Logic of the Course
Welcome! The Senior Honors Proseminar II is the second of two courses designed for honors students majoring in sociology. Students will conduct their empirical analyses, write the results, discussion, and conclusion sections of their theses, and develop a plan for disseminating their research. By the end of the semester, you will have unified the component parts of their thesis into a coherent whole and defended it before a three-person faculty committee.

In the first (Fall) Senior Proseminar, we emphasized conceptualization and measurement. You narrowed your topic to a thesis-sized research question, identified or secured the data and permissions necessary to proceed with your work, identified a thesis committee, and (in some cases) took your first cut at the analysis. In the second (Spring) Proseminar, you will focus on executing, writing, and rewriting the thesis. This course will likely differ from other courses you’ve taken, since our primary goal is to actually produce good social science (with learning how good social science is produced as a secondary goal). Your success will hinge on your ability to manage your time and emotions, so you must be both disciplined and flexible in meeting the challenges and embracing the opportunities ahead. Enjoy!

Objectives
- Strengthen the core research competencies you have learned in your major: literature searches, summarizing and critiquing articles, writing cogent literature reviews and convincing proposals, and presenting your ideas orally.
- Use these competencies and experiences to propose and produce your own research.
- In the first (Fall) Senior Proseminar, we emphasize conceptualization and measurement. You will narrow your topic to a thesis-sized research question, secure the data and permissions necessary to proceed with your work, identify your thesis committee, and take your first cut at the analysis.
- In the second (Spring) Senior Proseminar, you will finish data analysis and focus on writing and rewriting your thesis. You will unify its component parts into a coherent whole, defend the thesis before your committee, and consider outlets for publication or dissemination of your work.
Course Requirements and Grading

- This isn’t about getting an A, though most students earn A’s in 4978. Instead, your reward for this seminar is producing a senior project that represents the best work of your undergraduate career – work that could serve as a writing sample in any field you enter.

- 10% Results section (draft due 3/11)
  - This is the very heart of your thesis – what, exactly, did you learn by doing this research? What does it mean for your research questions (usually about 8-15 pages, depending on the project)

- 10% Discussion section/Complete rough draft (due 4/3)
  - The discussion is the most abused and neglected aspect of most articles. After you present your results, how do you interpret them in light of past research? You are essentially in conversation with the scholars that you cited in your literature review and theory section. What findings were consistent or inconsistent with other work? What intriguing or surprising results remain to be explained? (usually about 5-8 pages). This is followed by a 1-2 paragraph conclusion – your last chance to drive home the punchline for readers.

- 10% Poster (due 4/8 for 4/17 SRI and 4/22 poster session)
  - You will display your poster at the all-University research poster fair (Wednesday, 4/22); Coffman Union Great Hall and our annual sociological research institute (Friday 4/17). See creating an effective scientific poster presentation and how to make a great poster and effective poster design.

- 10% Oral presentation (due 4/8 for 4/17 SRI)
  - Making effective presentations is an increasingly important skill to develop. Here you will present your research on panels with graduate and undergraduate students before an audience of sociologists. These are typically organized by substantive areas (e.g., “law and social inequality”). The allotted time varies, but is usually 10-15 minutes per presenter. You will set up your research question, present your results, and leave the audience with the key take-home points.

- 50% Final thesis (due 4/29)
  - The best theses are well-integrated, carefully presented, and polished – that is, they are more than an assemblage of impressive parts. Your final paper should thus include effective transition statements that bridge the different sections – and it will entail a good bit of rewriting on the front-end as well as the back-end sections.

- 10% Participation and other short exercises
  - I will again ask you to be a critic as well as an author – and to contribute constructively by providing helpful feedback for your colleagues.

- The Defense
  - You will walk into a small conference room to greet your committee members. You will then briefly present your research and key findings (5-10 minutes) and then the committee will ask questions about the work and its implications (45 minutes). You will then be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates about whether revisions are necessary and the appropriate level of honors to assign for the project. This sounds scary because, well, it is a little scary. But! Rest assured that the committee wants to engage with you and your work and to see you do well. To make it less scary, make sure to stay organized and disciplined throughout the semester, to give committee members plenty of lead time (and to be courteous in your interactions), and to deliver a complete and polished final project.
• **A Note on Competition:** Everyone in this class is a high achiever, but the only person you are competing with is yourself. Learn what you can from your peers – work habits, inspiring ideas, oral and written presentation techniques -- but do not get distracted making invidious comparisons between yourself and other students: That way madness lies. Trust yourself and your own abilities, work hard, stay organized, and you are sure to write a terrific thesis.

• **Attendance:** Because the course is conducted as a seminar workshop, it is especially important for all students to be active participants. I therefore expect everyone to be engaged throughout the semester and to provide constructive feedback to other students in the class.

### Texts and Resources

- You should have these materials from fall semester. I sent an electronic copy of a previous edition of the *ASA Style Guide* already, but the 4th edition is available at the bookstore. Creswell’s research design book is oriented to social psychology but will provide a clear and simple reference point regardless of area or the methodology you employ.
  - University of Minnesota Department of Sociology. 2014. *Faculty Research Activities*.

- **A Few Other Classic Texts and Resources, by Subject (Recommended Only)**
  - Uggen’s [Link Page](#).

### Course Policies and Friendly Reminders

- **LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** Assignments and readings are due on the dates noted in the syllabus. Late assignments are penalized 5% per day. Please document any family or medical emergencies.

- **PLAGIARISM/ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT.** You obviously cannot file a thesis that includes plagiarized work. You do not need to plagiarize. You do not want to plagiarize. Very Bad Things will happen if you plagiarize. Do not plagiarize. If you have any doubts about the definition of plagiarism, please refer to American Sociological Association’s [ethics statement on plagiarism](#) and [Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices](#) by the Council of Writing Program Administrators.

- **TEACHING PHILOSOPHY, COLLEGE, AND DEPARTMENT POLICIES.** Attached.
Honors Thesis, Levels and Defense (adapted from J. Gerteis)

- The University bases the level of honors eligibility on GPA in the student’s final 60 graded credits, with the cutoffs as follows: *cum laude*: 3.500 GPA or higher; *magna*: 3.666 or higher; *summa*: 3.750 or higher. There are important details that you should review on the Honors web page and advisors; the department’s advisor, Bobby Bryant can tell you about cutoffs for departmental honors. While the GPA cutoffs establish your eligibility, the committee determines the honors level based on the quality of the thesis. This level may be below (but not above) the eligibility level.
- The Sociology Department requires you to assemble a committee of three faculty members, who will review the thesis paper and conduct the final hearing. Chris Uggen will be one, serving in the role of advisor. One other member must be a regular (tenure-track) member of the Sociology department. The third should be a faculty member from outside the department. You are responsible for recruiting faculty to fill the two open spots. We’ll discuss ways to make this easier.
- In April, you will send your thesis paper to all committee members and schedule a time for an oral defense. You will also present your research in a short (15 minute) presentation to the broader department community, but the defense itself is only open to the committee. In this defense, you will briefly present your research and key findings (5-10 minutes), and then the committee will ask questions about your work (45 minutes). You will then step out of the room while the committee discusses whether revisions are needed and which level of honors to assign. This sounds scary, but your committee wants you to do well and the discussions are usually quite constructive.

Tentative Class Outline

I. INTRODUCTIONS AND ORIENTATION

“I’m writing a book. I’ve got the page numbers done.” — Steven Wright

Week 1
1/21 Welcome! See the thesis, be the thesis... (everybody)
- Big picture stuff: Where you want to be in March, April, and May
  - Revisiting your committee, your models (and finding good examples), and your specialized methodological resources: people, courses, texts
  - Committee asks: Can we identify a clear research question? Does the answer matter for social science? For the broader world? Is the thesis complete, well-written, and nicely executed?
  - How “big” is an honors thesis? [versus MS thesis, dissertation, career...]
  - 3 months: Establishing individual timelines.
  - Etiquette and life skills
- WORKSHOP: Progress Reports

II. DATA HANDLING AND DESCRIPTION

“Writing is like driving at night in the fog. You can only see as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way.” — E.L. Doctorow

Week 2
1/28 Half-hour individual meetings w/ Uggen (sign-up sheet 1/21)
- Bring a hard copy of your “working draft”
Week 3
2/4 **Progress Reports on data collection and analysis (everybody)**
   - Bring your data files, field notes, or interview information, where appropriate

### III. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

“The art of writing is the art of discovering what you believe.” — Gustave Flaubert

Week 4
2/11 **Troubleshooting data collection and analysis (as needed)**
   - **WORKSHOP:** Live problem-addressing (and hopefully problem solving)
   - Coding interview data
   - [Poster design workshop #1](#), Tuesday 2/17/15 1:30-2:30, 310 Walter Library

Week 5
2/18 **Presenting univariate descriptive results: tables & figures (everybody)**
   - Describing your sample: quantitative and qualitative description
   - Creating ASR-style tables of means, percentages, standard deviations
   - Creating powerful figures in Excel and other packages
   - Writing it up: walking readers through the descriptives (tables can’t speak for themselves)

Week 6
2/25 **Presenting Qualitative Analysis (as needed)**
   - Textual analysis and computer analysis of qualitative data
   - The qualitative portions of quantitative theses
   - BRING: Your data, field notes, or interviews and any problems you might have
   - [Poster design workshop #2](#) (same as #1,#3), Wednesday 2/25/15 1-2 Magrath Library rm 81

Week 7
3/4 **Presenting bivariate and multivariate results (everybody)**
   - Crosstabs, Chi-square tests, T-tests and other bivariate approaches
   - Multiple Regression and other multivariate approaches
   - **BRING:** Your data and output and any problems you might have

Week 8
3/11 **Individual meetings on analysis issues (as needed)**

**DUE:** Real draft of results section due to Uggen and critic by 3/13 at 6pm.
   - **Organization:** for the draft, I want everyone to follow the same general pattern (you will have freedom to deviate from this later on).
     - Front end (I want to see the whole thesis, so attach your front-end)
     - 1-paragraph section introduction
     - At least one table that describes your data (e.g., interview subjects) (follow conventions in ASA style guide and complete text describing this table)
     - At least one figure that graphs a key relationship or levels of key variables and complete text describing this figure
     - At least one table or narrative summary that presents your analysis and inference and complete text describing this table.
     - A narrative summary of key findings
3/18- Spring break – No class

Week 9
3/25 One-on-one meetings on results (as needed)
• Make sure that you are writing now – continue to fine-tune the analysis if needed, but don’t put off the actual writing.
• What if the research question “evolved” while conducting the analysis?
• The discussion back-end must connect the results to the issues raised in the front end; if not, revise front- or back-end until it does.

IV. INTEGRATING THE COMPONENTS
“You don’t start out writing good stuff. You start out writing crap and thinking it’s good stuff, and then gradually you get better at it. That's why I say one of the most valuable traits is persistence.”
-- Octavia Butler

Week 10
4/1 PowerPoint and posters / Writing the back-end (everybody)
• Poster design workshop #3 (same as #1,#2), Tuesday 3/31 1-2 Magrath Library rm 81

DUE: A real draft of your complete thesis (including discussion and conclusion sections) due to Uggen and critic by Friday 4/3 at 6pm.
• NOTE: You will be scheduling your oral thesis defenses throughout the month of April (do not plan to get your committee together the last week of classes), so make sure your draft is something you can send your committee without apology.
• THE WHOLE ENCHILADA, CONTAINING EACH OF THESE COMPONENTS:
  o Title Page
  o Abstract
  o Literature Review, Theory, and Conceptualization (but don’t call it that)
  o Data, Measures, and Methodology
  o Results
  o Discussion (must refer back to questions raised in lit/theory section)
  o Conclusion (can be very brief- summary of results, caveats, remaining questions)
  o References
• CRITERIA: Completeness; Clarity and internal logic; Style and presentation (syntax, spelling, punctuation); Appropriateness, specificity, and extent of literature review; Appropriateness and quality of analysis; Effectiveness of discussion in linking results to research questions, conceptualization, and literature review; Appropriateness of conclusions, caveats, and directions for future research

V. DELIVERING THE GOODS
“Rewriting isn’t just about dialogue; it’s the order of the scenes, how you finish a scene, how you get into a scene.” – Tom Stoppard

Week 11
4/8 Oral/Poster presentations (5-10 minutes) in preparation for SRI
DUE: Electronic copy of your poster to meet free printing deadline (TBA)
Week 12
4/15 No class – but full draft is due (and SRI 4/17)

4/17 FRIDAY: RESERVE THE FULL DAY FOR SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE CONFERENCE AND PRESENTATION [YOU ARE ALSO INVITED TO EVENING FESTIVITIES]

Week 13
4/22 Undergraduate research symposium poster session (Great Hall, Coffman)
• Sign up for Session 3, if possible (3:00-4:30)

Week 14
4/29 Complete thesis due – Preparing for Defense (everybody)

Week 15
5/6 Oral Exams (4/30-5/8)
Uggen’s Teaching Goals and Philosophy

1. **Respect for Students.**
   The other points are really a subset of this one. Education is a service industry, but you cannot simply purchase a unit of education the way you would buy other commodities. Instead, you must devote time and energy to learning. I respect those students who must make work, family, or other commitments their top priority. Nevertheless, to benefit from the class and to be rewarded with a high grade, you must find time to do the work.

2. **Procedural Justice or Fairness.**
   In my non-statistics classes, I typically grade exams and papers anonymously (by identification numbers rather than names) to avoid favoritism or other biases. Universal standards and strict deadlines are the best way I know to provide equal opportunities for all students.

3. **High Standards for Excellence.**
   I reserve grades of A for outstanding work that engages course materials with original thought and creativity or a mastery of technical skills. You can receive a B by doing all of the work well and a C by meeting all course requirements.

4. **Opportunities for Independent Work.**
   All must meet the basic requirements. For those wishing to engage the material at the highest level, I allow flexibility for more ambitious projects.

5. **Responsiveness and Accountability.**
   You will have the opportunity to evaluate me and to critique the course in time for me to make changes that will benefit you. If you think I have failed to live up to the principles or philosophies here listed, please let me know about it.

6. **Accessibility.**
   I will be available to you during office hours and flexible in scheduling appointments outside these hours (including nights and weekends).

7. **Openness to Diverse Perspectives.**
   Sharing your experiences and understandings (publicly or privately) enriches the course for your fellow students, especially when you disagree with me.

8. **Enthusiasm for the Subjects I Teach and for Teaching as a Vocation.**
   I cannot expect you to really engage the course materials if I am bored with them. Therefore, I will make every effort to make the texts, lectures, and assignments current, relevant, and intellectually engaging.

9. **Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes.**
   I teach: (1) technical and life skills that will benefit you inside and outside of the classroom; (2) abstract and concrete knowledge about the social world; and, (3) attitudes promoting the free and good-humored exchange of ideas.
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS POLICY

GRADES: University academic achievement is graded under two systems: A-F (with pluses and minuses) and S-N. Choice of grading system and course level (1xxx/3xxx/4xxx) is indicated on the registration website; changes in grade scale may not be made after the second week of the semester. Some courses may be taken under only one system; limitations are identified in the course listings. The Department of Sociology requires A-F registration in courses required for the major/minor. University regulations prescribe the grades that will be reported on your transcript.

A  Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements (4.00 grade points)
A- 3.67 grade points
B+ 3.33 grade points
B  Achievement significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements (3.00 grade points)
B- 2.67 grade points
C+ 2.33 grade points
C  Achievement that meets the basic course requirements in every respect (2.00 grade points)
C- 1.67 grade points
D+ 1.33 grade points
D  Achievement worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements (1.00 grade point)
F  Performance that fails to meet the basic course requirements (0 grade points)
S  Represents achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better.
N  No credit. Its use is now restricted to students not earning an S on the S-N grade base
I  Incomplete, a temporary symbol assigned when the instructor has a “reasonable expectation” that you 1) can successfully complete unfinished work on your own no later than one year from the last day of classes and 2) believes that legitimate reasons exist to justify extending the deadline for course completion. The instructor may set date conditions for make-up work. If a course is not completed as prescribed or not made up as agreed within the year, the I will lapse to an F if registered on the A-F grade base or an N if registered on the S-N grade base.
W  Official withdrawal from a course after the end of the second week of the semester. You must file a course cancellation request before the end of the sixth week of the semester to ensure that the W, rather than the F, will be formerly entered on your record.

FINAL EXAMINATIONS (see schedule on the Calendar web site at http://onestop.umn.edu/onestop/Calendars/FinalExams.html): You are required to take final examinations at the scheduled times. Under certain circumstances, however, you may request final examination schedule adjustment in your college office. Instructors are obligated to schedule make-up examinations within the final examination period for students who have three final examinations within a 16-hour period. Instructors also are encouraged to reschedule examinations for students with religious objections to taking an examination on a given day. You must submit your request for an adjustment in your schedule at least two weeks before the examination period begins. For assistance in resolving conflicts, call the CLA Student Information Office at 625-2020. If you miss a final, an F or N is recorded. You must obtain the instructor’s permission to make up the examination. Final examinations may be rescheduled by the instructor only through the official procedure for that purpose (as noted on the above web page). Final examinations may not be scheduled for the last day of class or earlier or for Study Day. If an examination is rescheduled at the instructor’s request, and you have an examination conflict because of it, you are entitled to be given the final examination at an alternative time within the regularly scheduled examination period for that semester.

CLASS ATTENDANCE: As a CLA student, you are responsible for attending class and for ascertaining the particular attendance requirements for each class or department. You should also learn each instructor’s policies concerning make-up of work for absences. Instructors and students may consult the CLA Classroom, Grading, and Examination Procedures Handbook for more information on these policies (http://advisingtools.class.umn.edu/cgep/).
COURSE PERFORMANCE AND GRADING: Instructors establish ground rules for their courses in conformity with their department policies and are expected to explain them at the first course meeting. This includes announcement of office hours and location, the kind of help to be expected from the instructor and teaching assistants, and tutorial services, if available. The instructor also describes the general nature of the course, the work expected, dates for examinations and paper submissions, and expectations for classroom participation and attendance. Instructors determine the standards for grading in their classes and will describe expectations, methods of evaluation, and factors that enter into grade determination. The special conditions under which an incomplete (I) might be awarded also should be established. The college does not permit you to submit extra work to raise your grade unless all students in the class are afforded the same opportunity.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: You are entitled to a good learning environment in the classroom. Students whose behavior is disruptive either to the instructor or to other students will be asked to leave (the policies regarding student conduct are outlined in the CLA Classroom, Grading, and Examination Procedures on-line at http://advisingtools.class.umn.edu/cgep/).

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: University instructors may restrict or prohibit the use of personal electronic devices in his or her classroom, lab, or any other instructional setting. For the complete policy, visit: http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html

SCHOLASTIC CONDUCT: The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows: Scholastic Dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. Students cannot evade (intentionally or unintentionally) a grade sanction by withdrawing from a course before or after the misconduct charge is reported. This also applies to late withdrawals, including discretionary late cancellation (also known as the “one-time-only drop”). For the complete policy, visit: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND STRESS MANAGEMENT: As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student’s ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu/.

A REMINDER OF RELEVANT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
* SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES *

GRADE INFORMATION: Grades are due in the Office the Registrar within 3 business days after the final examination. No information regarding grades will be released by the department office staff to anyone except designated personnel in Records and college offices. Students may access their own grades through their computer account. They may do this by following the directions on the One Stop web site at http://onestop.umn.edu/.

INCOMPLETES: It is the instructor’s responsibility to specify conditions under which an Incomplete (I) grade is assigned. Students should refer to the course syllabus and talk with the instructor as early as possible if they anticipate not completing the course work. Coursework submitted after the final examination will generally be evaluated down unless prior arrangements are made in writing by the instructor. University policy states that if completion of the work requires the student to attend class in substantial part a second time, assigning an “I”
grade is NOT appropriate. Incompletes are appropriate only if the student can make up the coursework independently with the same professor.

**MAKE-UP EXAMINATIONS:** Arrangements for special examinations must be made directly with the instructor who taught the course and who is responsible for approving and supervising the examination or making individual arrangements. Circumstances for missing an exam include, but are not necessarily limited to: verified illness, participation in athletic events or other group activities sponsored by the University, serious family emergencies, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, and religious observances. It is the responsibility of the student to notify faculty members of such circumstances as far in advance as possible.

**GRADE CHANGES:** Grades properly arrived at are not subject to renegotiation unless all students in the class have similar opportunities. Students have the right to check for possible clerical errors in the assignment of grades by checking with the instructor and/or teaching assistant.

Students with justifiable complaints about grades or classroom procedures have recourse through well-established grievance procedures. You are expected to confer first with the course instructor. If no satisfactory solution is reached, the complaint should be presented in writing to the department Director of Undergraduate Studies or the Coordinator of Undergraduate Advising (909 Soc Sci). If these informal processes fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, other formal procedures for hearing and appeal can be invoked. See the departmental advisor in 923 Social Sciences to explore options.

**DISABILITY SERVICES:** Students with disabilities that affect their ability to participate fully in class or to meet all course requirements are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the instructor so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged. For more info contact Disabilities Services in 230 McNamara.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT:** University policy prohibits sexual harassment as defined in the December 1998 policy statement, available at the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. Questions or concerns about sexual harassment should be directed to this office in 419 Morrill Hall.

**SOCIOLGY PROGRAMS INFORMATION:** The Sociology Department offers two options for the Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Science degree. We also have an Honors Program. Students interested in majoring in Sociology should view the online-information session about the major. Further information can be obtained from the following persons and offices or online at http://www.soc.umn.edu/undergrad/

General information, Sociology Department, 909 Social Sciences - 624-4300  
Coordinator of Undergraduate Advising, Bobby Bryant, 923 Social Sciences – 624-4300  
Director of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Teresa Swartz, 1172 Social Sciences - 624-2310  
Sociology Honors Advisor, Professor Kathleen Hull, 1131 Social Sciences - 624-4339  
Director of Graduate Studies, Professor Ann Meier, 1074 Social Sciences – 624-9828 and/or  
Graduate Program Associate, Becky Drasin, 927 Social Sciences - 624-2093  
Undergraduate jobs, internships, volunteer and research opportunities, scholarships, and much more can be found in the Undergraduate Resources site - [http://z.umn.edu/socugrad](http://z.umn.edu/socugrad)