

**Senior Seminar**  
**Sociology 495, Spring 2016**  
**Tues & Thurs 12:30 - 1:45**  
**Class Location: Benton Hall 104**

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**Office Hours: Tues & Thurs: 2:00-3:00 and by appointment**

**Required Texts:**

*See Bibliography for a list of all assigned readings. The articles are available on Blackboard.*

C. Wright Mills described “the sociological imagination” as that quality of mind with the ability to grasp the interplay of biography and history, of self and social structure, of private troubles and public issues. As we venture into the 21st century, various issues of social influence, group dynamics, systemic inequality, and collective consciousness dominate popular discourse and policy debates. This capstone seminar will explore current substantive and theoretical expressions of the sociological imagination for providing critical assistance in understanding some of the major social issues of our time. The seminar is designed to emphasize critical discussion through active participation and class presentations. Each student will complete a significant intellectual project which reflects her or his own sociological analysis about an important social issue. Additionally, this class is focused on introducing you to educational, internship, career, and networking opportunities by inviting prospective employers into the classroom. We will hear from such organizations as the Bureau of Sociological Research, the Nebraska Democratic Party (political party), and large private employers located in Nebraska (Gallup, Talent Plus). Ideally, you will finish the course with a greater sense of what you want to do (as well as perhaps what you do not want to do) with your soon-to-be-acquired degree in Sociology.

**Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) Student Learning Outcomes**

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln seeks to provide quality education to all of its students. To that end, it has designated certain classes as ACE certified. These classes provide and assess specific learning outcomes. As an ACE class, Sociology 495 Senior Seminar will facilitate **Learning Outcomes #10**: Using knowledge, theories, methods, and historical perspectives appropriate to the social sciences to understand and evaluate human behavior. This class will:

- Provide opportunities to generate your own research question regarding an individual's relationship with society, social dynamics, or the properties of human collectives. You will develop an in-depth understanding of the application of sociological theories and sociological methods through the collection or analysis of social data.
- Generate a research paper that requires broad knowledge of sociological theory and topics, technical proficiency in conducting a short research project that involves data

collection or the use of secondary data, analysis and interpretation, and the synthesis and presentation of the project to other class members.

**ACE learning outcomes in this class will be assessed by:**

- The theoretical and methodological knowledge gained in the major to a concrete research question (or issue) studied throughout the semester through an original research project. This option allows students to consider the range of sociological sub-specialties comprising the discipline, collect and analyze data to enhance sociological knowledge, and effectively discuss research and the research process.
- Presentations and discussion of course readings, research project and peer feedback on paper conclusions.

**Course Requirements and Grades (100 points total):**

<b>Participation</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Discussion/presentation of readings</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Research paper presentation</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Research paper</b>	<b>50</b>

**Grading Scale**

A+	98%-100%	B+	88%-90%	C+	78%-80%	D+	68%-70%
A	94%-97%	B	84%-87%	C	74%-77%	D	65%-67%
A-	91%-93%	B-	81%-83%	C-	71%-73%	F	<65%

## SCHEDULE OF CLASS SESSIONS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

1	1/12	<b>Introduction</b>
2	1/14	Conducting Quantitative Research Readings: <i>The Gift</i> <sup>1</sup> – Mauss & “Manifesto for a Relational Sociology” <sup>2</sup> – Emirbayer & “The Small World Problem” <sup>3</sup> – Milgram
3	1/19	Secondary Data Sources (GSS) - Using BOSR Surveys - Lindsey Witt-Swanson (BOSR)
4	1/21	Conducting Qualitative Interviews Readings: “The Social Contagion of Antisocial Behavior” <sup>4</sup> –Tsvetkova and Macy & “Street-level drug markets: Network Structure and HIV Risk” <sup>5</sup> – Curtis et al.
5	1/26	PhD Program with Dane Hautala
6	1/28	Developing a Research Question Readings: “Why Do Liberals Drink Lattes?” <sup>6</sup> – Macy et al & “Leading the Herd Astray: An Experimental Study of Self-fulfilling Prophecies in an Artificial Cultural Market” <sup>7</sup> – Salganik and Watts
7	2/2	Applying to Graduate School (Grad Studies) Readings: “Online Islamophobia and the politics of fear manufacturing the green scare” <sup>8</sup> – Ekman
8	2/4	<b>(Research Proposal Part I Due)</b> Readings: “Delinquent Peers Revisited: Does Network Structure Matter?” <sup>9</sup> – Haynie & “Network sampling of social divisions in a rural Inuit community” <sup>10</sup> – Dombrowski et al
9	2/9	Consultations/Lab Day (104 Benton)
10	2/11	Consultations/Lab Day (104 Benton) <b>(Four annotated sources due)</b>
11	2/16	Readings: “Topological and Historical Considerations for Infectious Disease Transmission among Injecting Drug Users in Bushwick, Brooklyn (USA)” <sup>11</sup> – Dombrowski et al & “Network-related Mechanisms May Help Explain Long-term HIV-1 Seroprevalence Levels That Remain High but Do Not Approach Population-Group Saturation” <sup>12</sup> – Friedman et al.
12	2/18	Readings: “How Do They End Up Together? A Social Network Analysis of Self-Control, Homophily, and Adolescent Relationships” <sup>13</sup> – Young & “Chains of Affection: The Structure of Adolescent Romantic and Sexual Networks” <sup>14</sup> Bearman et al.
13	2/23	Lab Day (Oldfather 738)
14	2/25	Lab Day – <b>Four Annotated Sources Due</b> (Oldfather 738)
15	3/1	Lab Day (Oldfather 738)
16	3/3	Readings: “Does the Internet Make Us Lonely?” <sup>15</sup> Franzen & “The Strength of Weak Ties” <sup>16</sup> Granovetter
17	3/8	<b>Part Two Due: Literature Review and (Revised Part 1)</b> Lab Day (Oldfather 738)
18	3/10	Readings: “Is Power Sexy?” <sup>17</sup> John Levi Martin & “Glee's McKinley High: Following Middle America's sexual taboos” <sup>18</sup> – jimi adams
19	3/15	Consultations/Lab Day (104 Benton)
20	3/17	<b>Part 3 of Paper Due</b> Consultations/Lab Day (104 Benton)
<b>Mar 20-27 No Classes</b>		
22	3/29	Readings: “White Supremacist Networks on the Internet” <sup>19</sup> – Burris, Smith & Strahm & “The (un)known Universe: Mapping Gangs and Gang Violence in Boston (1997)” <sup>20</sup> – Kennedy et al
23	3/31	Readings: “A Social Network Study of the Apple vs. Android Smartphone Battle” <sup>21</sup> – Bjelland & “The man whose web expanded: Network dynamics in Manchester’s post/punk music scene 1976–1980” <sup>22</sup> – Nick Crossley

24	4/5	Lab/Writing Day (Oldfather 738)
25	4/7	Peer Reviews
26	4/12	<b>Full Paper Draft Due April 15th (Part 4)</b>
27	4/19	Part 4 papers returned
<b>Apr 26-May 3: Student Presentations - Final Paper due by the beginning of class on April 26<sup>th</sup></b>		

### **Research Paper Project (50 points total - breakdown shown below)**

Students are required to complete a 15 - 18 page (double spaced) research paper with a **full draft due Tuesday, April 12th** at the beginning of class. You may choose the topic of your paper, but it must relate to sociology. Papers must be written in ASA format. All papers should include, at minimum: an introduction, literature review, theory, methods, findings, conclusion and works cited section. The final revised paper (responding to my comments on your draft) is **due April 26.**

You may choose from the following three options for papers:

**Option 1: Qualitative Interviews/Media Analysis.** Conduct at least 5 qualitative interviews on your topic. Using a qualitative methodology of your choice, students must thematically analyze interviews.

Consider these as a potential focus:

1. Provide a literature review on a profession/occupation from a sociological perspective – and interview five people within this profession to analyze a question of difference/inequality
2. Identify a ritual object (sacred and/or secular) and interview five people to assess variations in symbolic meaning.
3. Conduct a media analysis (minimum of 15 newspaper or magazine articles thematically analyzed on the topic)

**Option 2: Original Quantitative Survey Data.** Create a survey (approved by me) and distribute it to at least 20 persons (each) on a topic of your choice. Students will use SPSS, STATA or SAS to analyze the findings from their surveys (see OPTION 3). It is permissible to combine surveys (no more than 25 total questions) but you must develop an independent set of research questions and an independent paper. Some topics may be restricted due to IRB restrictions.

**Option 3: Secondary Data Analysis.** Use a public data set (such as the General Social Survey or NASIS) to statistically analyze your research question. You must be skilled in quantitative methodology and use SPSS, STATA or SAS to complete this option (i.e., completed Soc. 205 and 206).

Throughout the course, you will turn in sections of your papers (see Parts 1-5 below) and

receive feedback from me and/or my TA's. All students will turn in their typed paper section on the assigned date and receive feedback the following week. All papers must be turned in electronically as well as in paper format, before the beginning of class on their due date. Please email paper directly to me.

\*\* Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment will not be tolerated. Any offense will receive an automatic failure for the course paper and notification to the UNL Student Judicial Committee. See the Student Handbook and class notes for definitions and we will have a discussion in class about avoiding unintended plagiarism.

### **Part 1 – Due Thursday Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> (10 points)**

Write a 1-2 page narrative describing your specific research question(s) and how you plan to approach the topic both in terms of methodology (Identify Option 1, 2 or 3) and key concepts that are important to your topic.

**Option 1:** Who are you going to interview or what media will you examine? What questions will you ask? How will these questions answer your research question(s)?

**Option 2:** Who will you survey? What questions will you ask? How will these survey questions answer your research question(s)? Students selecting a similar pool of respondents (students, single mothers, etc.) will be required to meet with me prior to distributing your survey to discuss possible overlaps and collaborations.

**Option 3:** What secondary data source will you be using (e.g., GSS)? What questions from that data source will you be analyzing? How do you think these survey items help to answer your research questions(s)? Students will be required to meet with me prior to

### **Part 2 – Due Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> (10 points)**

Part two is split up into 2 sections.

1. Identify a minimum of eight (8) peer-reviewed journal articles. At least two of the articles must be current (i.e. published after 2009). Provide an annotated bibliography for your sources. Four of these articles will be turned in on February 11<sup>th</sup> and the other four will be turned in on February 25<sup>th</sup>

Annotated Bibliographies are a summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources and a citation of the source. For each source, provide a complete ASA citation, a brief description of the source and what it contributes to your topic (i.e., does it provide a discussion of theory, a source for survey/interview questions, empirical or background information on your topic, etc.).

2. Identify your theory and the sources you will be using for your paper. Discuss which theory you will use that relates to your research questions. What are the basic

assumptions of this theory? Based on this theory, what are your hypotheses for your research (you must provide at least 2 hypotheses)? How will this theory potentially help you explain your findings? Make sure to provide an appropriate citation for your theory.

### **Part 3 – Due Wednesday March 17th (10 Points)**

Complete a written narrative (not an outline) of the Introduction, Theory, and Literature Review sections of your paper. These components of your paper should include the following:

#### **Introduction:**

Why is this topic important? Why have sociologists studied it? Provide historical perspective/social context of the issue (if relevant). Provide a clear statement of the purpose of this paper.

#### **Theory and Application:**

Review the guiding theoretical perspectives and key sociological concepts. Apply the theoretical perspective to your topic.

#### **Review of the literature:**

Provide an overview of the past research on your topic or related topics. What do we know? Review and SYNTHESIZE the sources that relate to your topic and tell us where you see gaps. Refer to your theory application when presenting and synthesizing the existing literature.

#### **Reference page:**

Use proper ASA citation and reference guidelines.

\*\*Students are expected to make revisions on part 2 of the paper.

### **Part 4 – Due Tuesday, April 12th (10 points)**

The first full draft of the paper is due. Students are expected to make revisions on part 3 of the paper and turn in the methods, findings and conclusions sections of their paper.

The first full draft should include the following:

1. Title Page
2. Introduction
3. Theory and Application
4. Literature Review
5. Methods
6. Discussion
7. Conclusion

### **Part 5 – Due April 26<sup>th</sup> – May 3<sup>rd</sup> (10 Points)**

The final paper must include all required sections of the paper and appropriate revisions. Provide the earlier copies of all Parts (with my comments) along with your final paper. Students will be expected to present the findings of their paper in class.

Each student will be allotted 15 – 20 minutes to present and discuss his or her work. I will assign a grade to your final paper and presentation. In addition, as an evaluation of the sociology undergraduate program, the department's Undergraduate Committee will be reviewing your paper. The Undergraduate Committee's assessment will have no bearing on your final paper or final course grade.

### **Attendance and Participation:**

Attendance to all sessions is required. To reinforce this, 30% of your grade is based on attendance and participation. That means, in effect, you cannot pass this course without coming to class and contributing to class discussions on a regular basis.

### **Attendance Policy:**

As stated above, attendance at all class session is required. Students receive 1 point toward their final grade for each class attended (for a total of 30 points, or 30% of the final grade).

### **Readings:**

In addition to general participation, students will assume responsibility for initiating and leading the seminar discussion (for approximately 30 - 45 minutes) for two articles. At professional sociology meetings, the term, "discussant" is used to refer to the person(s) who review, critique, and compliment the presenters' papers. Their role is to identify main themes, to share observations or pose questions that stimulate further discussion among those in attendance. Similarly, your objective is to facilitate a dynamic exchange, not to make a formal presentation. The focus of these articles is Social Network Analysis (SNA) and relational sociology more generally. I will introduce basic concepts in network theory and methodology in the first week of class, and then we will cover a wide variety of topics from culture to technology and how researchers approach these issues using SNA. This is worth 10% of your final grade.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY

## REFERENCES

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