

**Senior Seminar (Soc 495)**  
**Spring 2017**  
**Tu. & Th. 12:30-1:45**  
**Location: 707 Oldfather Hall**

Dr. Kimberly A. Tyler  
717 Oldfather Hall

Phone: (402) 472-6073

Email: ktyler2@unl.edu

Office Hours: Tu. & Th. 8:15-9:15 am or by appointment

kim@ktresearch.net

**Note:** You are required to use Black Board for this course to view assignments, readings, announcements, etc.

---

This senior seminar focuses on strengthening your analytic skills in using sociological research and writing to express your *sociological imagination*. The goal is to bring together your varied course backgrounds and other experiences (internships, jobs, travel, etc.) in discussions with other sociology majors. This senior seminar course is yours to create a capstone experience for your time here at UNL. The department designed this course to provide you with the opportunity to pull together your sociological learning: applying theory, illustrating concepts, formulating hypotheses, gathering data, undertaking analysis, drawing implications, and making arguments based on your research. At a much more personal level, it is an opportunity for you to address an issue of importance to you—for you to become more expert on a topic close to your heart, to wrestle with a social/political/ethical issue about which you are passionate. Practically speaking, this seminar requires that you write a research paper--an intellectual product of which you can be proud.

Your development of a sociological imagination is an important tool: a framework for examining how social and historical forces affect the everyday lives of people. How you understand social forces (institutions; social structures; inequalities of race, class, gender, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicity; social movements and social change) challenges who you are and your perception of your place in the world.

**COURSE GOALS.** To accomplish our goals, we first revisit basic principles and sociological praxis in an integrative way. We sharpen your sense of sociological perspectives and the enterprise of doing social research. Other specific goals include:

1. To strengthen your ability to raise sociological questions and explore methodological strategies to answer them in the form of an **original research project**. This will also be done through the reading and discussion of assigned research articles and the broader sociological literature.
2. To promote your ability to think critically and creatively about sociological questions and to express them successfully in written and oral forms. We will focus on theories of: 1) life course perspective 2) social exchange theory and 3) social learning theory.
3. To reinforce C. Wright Mills' call for a grasp of the enduring link between your personal experiences and larger socio-historical forces as they affect your future; as a person, a professional and an active global citizen.

**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. 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 proposal, data collection or use of secondary data and research project presented in portfolio form (more information on the research development process is presented below).
- Presentations and discussion of course readings and research project and peer feedback on paper conclusions.

**Course Requirements:**

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Possible Points</i>
Participation/Attendance	50
Discussant /presentation of readings	20
In class assignments <sup>†</sup>	20
Research paper project	150
Paper presentation	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>

*Note:* <sup>†</sup>(Research question=5 points; consent form=5 points; survey/interview questions=10 points).

**Grading Scale:**

A+	98%-100%	B+	88%-90%	C+	78%-80%	D+	68%-70%
A	95%-97%	B	84%-87%	C	74%-77%	D	65%-67%
A-	91%-94%	B-	81%-83%	C-	71%-73%	F	<65%

\*Final grades are not rounded up.

**WHAT IS A SEMINAR?**

A seminar is a small group of students who take responsibility for learning or mastering some piece of material and for sharing their insights/critique/commentary/questions with other group members. Seminar members are both teaching and learning simultaneously, shifting back and forth between these two roles. This means that each member is obligated not only to do the required readings, but to THINK DEEPLY about them and be able to communicate one's ideas with others in a discussion session. **Each seminar member will be given a reading to master and then will LEAD a discussion seminar on the reading.**

To lead a session means highlighting the main points of the article, conversing with the group, and going beyond the reading to raise questions, to forge links with other readings/courses and to challenge each other's assumptions. It means assisting the group to have a lively, informed and enjoyable session discussing ideas and problems. In the "real world" these skills will be in great demand on the job, in places where you volunteer, or as a community member. You are required to turn in your typed notes to me at the end of the class period for which you are a discussant.

Participation/Attendance: It is expected that all students will have regular class attendance. Students who miss class will have difficulties fulfilling the requirements of this course. Class attendance is not limited to merely your presence, but an active and engaged presence. Your grade for this portion of the course will be reflective of not only your class attendance but also the depth of your engagement and participation. You may miss up to two class periods without it affecting your course grade.

## **REQUIRED READINGS: (All readings are posted on Black Board [BB])**

The Promise of the Sociological Imagination (Mills 1959)

Simons, Ronald L., Kuei-Hsiu Lin, and Leslie C. Gordon. 1998. "Socialization in the Family of Origin and Male Dating Violence: A Prospective Study." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 60:467-78.

Neilson, Elizabeth C., Amanda K. Gilmore, Hanna T. Pinsky, Molly E. Shepard, Melissa A. Lewis, and William H. George. 2015. "The Use of Drinking and Sexual Assault Protective Behavioral Strategies: Associations with Sexual Victimization and Revictimization among College Women." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 1-22.

Gilmore, A. K., Stappenbeck, C. A., Lewis, M. A., Granato, H. F., & Kaysen, D. 2015. "Sexual Assault History and its Association with the Use of Drinking Protective Behavioral Strategies among College Women." *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 76:459-64.

Aosved, Allison C., Patricia J. Long, and Emily K. Voller. 2011. "Sexual Revictimization and Adjustment in College Men." *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 12:285-96.

Phillips, Michael M., Kristina T. Phillips, Trent L. Lalonde, and Kristy R. Dykema. 2014. "Feasibility of Text Messaging for Ecological Momentary Assessment of Marijuana Use in College Students." *Psychological Assessment* 26:947-57.

Soule, Eric K., Tracey E. Barnett, and Michael D. Moorhouse. 2015. "Protective Behavioral Strategies and Negative Alcohol-related Consequences among US College Fraternity and Sorority Members." *Journal of Substance Use* 20:16-21.

Writing for Sociologists (Two chapters –Quantitative and Qualitative writing)

Schmitz, Rachel M. 2016. "Constructing Men as Fathers: A Content Analysis of Formulations of Fatherhood in Parenting Magazines." *Journal of Men's Studies* 13:1-21.

Howard, Donna Elise, Melinda Griffin, Bradley Boekeloo, Kristin Lake, and Denise Bellows. 2007. "Staying Safe While Consuming Alcohol: A Qualitative Study of the Protective Strategies and Informational Needs of College Freshmen." *Journal of American College Health* 56:247-53.

Kaukinen, Catherine. 2014. "Dating Violence among College Students: The Risk and Protective Factors." *Trauma, Violence & Abuse* 15:283-96.

Thompson, Martie P. 2014. "Risk and Protective Factors for Sexual Aggression and Dating Violence: Common Themes and Future Directions." *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 15:304-09.

Gover, Angela R., Catherine Kaukinen, and Kathleen A. Fox. 2008. "The Relationship Between Violence in the Family of Origin and Dating Violence among College Students." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 23:1667-93.

---

## **SCHEDULE OF CLASS SESSIONS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

---

**1/10** Introduction to the Course; What is a Theory and why do we need them?

---

**1/12** Theories and their Application.

**Reading:** (1) The Promise of the Sociological Imagination (Mills 1959)

---

**1/17** Developing a Research Question – Where to Begin?

*Consider: \*\*Think about a potential topic that you are interested in learning more about for your project.*

**Readings:** (1) Simons et al. (1998)  
(2) Neilson et al. (2015)

---

**1/19** Narrowing your Topic.

*Consider: \*\*How to narrow your topic down to a single research question for your project.*

**Readings:** (1) Gilmore et al. (2016)  
(2) Aosved et al. (2011)

---

*\*\*Denotes an assignment or rough draft due that day (in addition to Readings and/or proposal).*

1/24 Guest Speaker: Nichole MacDonald – Managing Director of Graduate Programs - CBA  
Sharing your Research Question with the class

**Readings:** (1) Phillips et al. (2014)  
(2) Soule et al. (2015)

**Assignment:** **\*\*Turn in first draft of research question. Sign up for individual meeting with instructor.**

---

1/26 Conducting Qualitative Interviews

**Readings:** (1) Qualitative chapter  
(2) Schmitz (2016)  
(3) Howard et al. (2007)

**Consider:** *Is your research question suited to qualitative research methods?*

---

1/31 Individual Meetings with Instructor to Finalize your Research Question (RQ).

**Assignment:** **\*\*If not meeting with instructor, find 2 articles related to your RQ.**

---

2/2 Individual Meetings with Instructor to Finalize your Research Question (RQ).

**Assignment:** **\*\*If not meeting with instructor, find 2 articles related to your RQ.**

---

2/7 Conducting Quantitative Research

**Reading:** (1) Quantitative Chapter

**Consider:** *Is your research question suited to quantitative research methods? Share final RQ with class.*

**At this point, your RQ should be finalized! It is time to move on to the next step of your project!**

---

2/9 Formulating Hypotheses.

**Readings:** (1) Kaukinen (2014)  
(2) Thompson (2014)

**Assignment:** **\*\*Bring hypotheses to class. Review classmates' hypotheses; these must "map on" to your RQ.**

---

2/14 Guest speaker: Meagan Savage - Career Services

---

2/16 **\*\*Proposal Part 1 Due.**

Guest speaker: Becky Freeman – IRB: Ethics, Permissions, IRB

Guest speaker: – Lindsey Witt-Swanson - BOSR: Secondary Data Sources

---

2/21 *Part 1 papers returned.* Revisit Theories; What theory will you use?

Guest speaker: – Morgan Beal - UNL & SCC Victim Advocate/Prevention Specialist

---

2/23 Writing a Consent Form and Developing Survey Questions or Interview Questions.

---

2/28 **Proposal Part 2 and Revised Part 1 Due.** Continue with consent form and survey/interview questions.

---

3/2 Writing Day – work on writing up Part 3.

---

3/7 Peer Review. **Assignment:** **\*\*Bring consent form & draft of survey/interview questions to class**

**\*\*Denotes an assignment or rough draft due that day (in addition to Readings and/or proposal).**

---

3/9 Guest speaker: Linda Major - Vice Chancellors Office - College Drinking  
**Assignment: \*\*Turn in final consent form and first draft of survey/interview questions.**

---

3/14 Writing your Introduction, Theory and Literature Review – Use of track changes – MS Word

---

3/16 **Proposal Part 3 Due** (Introduction, Theory, and Literature Review sections of your paper).  
**Assignment: \*\*Turn in final version of survey/interview questions.**

---

3/21-3/23 **Spring Break – No Classes!!!**

---

3/28 Data Collection; Writing up your Method and Conducting Data Analyses  
**Reading:** (1) Gover et al. (2008)

---

3/30 Writing Lab; Write up your Method and Results Section

---

4/4 Limitations of Research and Drawing Conclusions  
*Sign up for consultation.*

---

4/6 Writing Lab Exercises; Finish writing up Limitations and Conclusion section of paper

---

4/11 Preparing a Professional Poster and Presentation

---

4/13 **Part 4 - Full Paper Draft Due April 13<sup>th</sup>**; Peer Review of Conclusions  
**Assignment: \*\*Bring your Discussion and Conclusion Sections to class for peer review**

---

4/18 Consultant day for presentation and paper

---

4/20 Student Paper Presentations

---

4/25 *Part 4 papers returned*  
Student Paper Presentations

---

4/27 Student Paper Presentations

---

5/1 **Final Revised Paper – Part 5 Due by 12:30 pm**

---

*\*\*Denotes an assignment or rough draft due that day (in addition to Readings and/or proposal).*

## **Research Paper Project (150 points total - breakdown shown below)**

Students are required to complete a 15 - 18 page research paper with a **full draft due Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup>** due during class time. You may choose the topic of your paper, but it must relate to sociology and inequality. Papers must be written in ASA format. All papers should include, at minimum: an introduction, literature review, theory, methods, findings, and conclusions section. The final revised paper (responding to my comments on your draft) is **due May 1**.

\*\* 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.

**If you are completing an Honors Thesis under the supervision of a faculty member at UNL, see me during office hours before FEBRUARY 13 to discuss the relationship of that paper to this assignment.**

You may choose from the following three options:

- ❖ **Option 1: Qualitative Interviews/Media Analysis.** Conduct at least 6 qualitative interviews on your topic. Using a qualitative methodology of your choice, students must thematically analyze interviews.

Possible topics to focus on:

- 1) Interview 6 people currently cohabiting to assess their views on division of household labor; finances; or work outside the home to analyze a question of difference/inequality.
- 2) Identify a ritual object (sacred and/or secular) and interview 6 people to assess variations in symbolic meaning (e.g., the object may be related to sports).
- 3) Conduct a media analysis (minimum of 16 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 on a topic of your choice. Students will use SPSS or STATA to analyze the findings from their surveys. **Some topics may be limited 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 or STATA 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. All students will email me their typed paper section on the assigned due date and receive feedback the following week (some restrictions may apply due to my travel schedule, holidays, etc.). All papers must be turned in electronically before the beginning of class on their due date. Please email your paper directly to me unless otherwise noted.

### **Part 1 – Due Thursday Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> (20 points)**

Turn in your research question. It should be a clear and concise statement of what you plan to examine. Next, tell me what option you plan to use and why (see list of three options below). Finally, provide two full citations (in ASA format) for two articles that you plan to use for your proposal. (*Hint*: they must be related to your research question).

- **Option 1:** Who will you 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)?
- **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 question(s)?

## **Part 2 – Due Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup> (20 points)**

Identify your theory and the sources/articles 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.

**Identify a minimum of five (5) peer-reviewed journal articles. *At least two of the articles must be current (i.e. published after 2010).***

For each source, provide a complete ASA citation, and a 3-4 sentence 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.).

## **Part 3 – Due Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup> (20 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:**

- Ø Review your topic/why is it important to study?
- Ø How does it relate to inequality?
- Ø Historical perspective/social context of the issue (if relevant).
- Ø Provide a clear statement of the purpose of your paper. Be sure to number your pages.

### **Theory Application:**

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

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

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

**Reference page** - Use proper ASA citation and reference guidelines.

## **Part 4 – Due Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup> (40 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 for this assignment.

## **Methods**

- Ø Did you choose qualitative or quantitative analysis and why? Explain the strengths and weaknesses of this method for answering your questions. Did you use an existing data source or create your own and why?
- Ø Describe your sample (provide demographics, but maintain confidentiality).
- Ø For option 1: What questions did you ask? How do these questions relate to your topic?
- Ø For options 2 and 3: What items/measures did you use? What were the descriptive statistics for these items?

## **Findings**

- Ø For option 1: What are the major themes present in your interviews? Did any of the interviews provide contrasting or contradictory ideas to these findings?
- Ø For options 2 and 3: What are the major statistical findings for your paper? Associations or Correlations? Significance?

## **Conclusions**

- Ø Summarize your findings. Are your hypotheses supported or rejected? Were your research questions fully answered?
- Ø Relate your findings to your theory. What have you learned by doing this project?
- Ø Do your findings contradict or confirm the current research in this area?
- Ø What are the implications of your findings? For inequality and social policy?
- Ø What are the limitations of your findings? What would you do differently the next time you conduct research?
- Ø What is the goal for future research (i.e., what are the next steps)?

## **Reference page**

- Ø Use proper ASA citation and reference guidelines.

### **Part 5 – Final Paper Due Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup> (50 points)**

The final paper must include all required sections of the paper and appropriate revisions.

Students will present their findings in class. Each student will be allotted ~15 minutes to present and discuss their work.