# Sociology 495: Senior Seminar

University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Online: Canvas Learning Management System  
Summer 2019: May 20th - July 12th

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<tr>
<th>Professor: Dr. Kazyak</th>
<th>TA: Grace Kelly, M.A.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Office Hours on Zoom: T 10-11am</td>
<td>Office hours: T 4-5pm, TH 10-11am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:ekazyak2@unl.edu">ekazyak2@unl.edu</a></td>
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## Course Description

This is a capstone course for Sociology majors. The course is designed for students to demonstrate their understanding of Sociology by completing an independent research project and writing a research-based paper. Students will have the opportunity to bring together and put to use all of the knowledge they have gained in their sociology coursework (methods, theory, classes in topics like crime/deviance, family, and inequalities).

As you’ve learned from this coursework, sociologists are interested in understanding our social world, people’s experiences, and social change from a particular framework: a framework that asks questions like: Are there are patterns to social life? Are there inequalities in our society? How are people’s experiences shaped by where they live or their various identities including gender, race, or sexuality? How do people make sense of controversial social issues? What factors have created change in our society?

The senior seminar will allow you to address a sociological question that is of particular interest to you by doing research and writing a research-based paper. Your research will consist of conducting either a quantitative or qualitative analysis of secondary data. Throughout the class, we will read and discuss research done by sociologists in order for you to have models of how to write your own research-based paper. There will also be an emphasis on communicating sociological research. To that end, we will read and discuss the various ways that sociologists have provided a sociological perspective to the general public on social issues and debates. Finally, since this is a capstone course, the course is designed for you to reflect on how your sociology degree can translate into your career path after graduation.

## Course Learning Objectives

After taking this course, you should be able to:

1. Interpret and synthesize sociological research
2. Conduct sociological research
3. Communicate sociological research to both academic and non-academic audiences
4. Describe how you can use your sociology training after graduation

## ACE Program: 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: “Generate a creative or scholarly product that requires broad
knowledge, appropriate technical proficiency, information collection, synthesis, interpretation, presentation, and reflection.” This class will provide opportunities to generate your own research project. You will ask a research question regarding a social issue and develop an in-depth understanding of the application of sociological theories and sociological methods through the analysis of sociological data. You will also generate a research paper that requires broad knowledge of sociological theory and topics, technical proficiency in conducting a short research project that involves analyzing secondary data.

The ACE-learning outcome in this class will be assessed by the research paper.

**Course Materials**
You will access all of the course materials online through our Canvas course site. Likewise, you will submit all of the course assignments online through our Canvas course site. You can access Canvas here: [http://its.unl.edu/lms](http://its.unl.edu/lms)

**Course Format**
The bulk of this course (Modules 1-6) will be focused on your research paper. Additionally, you will be reading two published research papers each week. Reading the published papers will provide you with examples of how to write a research paper as you write your own paper. In the last two weeks of the course (Modules 7-8), we will focus on translating your Sociology degree into life after graduation and translating a sociological perspective outside of the academy. We will work with the College of Arts & Sciences career coaches (Module 7) and you will have an assignment due on Friday of week 7. We will engage with various examples of sociologists writing for non-sociological audiences, including op-eds and media interviews (Module 8).

All material will be accessible through our Canvas site.

**Office Hours**
I will have virtual office hours on Zoom on Tuesdays 10-11am. To join my office hours, use this link: [https://unl.zoom.us/j/625980443](https://unl.zoom.us/j/625980443). During Week 6, I will old in-person office hours in my office in the Sociology Department: 725 Oldfather.

The TA for the course, Grace Kelly, will have office hours: Tuesday 4-5pm and Thursday 10-11am. During Weeks 3 and 4, Grace will hold in-person office hours in the Sociology Department Computer Lab: on the 7th floor of Oldfather.

**Course Assignments and Grading**
Your grade in this class will be determined by your performance on 4 assignments:
1) Research Paper
2) Reading Responses
3) Career Assignment
4) Communicating Sociological Perspective Assignment

Please note that an assignment will be due every Wednesday at 11:59pm, Friday at 11:59pm, and Sunday at 11:59pm.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. NO EXCEPTIONS.**
Research Paper Assignments
All students will be required to complete a 14-15 page research paper. The bulk of the course will focus on completing the research project and paper. Each week, you will turn in a draft of sections of your papers and receive feedback.

You will have an assignment related to the Research Paper due every Wednesday and Sunday at 11:59pm. The complete final research paper due Sunday June 30th at 11:59pm.

More details about the Research Paper Assignments, including the requirements and grading rubric, will be provided in Canvas.

The Research Paper Assignments are worth 60% of your overall course grade: 40% will be based on the 11 assignments (due each Wednesday and Sunday at 11:59pm) and 20% will be based on the final paper (due on June 30th at 11:59pm).

Reading Responses Assignment
Throughout the class, we will read and discuss two journal articles that are based on research done by sociologists. The Reading Response assignment is designed for you to learn how to read and understand a Sociology journal article. Doing this assignment will prepare you to write your own research-based paper. Each week you will read one article that uses a quantitative analysis and one article that uses a qualitative analysis.

Reading Responses will be due every Friday at 11:59pm.

More details about the Reading Responses, including the requirements and grading rubric, will be provided in Canvas.

Reading Responses are worth 20% of your overall course grade.

Career Assignment
Since one goal of the course is to provide the opportunity for you to reflect on how you may be able to use your training and experiences in Sociology after you graduate, we will have one assignment that focuses on preparing you for your career after graduation.

The Career Assignment will be due Friday July 5th at 11:59pm

More details about the Career Assignment and its components, including the grading rubric, will be provided in Canvas.

The Career Assignment is worth 10% of your overall course grade.

Communicating a Sociological Perspective Assignment
Sociologists do not only publish research in academic journal articles or books, but also work to provide a sociological perspective the general public on social issues and debates. We will spend some time in the course engaging with different examples of how sociologists have translated a sociological perspective into things like media interviews, opinion pieces in newspapers, and
podcasts. This assignment will allow you the opportunity to communicate as well, in the form of writing an opinion piece for newspaper (an op-ed).

The Communicating a Sociological Perspective Assignment will be due Friday July 12th at 11:59pm.

More details about this assignment, including the grading rubric, will be provided in Canvas.

The Communicating a Sociological Perspective Assignment is worth 10% of your overall course grade.

The final grade breakdown:

Research Paper 60%
Reading Responses 20%
Career Assignment 10%
Communicating Perspective 10%
TOTAL 100%

Grading Scale

A + = 97-100%  B + = 87 – 89%  C + = 77 – 79%  D + = 67 – 69%
A – = 93 – 96%  B = 83 – 86%  C = 73 – 76%  D = 63 – 66%
A – = 90 – 92%  B – = 80 – 82%  C – = 70 – 72%  D – = 60 – 62%
F = 59 % or below

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is essential to the existence and integrity of an academic institution. The responsibility for maintaining that integrity is shared by all members of the academic community. To further serve this end, the University of Nebraska supports a Student Code of Conduct, which addresses this issue of academic dishonesty. See Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures Manual.

Services for Students with Disabilities

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options privately. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). If you are eligible for services and register with their office, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so they can be implemented in a timely manner. SSD contact information: 232 Canfield Admin. Bldg.; 402-472-3787.
COURSE SCHEDULE

MODULE 1: May 20-May 24

Readings
1) Laubepin, Frederique. 2013. “How to Read (and Understand) a Social Science Journal Article” Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.

2) American Sociological Association Style Guide


*Note: Readings 5 and 6 are connected to the Reading Responses Assignment

7) Quantitative Data Source:
Methods Reports for the 2015, 2016, 2017 Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey
Appendix B and Appendix G of the 2015 Report
Appendix B and Appendix F of the 2016 Report and the 2017 Report

8) Qualitative Data Source:
Global Feminisms Project:
https://globalfeminisms.umich.edu/about

Oklahoma Oral History Research Program:
https://library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/digital/

*Note: Readings 7 and 8 are connected to the Research Paper Assignment 1 and 2

Lectures
1) Introduction to the Senior Seminar
2) Data Source, Topic, Research Question
3) Quantitative Secondary Data Analysis: Nebraska Annual Social Indicator Survey (NASIS)
4) Qualitative Secondary Data Analysis: Global Feminisms Project or Oklahoma Oral History Research Program
Assignments
1) Research Paper Assignment 1: Due Wednesday
2) Reading Responses Assignment: Due Friday
3) Research Paper Assignment 2: Due Sunday

MODULE 2: May 27th-May 31st

Readings
   *Note: Reading 1 is connected to the Research Paper Assignment 3


   *Note: Readings 2 and 3 are connected to the Reading Responses Assignment

4) The 6 articles you identified as relevant to your research paper
   *Note: Reading 4 is connected to the Research Paper Assignment 4

Lectures
1) Theoretical Orientations: Positivism, Interpretivism, and Critical
2) How to Write a Literature Review Section

Assignments
1) Research Paper Assignment 3: Due Wednesday
2) Reading Responses Assignment: Due Friday
3) Research Paper Assignment 4: Due Sunday

MODULE 3: June 3rd-June 7th

Readings

   *Note: Readings 1 and 2 are connected to the Reading Responses Assignment
Lectures
1) Quantitative Analyses
2) How to work in SPSS
3) Qualitative Analyses
4) How to work in NVivo

Assignments
1) Research Paper Assignment 5: Due Wednesday
2) Reading Responses Assignment: Due Friday
3) Research Paper Assignment 6: Due Sunday

MODULE 4: June 10th - June 14th

Readings


*Note: Readings 1 and 2 are connected to the Reading Responses Assignment

Lectures
1) How to Write a Findings Section

Assignments
1) Research Paper Assignment 7: Due Wednesday
2) Reading Responses Assignment: Due Friday
3) Research Paper Assignment 8: Due Sunday

MODULE 5: June 17th - June 21st

Readings
1) Pfeffer, Carla. 2014. “‘I Don’t Like Passing as a Straight Woman’: Queer Negotiations of Identity and Social Group Membership.” American Journal of Sociology 120: 1-44.


*Note: Readings 1 and 2 are connected to the Reading Responses Assignment

Lectures
1) How to Write a Methods Section
2) How to Write a Introduction Section
Assignments
1) Research Paper Assignment 9: Due Wednesday
2) Reading Responses Assignment: Due Friday
3) Research Paper Assignment 10: Due Sunday

MODULE 6: June 24th - June 28th

Readings


*Note: Readings 1 and 2 are connected to the Reading Responses Assignment

Lectures
1) How to Write a Conclusion Section

Assignments
1) Research Paper Assignment 11: Due Wednesday
2) Reading Responses Assignment: Due Friday
3) Final Research Paper: Due Sunday

MODULE 7: July 1st – July 5th

Readings

Lectures
1) What can I do with a Sociology degree?
2) Tools, resources, and opportunities at UNL and beyond
3) Writing a Resume and cover letter

Assignments
1) Career Assignment: Due Friday

MODULE 8: July 8th – July 12th

Readings
1) Burke, Kelsy and Emily Kazyak. 2019. “Nebraskans Support LGBT Protections” Lincoln Journal Star


7) Interview with Jennifer Reich: Why Aren’t Parents Getting Their Children Vaccinated? National Public Radio


Lectures
1) How to Write an Op-Ed

Assignments
1) Communicating a Sociological Perspective Assignment: Due Friday