final grade). The weekly discussion memos are designed to give you an opportunity to reflect on each week’s readings and to develop questions for class discussion. The three formal written assignments are designed to orient your work on your proposal.

In addition to these written requirements, all class members are required to participate in a research group that meets throughout the semester (most often during class) to discuss your emerging ideas and that reviews preliminary drafts of research questions and research proposals. Research is a collective enterprise that involves collaboration of thought and action. It is important that you become accustomed to this aspect of academic work early in your careers. Although this requirement is not graded, you will be severely penalized for failing to participate actively and effectively. Class participation (discussion memos, participation in class discussion, constructive feedback to other class members) accounts for the final 20% of your grade.

If you have a positive COVID-19 test, have COVID-like symptoms, or have been instructed to quarantine you should not attend class. To ensure that you can do this, attendance in this class will be taken but will be prorated and will not lower a student’s grade when that student was absent due to compliance with campus isolation expectations. Please work with your instructor to determine a path to continue your progress in the class during these absences, in whatever way the instructor determines fits within course objectives.

The three written assignments (besides the proposal) are:

1. Identification of your research interests with an annotated bibliography of relevant sources (10%).
2. Specification of your research question with a focused discussion of the answers that have been given by previous studies (10%).
3. Description of the research design you will use to answer your research question(s) (10%).

**Course readings**:

One book is required; 8 are recommended. The required book is:

Menard, Scott. 2002. Longitudinal Research, 2nd edition. Sage University Paper Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, Vol. 76. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

The recommended books are listed below. Most of the recommended books cover one topic from the course in depth; the Salganik book offers a contemporary take on sociological research methods.  These books will be especially useful to those of you who have not taken a research methods course in a while. All other course readings are available through the course Canvas page.

Carmines, Edward G. and Richard A. Zeller. 1979. Reliability and Validity Assessment. Sage University Paper Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, Vol. 17. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Fowler, Floyd Jr. 2008. Survey Research Methods, Fourth Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Henry, Gary T. 1990. Practical Sampling. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Jorgensen, Danny L. 1989. Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Salganik, Matthew J. 2018. Bit by Bit: Social Research on the Digital Age. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Spector, Paul E. 1981. Research Designs. Sage University Paper Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, Vol. 23. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Weiss, Robert S. 1994. Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies. New York: The Free Press.

I did not order these books through the bookstore; you should be able to purchase inexpensive copies through Amazon.com or another on-line bookseller. Supplementary readings on course topics are available on request.

**The classroom environment:**

As your instructor, one of my responsibilities is to create a positive learning environment for all students. Bias incidents (events or comments that target an individual or group based on age, color, religion, disability, race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status or veteran status) are not appropriate in our classroom or on campus. Please bring to my attention any incidents in this classroom that make you feel uncomfortable or threatened.

BIAS INCIDENT REPORTING: Bias-based incident reports can be made by students, faculty, and staff. Any act of discrimination or harassment based on race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability can be reported through any of the options: 1) fill out an online report at <https://reportincident.iu.edu/>; 2) call the Dean of Students Office at (812) 855-8187. Reports can be made anonymously at [https://reportincident.iu.edu](https://reportincident.iu.edu/).

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT & TITLE IX: IU policy prohibits sexual misconduct in any form, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, sexual exploitation, and dating and domestic violence. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help. If you are seeking help and would like to speak to someone confidentially, you can make an appointment with the [IU Sexual Assault Crisis Services](https://healthcenter.indiana.edu/counseling/sexual-assault/index.html) at (812) 855-8900, or contact a Confidential Victim Advocate at (812) 856-2469 or [cva@indiana.edu](mailto:cva@indiana.edu).

University policy requires me to share certain information brought to my attention about potential sexual misconduct with the campus Deputy Sexual Misconduct & Title IX Coordinator or the University Sexual Misconduct & Title IX Coordinator. In that event, those individuals will work to ensure that appropriate measures are taken, and resources are made available. Protecting student privacy is of utmost concern, and information will only be shared with those that need to know to ensure the University can respond and assist. I encourage you to visit <http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/index.html> to learn more.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMODATION: Indiana University is dedicated to ensuring that students with disabilities (e.g., chronic health, neurodevelopmental, neurological, sensory, psychological & emotional, including mental health, etc.) have the support services and reasonable accommodations needed to provide equal access to academic programs. To request an accommodation, you must establish your eligibility by working with Disability Services for Students (iubdss@indiana.edu or 812-855-7578). Additional information can be found at accessibility.iu.edu. Note that services are confidential, may take time to put into place, and are not retroactive; captions and alternate media for print materials may take three or more weeks to get produced. Please contact your campus office as soon as possible if accommodations are needed.

## ****Course schedule and readings****

### ****Aug. 24     The Elements of Research Design****

* Angrist, Joshua, and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2008. “Questions about Questions” In Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist’s Companion. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
* Smith, Joel. 1991. “A Methodology for Twenty-First Century Sociology.” Social Forces 70(1):1-17.
* Leahey, Erin. 2008. “Methodological Memes and Mores: Toward a Sociology of Social Research.” Annual Review of Sociology 34:33-53.
* Leifer, Eric M. 1992. “Denying the Data: Learning from the Accomplished Sciences.” Sociological Forum 7: 283-299. (Ok to skim the discussion of Feynman.)
* Optional:
  + Van Maanen, John, Jesper B. Sørensen and Terence R. Mitchell. 2007. “The Interplay Between Theory and Methods.” Academy of Management Review 32: 1145-1154.

**Preparation:**

* Before doing the readings, take a minute to reflect on what you think the research process is like. What is the relationship between theory, methods, and data? Where does good research begin? Sketch out the research process on paper.
* What are the goals of social research? How does research design depend on those goals?
* Leifer suggest that if you don’t like your results, you should “deny the data.” Do you agree?

### ****Aug. 31     Developing Research Questions****

* Becker, Howard S. 2007 [1986]. “Terrorized by the Literature.” Pp. 135-49 in Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
* Firebaugh, Glenn. 2008. “Chapter 1: The First Rule.” In Seven Rules for Social Research. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
* Jensen, Joli. 2018. “Lessons on the Craft of Scholarly Reading.” The Chronicle of Higher Education August 5, 2018.
* Maxwell, Joseph A. 2013. “Goals: Why Are You Doing This Study?” and “Research Questions: What Do You Want to Understand?” Pp. 23-38 and pp. 73-86 in In Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**Example articles to discuss:**

* Nagel, Joane. 1995. “American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Politics and the Resurgence of Identity.” American Sociological Review 60(6):947-65.
* Harris, David R. and Jeremiah Joseph Sim. 2002. “Who is Multiracial? Assessing the Complexity of Lived Race.” American Sociological Review 67(4):614-27.

**Preparation:**

For Harris and Sim (2002) and Nagel (1995), answer the questions posed by Smith (1991).

### ****Sep. 7      Defining Cases, Sampling, and Generalization****

Come prepared to present your research question in a small group

* Hibberts, Mary, R. Burke Johnson and Kenneth Hudson. 2009. “Common Survey Sampling Techniques.” Pp. 53‐74 in Handbook of Survey Methodology for the Social Sciences, ed. L. Gideon. Springer.
* 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.
* Walton, John. 1992. “Making the Theoretical Case.” Pp. 121-37 in C. C. Ragin
* and H. S. Becker (eds.) What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Sociological Inquiry. New York: Cambridge.
* Yin, Robert K. 2009. Case Study Research: Design and Methods, pp. 2-21, 25-40, 46-64. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Review articles by Harris and Sim, and Nagel

Recommended background:

* Henry, Gary T. 1990. Practical Sampling. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

### ****Sep. 14    Catch Up and Review****

**Assignment #1 due: Identifying your research interests**

**No discussion memo due**

* Zuckerman, Ezra W. 2017. “On Genre: A Few Tips to Article-Writers.”

Preparation: Be prepared to discuss your assigned "genre", including its pros and cons, and to summarize the framing of your assigned article.

### ****Sep. 21    Measurement****

* Krosnick, Jon A., Charles M. Judd, and Bernd Wittenbrink. 2005. “The Measurement of Attitudes.” Pp. 21-76 in D. Albarracin, B. T. Johnson, and M. P. Zanna (eds.) Handbook of Attitudes. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
* Becker, Howard S. 1998. “Concepts.” Pp. 109‐145 in Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While You're Doing It. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
* Charmaz, Kathy. 1983. "The Grounded Theory Method: An Explication and Interpretation." Pp. 109-126 in R.M. Emerson (ed.) Contemporary Field Research: A Collection of Readings. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
* Carmines, Sniderman, and Easter. 2011. “On the Meaning, Measurement, and Implications of Racial Resentment. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. 634(March):98-116.

**Examples:**

* Cheng, Simon and Brian Powell. 2015. “Measurement, Methods, and Divergent Patterns: Reassessing the Effects of Same-Sex Parents.” Social Science Research 52:615-26.
* DiGrazia, Joseph. 2015. “Using Internet Search Data to Produce State-level Measures: The Case of Tea Party Mobilization.” Sociological Methods & Research 46(4):898-925.

**Recommended:**

* Carmines, Edward G. and Richard A. Zeller. 1979. Reliability and Validity Assessment. Sage University Paper Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, Vol. 17. Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications.

### ****Sep. 28    Causality****

* Freese, Jeremy and J. Alex Kevern. 2013. “Types of Causes.” Pp. 27-41 in S. L. Morgan (ed.) Handbook of Causal Analysis for Social Research. Dordrecht: Springer.
* Mahoney, James, Erin Kimball, and Kendra L. Koivu. 2009. “The Logic of Historical Explanation in the Social Sciences.” Comparative Political Studies 42(1):114-46.

**Examples:**

* Leahey, Erin. 2007. “Not by Productivity Alone: How Visibility and Specialization Contribute to Academic Earnings.” American Sociological Review 72(4):533-61.
* Armstrong, Elizabeth A. and Suzanna M. Crage. 2006. “Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth.” American Sociological Review 71(5):724-51.

**Recommended background:**

* Spector, Paul E. 1981. Research Designs. Sage University Paper Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, Vol. 23. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

### ****Oct. 5    Experimental and Nonexperimental Designs****

* Jackson, Michelle and D. R. Cox. 2013. “The Principles of Experimental Design and Their Application in Sociology.” Annual Review of Sociology 39:27-49.
* Menard, Scott. 2002. Longitudinal Research, 2nd edition. Sage University Paper Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, Vol. 76. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. pp. 1-49.

Examples:

* Correll, Shelley J., Stephen Benard, and In Paik. 2007. “Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?” American Journal of Sociology 112(5):1297-1338.
* Halpern-Manners, Andrew, John Robert Warren, James M. Raymo, and D. Adam Nicholson. 2015. “The Impact of Work and Family Life Histories on Economic Well-Being at Older Ages.” Social Forces 93(4):1369-96.

### ****Oct. 12     Ethnography****

**Assignment #2 due:** Specifying your research question

**No discussion memo due**

* Burawoy, Michael. 1991. "The Extended Case Method." Pp. 271-287 in Michael Burawoy et al., Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
* Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. “Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research.” Pp. 1-16 in Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
* Duneier, Mitchell. 2011. “How Not to Lie with Ethnography.” Sociological Methodology 41:1-11.
* Tavory, Iddo and Stefan Timmermans. 2009. “Two Cases of Ethnography: Grounded Theory and the Extended Case Method.” Ethnography 10(3): 243-63.

Example:

* Calarco, Jessica McCrory. 2014. “The Inconsistent Curriculum: Cultural Tool Kits and Student Interpretations of Ambiguous Expectations.” Social Psychology Quarterly 77(2):185-209.

Recommended background:

* Jorgensen, Danny L. 1989. Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
* Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
* Timmermans, Stefan, and Iddo Tavory. 2012. “Theory Construction in Qualitative Research: From Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis. Sociological Theory 30(3): 167-186.

### ****Oct. 19    Survey Research****

* Singleton, Royce A. and Bruce C. Straits. 2013. “Survey Interviewing.” Pp. 77-98 in J. F. Gubrium, J.A. Holstein, A. Marvasti, and K. D. McKinney (eds.) The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
* Couper, Mick P. 2017. “New Developments in Survey Data Collection.” Annual Review of Sociology 43:121-45.
* Garbarski, Dana, Nora Cate Schaeffer, and Jennifer Dykema. 2016. “Interviewing Practices, Conversational Practices, and Rapport: Responsiveness and Engagement in the Standardized Survey Interview.” Sociological Methodology 46(1):1-38.

**Example:**

* Alderson, Arthur S. and Tally Katz-Gerro. 2016. “Compared to Whom? Inequality, Social Comparison, and Happiness in the United States.” Social Forces 95(1):25-53.

**Recommended background:**

* Fowler, Floyd Jr. 2008. Survey Research Methods, Fourth Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

### ****Oct. 26****    ****In-depth Interviews****

* Weiss, Robert S. 1994. “Chapter 1: Introduction.” In Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies. New York: The Free Press.
* Riessman, Catherine Kohler. 2002. “Analysis of Personal Narratives. Pp. 695-710 in J.F. Gubrium and J.A. Holstein (eds.) Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
* Jerolmack, Colin and Shamus Khan. 2014. “Talk is Cheap: Ethnography and the Attitudinal Fallacy.” Sociological Methods & Research 43(2):178-209. With responses from Cerulo, DiMaggio, and Vaisey.

**Examples:**

* Blee, Kathleen M. 2002. “The Racist Self.” Pp. 25-53 in Inside Organized Racism. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
* Mueller, Anna S. and Seth Abrutyn. 2016. “Adolescents Under Pressure: A New Durkheimian Framework for Understanding Adolescent Suicide in a Cohesive Community.” American Sociological Review 81(5):877-99.

**Recommended background:**

* Weiss, Robert S. 1994. Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies. New York: The Free Press.

### ****Nov. 2    Practice Presentations****

**Assignment #3 due:** Developing your research design

**No discussion memo due**

* I will assign each of you a recent article in ASR or AJS. Your task is to create about 3 slides to summarize the article. I want to know, (a) what is the question, (b) what is the design, and (c) what are the results. When I ask, what is the design, I want to understand things like, (a) what is the author's theoretical model, (b) what are the main comparisons being made, (c) what are the key concepts and how are they being measured, and so on. These presentations are short (10 minutes max), but I expect you to be the “expert” in the article and be prepared to answer questions about the design. This is meant be fun.
* Supplemental readings
  + Freese, Jeremy. 2009. “Secondary Analysis of Large Social Surveys.” Pp. 238-61 in E. Hargittai (ed.) Research Confidential. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
  + Drew, Julia, Sarah Flood, and John Robert Warren. 2015. “Making Full Use of the Longitudinal Design of the Current Population Survey: Methods for Linking Records Across 16 Months.” Journal of Economic and Social Measurement 39:121-44.
  + Long, J. Scott. 2009. “Cleaning your Data.” Pp. 197-285 in Workflow of Data Analysis Using Stata. Stata Press.
  + Lazer, David and Jason Radford. 2017. “Data ex Machina: Introduction to Big Data.” Annual Review of Sociology 43:19-39.
* Examples:
  + Brooks, Clem and Jeff Manza. 2013. “A Broken Public? Americans’ Responses to the Great Recession.” American Sociological Review 78(5):727-48.
  + Cha, Youngjoo and Kim Weeden. 2014. “Overwork and the Slow Convergence in the Gender Gap in Wages.” American Sociological Review 79(3): 457-84.
  + Bail, Christopher A., Taylor W. Brown, and Marcus Mann. 2017. “Channeling Hearts and Minds: Advocacy Organizations, Cognitive-Emotional Currents, and Public Conversation.” American Sociological Review 82(6):1188-1213.
  + Hallett, Tim, Orla Stapleton, and Michael Sauder. 2019. “Public Ideas: Their Varieties and Careers.” American Sociological Review 84(3):545-
* Recommended background:
  + Webb, Eugene J., Donald T. Campbell, Richard D. Schwartz, and Lee Sechrest. 2000 [1966]. “Archives I: The Running Record" and “Archives II: The Episodic and Private Record.” In Unobtrusive Methods: Nonreactive Research in the Social Sciences. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

### ****Nov. 9    Mixed Methods****

* Pearce, Linda D. 2012. “Mixed Methods Inquiry in Sociology.” American Behavioral Scientist 56(6):829-48.
* Small, Mario Luis. 2011. “How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study: Recent Trends in a Rapidly Growing Literature.” Annual Review of Sociology 37:57-86.
* Harding, David J. and Kristin S. Seefeldt. 2013. “Mixed Methods and Causal Analysis.” Pp. 91-110 in S. L. Morgan (ed.) Handbook of Causal Analysis for Social Research. Dordrecht: Springer.

Example:

* Barber, Jennifer S., Yasamin Kusunoki, Heather H. Gatny, and Jamie Budnick. 2018. “The Dynamics of Intimate Partner Violence and the Risk of Pregnancy during the Transition to Adulthood.” American Sociological Review 83(5):1020-47.

### ****Nov. 16     Research Ethics****

**Assignment #4 due:** First draft of research proposal

**No discussion memo due**

* The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. 1979. The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research.
* American Sociological Association.  2018.  Code of Ethics.  Washington D.C.:
* American Sociological Association. (available at <http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/asa_code_of_ethics-june2018.pdf>)
* Mitchell, Richard G., Jr.  1993. Secrecy and Fieldwork ("The Debate Over Secrecy”, pp. 23-35). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
* Shea, Christopher. 2000. “’Don’t Talk to the Humans’: The Crackdown on Social Science Research.” Lingua Franca 10(6):26-34.
* Stein, Arlene. 2010. “Sex, Truths, and Audiotape: Anonymity and the Ethics of Exposure in Public Ethnography.” Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 39(5):554-68.

Example:

* Neyfakh, Leon. 2015. The Ethics of Ethnography: Alice Goffman’s heralded book about inner-city life has come under fire for inconsistencies and inaccuracies. Is the author to blame—or does the fault lie with her field?

### ****Nov. 23     Thanksgiving break – class does not meet****

### ****Nov. 30, Dec. 7****   ****Research presentations****

### ****Dec. 14****     ****Research proposal due 9:00 p.m.****

## ****Weekly discussion memos****

The weekly discussion memo assignment has several purposes: to encourage you to keep up with the readings for the course; to help you integrate the readings within and across course topics; and to give you regular writing practice.

The memo you write should include the following:

* **Identification of an issue from the readings that you would like the class to discuss.** What did you find interesting? Confusing? Challenging? Surprising? Predictable?
* **Your initial thoughts about the issue.** Why did you find this issue interesting, confusing, etc.? What is your understanding of the issue?
* **A description of how the issue relates to the general topic for the week.** (This may be implicit in the previous two points.)

Your memos should be brief—1 page or less, typed, double-spaced, with your name and the date at the top of the page. They will be graded on a check+, check, check- basis. Most students will receive a check.

Each week, I will ask 2-3 students to present their comments to the rest of the class as an opening for class discussion.

## ****Assignment #1: Identifying your research interests****

Due Wednesday, September 14th

This assignment is designed to get you started on your research proposal. The first step in the process is identifying a research area that interests you. Try to choose an area that is new to you. Do not choose a topic on which you have already written a paper unless it is your deepest passion—this is an opportunity for you to explore the field of sociology. You may choose a topic that relates to another course you are currently taking but you must get my approval (and the approval of the professor from the other course) if you plan to do this.

Once you have identified a research area, identify four key sources (books, journal articles, book chapters) that relate to the topic. At least one of these should be a literature review in the area (such as those published in the Annual Review of Sociology or in the Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research) and at least one should be an empirical article or chapter. At least three of the sources should have been published in the past ten years.

The written assignment you submit should include the following:

* **A one-paragraph description of the research area.** Summarize the broad questions that motivate research in this area: What kinds of questions have researchers in this area asked?
* **A one-paragraph summary of why you are interested in this area.** What led you to become interested in this area? How does the research relate to broader concerns that you have inside and outside of sociology? What do you hope to learn by doing research in this area?
* **Your general research question.** Following from the initial readings you have done in this area, what general question interests you? You will refine your question as the semester goes on.
* **An annotated bibliography of your four sources** that includes, for each source, a complete citation (in ASA style, see the ASA Style Guide on Canvas or a recent American Sociological Review) and a one-paragraph summary of its main points in your own words.

Please do not hesitate to make an appointment with me if you are having trouble identifying a research area or relevant work.

This assignment will serve as the basis for future assignments including your final research proposal. Choose a topic that you are really interested in and that can be addressed with different types of data.  Your grade will be based on whether you addressed all parts of the assignment, the thoroughness of your responses, the relevance of your sources, and writing quality.

## ****Assignment #2: Specifying your research question****

Due Wednesday, October 12th

This assignment is designed to help you make your research interests more concrete by identifying a specific research question (or questions), building a justification for it, and considering appropriate methodological approaches. To that end, I ask you to do three things: (1) pose a specific research question, (2) summarize what we already know about the answer to this question from prior research, and (3) describe the methods that have been (or could be) used to answer it.

 Use the following questions to organize your thoughts:

* **What specific research question (or questions) will you ask?** What makes your question interesting and important? Why should other sociologists care about the answer to your question?
* **What do we already know about the answer to your question and what do we need to know?** What answers have been given to your question (or to related questions)? How satisfying are the answers? What are the gaps in our knowledge?
* **What methods have been applied in this area of research?** What limitations do these methods have? Could research be advanced by using a different methodology or by applying the standard methodology in a new or more rigorous way?

Try to keep your papers brief: four to six pages should be enough. Cite relevant work and attach a list of references in ASA format. (See the ASA Style Guide on Canvas or a recent copy of the American Sociological Review for instructions). Please bring enough copies for the members of your research group.

Your grade will be based on whether you addressed all parts of the assignment, the thoroughness of your responses, the relevance of the research you cite, and writing quality.

## ****Assignment #3: Developing your research design****

Due Wednesday, November 2nd

This assignment is designed to help you take the next step in writing your research proposal by asking that you begin to make decisions about the research design for your project.

The written assignment you submit should include the following (suggested lengths will vary):

* A brief restatement of your research question and a summary of your justification (2-5 pages)
* An overview of the methods you plan to use to answer the question, including:
  + Your general methodological approach (ethnography, in-depth interview, survey, analysis of secondary data, organizational records, etc.) (1/2-1 page)
  + The population you are targeting (or that was targeted), the sampling strategy, and the units of observation and analysis (1-2 pages)
  + The key concepts you need to measure and how will you do that (1-2 pages; include example questions or variables)
  + The timing of your observations (cross-sectional v. longitudinal, prospective v. retrospective, etc.) (1/2-1 page)
  + How you will gain access to the people, organizations, documents, data, etc. and the barriers you anticipate (1 page)
  + The strengths and limitations of the design

The paper you submit should be typed, double-spaced and, as always, should include references cited in ASA format.

## ****Research Proposal****

Due Wednesday, December 14th at 9:00am

The purpose of this assignment is to help you integrate the material on research methods by writing a research proposal on a specific topic of your choosing. You may choose any topic within the field of sociology. Take care to narrow your topic early in the semester so that you do not spend a lot of time reading irrelevant articles. I would be happy to discuss possible topics with you at any time.

A research proposal has as its goal convincing a group of reviewers that you have identified an important research question and that you are capable of implementing a study that will answer it. Thus, you will have to be able to discuss theories and research on your topic, general issues of research design, and specific data collection and analysis procedures. Early in the semester, you will begin thinking about the general topic on which you want to focus and review relevant sources. You will then identify a specific research question (or questions) and prepare a brief summary of previous research on your topic, identifying its limitations and considering the ways in which you could contribute to it. You will begin to work on the design of your project in the third assignment. Material from those assignments may be included in this proposal, but you will probably want to revise it in response to comments.

The format I require is a mash-up of the National Science Foundation (<https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappg18_1/nsf18_1.pdf>) and National Institutes of Health (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.pdf>) proposal formats. Suggested page lengths for each section are listed in parentheses. These are only guidelines—specific proposals may vary.

* **Project summary**: summarizes the question(s), justification, and procedures (1 double-spaced page or less)
* **Research plan:** clearly states the work to be undertaken, including the goals and significance of the research (15-18 pages). Outlines the general plan of work as well as specific methodological decisions. Subsections for:
  1. Specific aims: state concisely the objectives of the proposed research (e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, challenge an existing paradigm, etc.)
  2. Research strategy: Addresses what you propose to do, why you want to do it, how you plan to do it, and what benefits will accrue if the project is successful.
     1. Significance: Present your research questions. Explain the importance of the question. Describe the scientific justification for the proposed research, including consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of prior research; explain how the proposed research will advance sociological knowledge theoretically and/or empirically.
     2. Approach: Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims. Includes a discussion of the type of data you plan to collect (or use), the key concepts you want to measure and how you will do that, your sampling design, how you will implement your data collection strategy, and how you will analyze your data. Include a brief timeline. Acknowledges the limitations of the approach. If you are developing a survey instrument or interview schedule, you should include it as an appendix. If you are using existing data, include the items you will use in the text or as an appendix..
* **References cited** (1-2 pages) in ASA format
* **Human subjects:** discusses ethical issues pertaining to the project and how they will be addressed (1-2 pages). Discuss into which review category your research would fall (exempt, expedited, or full) using the definitions of the IU Human Subject’s Office and why. Attach evidence that you have completed the IUB Human Subjects tutorial.

The specific content of your research strategy will vary depending on the type of research you propose. For example, if you are developing your own survey, you will have to discuss the mode of survey administration (mail, telephone, in-person, online), the questions that you will use to measure the key concepts (include the questionnaire as an appendix), how you will minimize non-response, etc. If you plan an ethnography, you will have to describe the setting you want to observe, how you will gain access, the degree to which you will participate in the setting, the range of interactions/experiences you plan to observe, etc.

I expect you to balance good research design with practicality. For example, very few people are capable of implementing a survey that involves more than one or two thousand respondents; conducting observations in more than one or two sites is rarely possible. Propose a project that you could imagine yourself implementing now or in your early independent research career.

All sections of your proposal combined should be no more than 20 pages in length (typed, double-spaced). Appendices and references are not included in that total.

A complete first draft of your proposal is due November 18th. You will receive comments from the members of your research group. You also will have an opportunity to present an overview of your research to the class on December 2nd or December 9th.