COURSE DESCRIPTION
Are you a rising or current senior in Sociology, with plans to earn a graduate degree? If so, how do you write successful proposals for grants and fellowships that will make your advanced studies possible – or at least soooo much easier to finance?

Are you a graduate student in Sociology or a related field, with long-term plans to conduct research in applied or academic settings? If so, how do you write successful proposals for grants and fellowships that will underwrite your short- and long-term research goals?

Are you a junior or new faculty member/new PI, in need of external funding for your research? If so, how do you write successful proposals for grants and fellowships that will underwrite your research projects and optimize your long-term career trajectory?

This 1-credit course seeks to provide advanced undergraduate and graduate students, and new PIs, with a hands-on grant writing experience. In this course you will learn to

• navigate the world of funding entities (federal/state, foundations, even private sector) – learn about “the forest”
• identify most likely funding sources for YOUR research – learn about “the trees”
• conceptualize your research projects in phases, so that funding types can complement each other
• formulate a fundable research question
• design an empirical study with an appropriate methodology to answer said research question
• incorporate peer review and feedback on an ongoing basis
• draft a full-length research proposal (the goal is for you to revise this draft over the summer and submit to the funding agency at the next possible application deadline)
• address research compliance aspects necessary to receive external funding (e.g., IRB, RCR training)
• navigate UNL’s online systems (e.g., NUgrant) and logistics related to the grant submission process (Office of Sponsored Programs)

COURSE STRUCTURE
Prior to enrolling in the course, please set up an appointment with the instructor (Werum) to discuss how to prepare for the course in advance of the Spring semester. This includes identifying a research topic and question; identifying a faculty mentor (other than the instructor); conducting preliminary research on potential external funding opportunities suitable to your field. If you are thinking of proposing a collaborative project (more than 1 PI), please build your team prior to the start of the semester. Think carefully about the team members and their role in the grant proposal writing process and beyond. Collaborative Projects are typically not a good idea for new investigators.
This course follows a blended format: We will meet weekly, for an average of 1 hour/week. Some weeks we will meet as a group, some weeks assignments will be completed electronically (e.g., through email and online). At the group meetings, we will focus on a particular part of the grant writing process. Then, homework will be assigned, designed to push forward your individual projects by working on your own, with your mentor(s), and collaboratively with your peers. During weeks in which no full-group meetings occur, you will have one-on-one meetings with the instructor about your research project and proposal in progress. You are also expected to meet with your substantive area mentor regularly, as needed (more often is better!), and hold (online/in person) small-group meetings to provide feedback to each other.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Regular attendance and participation at full-group meetings; regular one-on-one meetings with your mentor (TBD) and with the instructor (Werum) during the other weeks; regular meetings (online/in person) meetings with your peers; 1 project-related class presentation; 1 grant/research proposal; completion of online research ethics training module (CITI).

**Ground Rules**
*For this 400-level course to count towards an undergraduate major, you must earn a “C” in all aspects of the course, including attendance. For rules re 800-level courses and grades see [http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/bulletin/scholastic-grade-requirements](http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/bulletin/scholastic-grade-requirements). Grading scale:*

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
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**Regular attendance and active participation in class.**

**Professionalism:** I welcome and encourage input from a wide range of viewpoints. However, I will not tolerate disruptive behavior or discourteous manners and speech. Please **TURN OFF cell phones, pagers, etc. I consider it disruptive, inconsiderate, and disrespectful when these devices go off during class.**

**Student Code of Conduct:** By attending this class you agree to adhere to the academic honor code. The UNL Student Code of Conduct applies to all aspects of the course. To familiarize yourself with it, please visit [http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code/three.shtml](http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code/three.shtml), paying close attention to section 4.2. For additional information about plagiarism as a form of academic dishonesty subject to university regulations and the UNL Student Code of Conduct, please visit [http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/integrity#plagiarism](http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/integrity#plagiarism).

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is UNL policy 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. For further information regarding UNL policies in this regard, please visit [http://www.unl.edu/equity/](http://www.unl.edu/equity/) or call (402) 472-2322.

**Gender-Neutral Bathrooms:** The following webpage provide a list of gender-neutral bathrooms on campus: [involved.unl.edu/unl-gender-neutral-bathrooms](http://involved.unl.edu/unl-gender-neutral-bathrooms). The closest one to Hamilton Hall and Oldfather Hall is in Andrews Hall.

**Lactation Rooms:** There is a lactation space in 727A Oldfather, and a family room on the ground floor (North side). Additional information about lactation spaces is available at [http://www.unl.edu/chancellor/policymemoranda/20090901-Lactation-Policy](http://www.unl.edu/chancellor/policymemoranda/20090901-Lactation-Policy).
ACE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

This is a special topics course, offered outside of the ACE 1- ACE 10 categories.

The goal of this course is to provide you with hands-on experience in identifying external funding sources, developing a fundable research question, and crafting a proposal. You will present your research idea to your peers (and mentor(s)) at various stages of evolution throughout the semester. You will also receive thorough training in research ethics, especially with regard to human-subjects related research. You will also receive insights into what goes one behind the scenes – how do proposals get submitted, processed and reviewed, what is the role of the academic institutions vs. the funding agencies.

Student learning outcomes will be assessed as follows:

1. **Research Proposal.** This will determine 50% of your final grade. Due by 4pm on April 30.

   To help you pace yourself, you will turn in segments of your grant proposal throughout the semester, expanding each section continually in light of feedback received from the instructor, your mentor, and your peers. This is an iterative process. Your grade depends both on the timely submission of each of the partial assignments and on your efforts to revise and improve them.

2. **Attendance and participation.** This will determine 45% of your final grade.

   *Regular attendance* in class. This comprises 25% of your final course grade. If you miss more than three classes during the semester, I reserve the right to lower your grade for poor attendance. I expect all of us to be punctual. Late arrival will be counted as an absence. At the same time, regular attendance will help your academic standing, especially if you are "borderline" (e.g. between a A- and a B+). Also, if you know in advance that you will miss a class, please talk to me beforehand. It is your responsibility to obtain lecture notes from your fellow students.

   *Active participation* in class. This will determine 20% of your final course grade. It includes being attentive and participating constructively in class discussions. I expect students to come to class prepared.

3. **CITI Certification.** This will determine 5% of your final grade.

   As part of your training in sociological methods, you need to acquire competency in research ethics. Completing this assignment will take you several hours. You can complete it at any time in the semester, but it is due no later than Friday, May 1, by 4:00 p.m. I recommend you block a chunk of time in MARCH to enable you to prepare properly for the online assignment by first reading the Belmont Report and other readings recommended below.

Once you are ready to do the online assignment, please visit the CITI website at [https://www.citiprogram.org/](https://www.citiprogram.org/). Please complete the Group 2 basic course. The assignment will also be set up via the course Blackboard site. Please provide me either with a hard copy or with an electronic copy of the completion report (i.e., append the report as a file to verify completion).

**To Complete the CITI Group 2 course:**
- Complete all Required modules at [https://www.citiprogram.org/](https://www.citiprogram.org/).
- If you have not read the Belmont Report yet, please review this document and/or copy it for future reference.
- Print a Completion Report and share it with your instructor. An electronic copy will be automatically sent to UNL’s IRB office.
**Required readings for CITI certification:**

**Optional Readings:**
Title 45, Part 46 of the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46):  
Title 21 Code of Federal Regulations  Part 11  Electronic Records; Electronic Signatures (21 CFR 11):  
[http://www.fda.gov/ICECI/EnforcementActions/default.htm](http://www.fda.gov/ICECI/EnforcementActions/default.htm)
CLIA - Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments:  
Weeks 1-2   Introduction

Week 1 – January 14   Overview of Grant and Fellowship Funding Opportunities for Sociologists

In Class:   How do you pick the appropriate funder and format to “pitch” your idea? Project Summaries, White Papers, Quad Charts.

Form small groups based on common interests (will meet throughout semester).

Homework (On Your Own):  Meet with your mentor and the instructor to develop a research question. Identify the proper existing data set and method of analysis. Alternatively, identify the type of design and data that need to be collected. Identify one or several -- suitable and specific -- external funding opportunities.

Week 2 – January 21   Write it Up!

Online Activities:  Compose a Project Summary/White Paper/Quad Chart in accordance with the norms of your primary funding source.

Meet with your mentor and the instructor to refine the research question and description.

Meet with your small group to receive additional feedback. Incorporate feedback from all sources into this project description.

Find a published article that you think would be a good model for your project to emulate. (Could be because of the topic, the way it is structured, the methods, the theories, or any combination).

Weeks 3-6   How to Frame your Project

Week 3 – January 28   Establishing Intellectual or Scientific Merit

In Class:   Learn about the variants of the “research wheel.” Figure out which model works best for you. Engage in small group work.

How can you “frame” a project effectively? Which alternative ways exist?

Bring your model article to class. Be prepared to summarize what makes it so useful to your project.

Homework (On Your Own):  Meet with your mentor and the instructor to refine the research question and description again – determine the logical next step. Which theories will you seek to test or advance? In the back of your mind, ask yourself: How are these theories tied to hypotheses you plan to test?

Who is the best contact at your grant funding agency? Are you ready to share your idea with this program officer? If not, what do you need to do next?
**Week 4 – February 4  Developing a Theoretical Framework**

**Online Activities:** Keeping your project description in mind, develop the initial theoretical framework for your study. This will help you set up general hypotheses.

Meet with your mentor and the instructor to discuss the theoretical framework.

Meet with your small group to receive additional feedback.

Incorporate feedback from all sources into this part of the proposal. Identify “holes” in your understanding of the theoretical literature. Start researching the extant theoretically relevant literature you will need to cite.

Initiate contact with relevant program officers at your funding agency.

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**Week 5 – February 11 Everything You’ve Always Wanted to Know About …. Successful Grants**

**In Class:** Learn about successful grants from your peers. Group discussion and guest speaker presentation.

**Homework (On Your Own):** Meet with your mentor and the instructor to refine the theory section again – determine the logical next step. Which empirical literatures will you build on, what will your literature review look like? Identify “holes” in your understanding of the empirical literature. Start researching the extant empirically relevant literature you will need to cite.

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**Week 6 – February 18 Developing your Literature Review**

**Online Activities:** Keeping your project description and theory section in mind, develop the empirical literature review for your study. This will help you set up tangible hypotheses the following week.

Meet with your mentor and the instructor to discuss the literature review and how it relates to your theoretical framework.

Meet with your small group to receive additional feedback.

Incorporate feedback from all sources into this part of the proposal.

Have you heard back yet from relevant program officers at your funding agency?
**Week 7**  
**Excursion**

**Week 7 – February 25 Ethics Training and CITI Certification**

**Online Activities:**  
My recommendation: Complete the readings on research ethics listed above. Complete your online CITI training this week.

Share additional revisions to your project description with your mentor and the instructor.

Meet with your small group to receive additional feedback. Incorporate it.

Develop a timeline for writing the remaining parts of this grant proposal.

**Weeks 8-13**  
**Research Methods and Design**

**Week 8 – March 4**  
**Methods and Design Part I: How to Develop Hypotheses or Expectations**

**In Class:**  
Review models using examples from already published work.

**Discuss your project-specific hypotheses in groups.**

**Homework (On Your Own):** Meet with your mentor and the instructor to refine the literature review section again so it directly informs your hypotheses. How have your hypotheses or expectations changed so far? Incorporate feedback from all sources, including relevant program officers at your funding agency.

**Week 9 – March 11**

**Online Activities:**  
Refine your hypotheses in light of new insights about what existing data can enable you to do. Share these additional revisions to your project description with your mentor and the instructor.

If not relevant,… Pretend you need to collect original data for your project.

Meet with your mentor and the instructor to discuss: What type of a design would be needed to answer your research question? What type of pilot data might be needed to strengthen your grant proposal? Pros and cons of this approach?

Meet with your small group to receive additional feedback. Incorporate feedback from all sources.
Week 10 – March 18  Methods and Design -- Part II: Analyzing Existing Data Sets

In Class: UNL-based Resources, Federal Sources

(Guest Speaker about NASIS and RDC data, Instructor to provide info about data from NCES, NCSES, BoL, CDC etc.; plus major surveys like GSS, ANES, IPUMS, NSFH, Add Health)

Presentations from participants using existing data in their projects (max 2).

Homework (On Your Own): Before designing your own data collection project, scour the relevant data sets. Can they help answer (part) of your research question? Do they contain data or variables/measures you might want to replicate in your original data collection project? Pros and Cons of this approach?

Week 11 – March 22-29  SPRING BREAK

Week 12 – April 1  Methods and Design -- Part III: Designing Your Own Data Collection

In Class: UNL Guest Speaker(s)

Presentations from participants using existing data in their projects (max 2).

Homework (On Your Own): Develop a detailed plan for original data collection. Meet with your mentor and the instructor and incorporate their feedback.

Week 13 – April 8

Online Activities: Revisit your hypotheses in light of new insights about what original data collection can enable you to do. Tighten the theory-method-data links in your proposal.

Share these additional revisions to your project description with your mentor and the instructor.

Meet with your small group to receive additional feedback. Incorporate feedback from all sources.
**Weeks 14-16  Tying It All Together**

**Week 14 – April 15  Presentations**

In Class: Presentations from participants (max 3)

**Homework (On Your Own):** Meet with your mentor and the instructor to identify remaining parts of the proposal that need to be written or refined. Contact the Research Compliance/Human Subjects Protection Program to get guidance on what they need from you. Write IRB protocol.

**Week 15 – April 22  Work on Remaining Sections**

Online Activities: Write the remaining parts of the proposal, aside from the proposal narrative itself. For instance: Biosketch, Data Management Plan, Budget, …

**Week 16 – April 29  Navigating IRB and OSP Services**

In Class: Guest Speakers from Compliance and Office of Sponsored Programs to discuss IRB process and proposal submission processes

**Homework (On Your Own):** Finalize proposal. Submit to mentor and instructor by 4pm on Thursday, April 30.

Provide instructor and mentor with documentation of CITI Certification by 4pm on Friday, May 1.