Pre-Recorded Lectures
This is main content-delivery for the course. It is extremely important that you follow along with the lecture and take notes. Video and audio versions of the lectures will be posted on the course website. **You do not have to watch “live,” during the scheduled hours for the lecture.** Lecture slides will also be made available.

Discussion Period
Wednesdays, 12:15 P.M. to 12:45 P.M., PDT

Every week I will save roughly 30 minutes of “lecturing” time so we can do an optional in-person discussion period to address lingering questions and concerns. Note, however, that these meetings will not be recorded because of privacy issues.

Readings
There is no textbook for this course. There are readings for each unit in the course, however. Please consult the class schedule to stay up to date. The PDFs of all the readings are posted under the appropriate heading on the course website.

Learning Goals
At the end of this course you should understand the basics of how sociologists do research. You should also leave this course being able to evaluate research critically (i.e. judging how much faith you should put in particular findings) and being able to conduct some research yourself. Methodology is, of course, an incredibly deep topic, so you won’t be an expert at the end of this class. But it should provide you with real, marketable knowledge and skills, and give you a solid foundation for learning more about particular research methods later on in your school and work careers.

This course is designed to provide you with regular feedback as you move through the content. The learning process should look something like this:
- do the readings
- come to class
- apply the ideas in your research diaries (see below) and daily quizzes
- get feedback on whether you understand the ideas properly
- complete your research papers (see below) and the final exam (see below) to demonstrate the knowledge you have learned.

Our assessments have two different goals. For the research diaries and the daily quizzes, the point is to give you an opportunity to "practice" or "apply" the things you learn in a low-stakes environment, and to get feedback on what you are doing right and what you are doing wrong. This is a stripped-down version of mastery learning. Toward the end of the class you will get to prove your knowledge (now that you have had practice and feedback) with a final exam and a paper.

Grading & Assignments
The overall breakdown of grades will look like this:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>0%†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Diary #1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Diary #2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Research Paper</td>
<td>30%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Research Paper</td>
<td>30%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†Quizzes do not count toward your grade
*The breakdown of grades for the two papers can be found in the project instructions document

We’re going to convert from percentages to letter grades like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97.0% to 100%</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93.0% to 96.9%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90.0% to 92.9%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.0% to 89.9%</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.0% to 86.9%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.0% to 82.9%</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.0% to 79.9%</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.0% to 76.9%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70.0% to 72.9%</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67.0% to 69.9%</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.0% to 66.9%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60.0% to 62.9%</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0% to 59.9%</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are taking the class on a Pass/No Pass basis (P/NP), a Pass is equivalent to a C or higher. UCLA sociology students may take the class P/NP and still fulfill departmental requirements. Other students should consult their home institutions. If in doubt please take the class for a grade.

Quizzes
Practice questions will be posted alongside every lecture. These will not be on the exam, but they are a good indication of the type of questions you can expect to see on the exam.

Original Research Projects (Research Diaries & Paper)
You will be undertaking two research projects for this course. These will each result in a separate 1250- to 1500-word paper (roughly 4-5 doubled spaced pages) that has (a) an introduction explaining what your topic is and why it’s interesting, (b) a methodology section explaining how you did your research, and what the strengths and weaknesses are in that approach, (c) a findings section explaining the results of your study and to what extent you can trust your findings given your methodological approach. This might sound intimidating, but every one of these points is going to be covered in this course, and you will get a chance to rehearse some of these ideas in the research diaries.

Qualitative Research Project
We cover three main qualitative research methods in this course: ethnography, archival research, and interviews. The qualitative research project must use one of these methods to investigate the social
world. **Under the “Research Projects and Diaries” folder you will find a document that explains the project in detail.**

You have a choice between three different projects, as explained in the document.

**Research Diary #1**, due one week before your paper is due, will give you an opportunity to get feedback on the main ideas in your research here, so you can go back and improve things if you wish. A prompt explaining how this is to be done is in the “Research Projects and Diaries” folder on the course website.

**Quantitative Research Project**

In the second research project you will be doing quantitative research, either using linear models or social network analysis to study the social world.

The task in the first research project will be to research something in the social world from a **qualitative perspective**, and to write a paper about it. Under the “Research Projects and Diaries” folder on the course website you will find a document that explains the assignment in detail.

One week before the paper is due you will turn in **Research Diary #2**. This will give you an opportunity to get feedback on the main ideas in your paper, so you can go back and improve things if you wish. The prompt for this assignment can also be found under the “Research Projects and Diaries” folder on the course website.

**Final Exam**

The final exam will be one hour long and will consist of 30 multiple choice questions. Some questions will test your knowledge of the concepts you have learned in this course. Others will ask you to read about actual research and evaluate/assess it according to specific ideas, like sampling, research design, analytical approaches, and so on.

You can take the exam at one of two times:

- During normal lecture hours, 11 A.M. to 12 P.M. PDT
- “After hours,” 8 P.M. to 9 P.M. PDT

You may only take the exam once, so you need to decide between taking the exam during normal lecture hours, and taking the exam after hours. The 30 questions given during the first exam time will have no overlap with the 30 questions given during the second exam time, though they will cover the same course material.

There are no advantages to taking the test at either time, beyond your own convenience.
# Class Schedule & Readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lectures and Readings</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 1: Introduction to Methodology</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 1 (Monday, June 22\textsuperscript{nd})</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lectures to watch/listen to:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1a: Introduction to the course, review of the syllabus</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 1b: Qualitative Research Project, Options and Guidelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1c: Quantitative Research Project, Options and Guidelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Required readings</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Why AREN’T you reading any selections?**
- You shouldn’t be required to have done work before the term even starts

| **Session 2 (Wednesday, June 24\textsuperscript{th})** | |
| **Lectures to watch/listen to:** | |
| Unit 2: What is a method? Basic terminology | |
| Unit 3: Experiments, causation, and internal validity | |
| **Required readings** | |
| Understanding the principles | |
| Example of research | |

**Why are you reading these selections?**
- The Ragin & Amoroso chapter provide a great explanation for why people do research in the first place, and what kind of implications those reasons hold for the type of research strategy we use. It is a complement to the material in Unit 2.
- Blackstone's short section on experiments provides a good overview of the classic scientific experiment, the central topic in Unit 3.
- Bursell’s article is a short (and super interesting) example of experimental research in sociology. It will help in understanding Unit 3.
Part 2: Fundamentals of Qualitative Research

Session 3 (Monday, June 29th)

Lectures to watch/listen to:
Unit 4: Ethnography as a fundamental research method
Unit 5: How to write and analyze ethnographic fieldnotes
Unit 6: Induction, deduction, and abduction

Required readings
Understanding the principles

Example of research

Why are you reading these selections?
• Emerson and his co-authors give a fantastic overview of the actual method of ethnography in these two chapters, what to pay attention to, what to write down, what not to neglect. This will help with the material in Units 4, 5 and 6. It will also be crucial for figuring out how to “do” ethnography, for those of you who choose the ethnography for your qualitative research project.
• The Reilly article shows you what this actually looks like in a finished form. It can be a little hard to understand how all of this leads to actual knowledge.

Session 4 (Wednesday, July 1st)

Lectures to watch/listen to:
Unit 7: Archival data and history
Unit 8: Comparative research and Mill’s methods
Unit 9: Process Tracing

Required readings
Understanding the principles

Example of research
Why are you reading these selections?

- The Ragin & Amoroso reading this week gives a gentle but thorough introduction into comparative research. It doesn't cover everything that researchers use for historical cases, but it does explain the logic of inquiry extremely well. It is especially useful for Unit 8.
- Muller's article—aside from showing an absolutely nutty historical practice of lending convicts to private companies in the US South—does a good job of showing the wide range of material social scientists can draw on in their research. This study is not comparative, but it gives a good counter-weight to the Ragin & Amoroso article, and addresses Units 7 and 9.

Session 5 (Monday, July 6th)

*Lectures to watch/listen to:*

Unit 10: Interviews and surveys, construct validity  
Unit 11: How to ask a good question—Qualitative research  
Unit 12: How to ask a good question—Quantitative research  
Unit 13: Transcripts and tabular data

*Required readings*

*Understanding the principles*  
Blackstone, Amy. 2012. "Survey Research: A Quantitative Technique," Chapter 8 in *Principles of Sociological Inquiry: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*. Saylor Foundation. (Note: Reading 8.5 is not required)  

*Example of research*  

Why are you reading these selections?

- Blackstone describes how surveys and interviews work, what's at stake in them, and what researchers need to consider when undertaking them. This is especially important for Units 10 and 13.
- Smith's article really hits home at how asking questions the wrong way can have consequences on the way we do science. In this case, he argues that we actually know very little about church attendance in the U.S. because social desirability bias screws up all our surveys (people want you to think they go to church even if they don't).

*Further reading (NOT required)*


Part 3: Fundamentals of Quantitative Research

Session 6 (Wednesday, July 8th)
Lectures to watch/listen to:
Unit 14: Representativeness, generalization, and external validity
Unit 15: Probability sampling
Unit 16: Non-probability sampling

Required readings
Understanding the principles

Why are you reading these selections?
• Blackstone’s chapter provides a good and accessible discussion of sampling. It covers almost everything we talk about in Units 14, 15, and 16.

Research Diary #1 due date (Friday, July 10th)

Research Diary #1

Session 7 (Monday, July 13th)

Lectures to watch/listen to:
Unit 17: Basic intuitions of quantitative research
Unit 18: Contingency tables, regression lines
Unit 19: Interpreting statistical output

Required readings
Understanding the principles

Example of research

Why are you reading these selections?
• Payne & Payne do a great job explaining the way we use contingency tables. This is important for Unit 18, and will help for your research project if you choose to do the statistical project.
• The Allison piece is a wonderful introduction to what regression is and how it works. This is perfect for making sense of Units 17, 18, and 19, and should help a lot if you choose to do the statistical project for the course.
• The Hughes & Thomas article takes data from one of the most important surveys in the United States, the General Social Survey, and applies linear models to it toward one of the most important questions in the country, the ways in which race continues to be an important determinant of life chances.
Session 8 (Wednesday, July 15th)

Lectures to watch/listen to:
Unit 20: Computational social science
Unit 21: Social networks and relational data
Unit 22: Network centrality

Required readings
Understanding the principles

Example of research
Barkey, Karen, and Ronan Van Rossem. 1997. "Networks of Contention: Villages and Regional Structure in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire." American Journal of Sociology 102 (5): 1345-1346, 1352-1360, 1371-76. (Note: Please do look at the figure on 1365. It's a bit hard to understand, but that is the simplified social network the authors are working with.)

Why are you reading these selections?
• This text from Easley and Kleinberg will introduce you to the central conceit of network research, and the things network scientists have in mind when they set out to analyze a graph. This is valuable for Units 21 and 22, and also for your projects if you choose to do the network project.
• This manifesto from Lazer and his colleagues summarizes extremely well how the growth in computing power and the exponential increase in digital data has spawned an entirely new corner of social science. This is helpful in understanding Unit 20
• The reading from Barkey & Van Rossem does a fantastic job showing how we can use networks in creative ways. Here they show how the connections between villages under the Ottoman empire in Turkey affected their likelihood to challenge (or outright revolt) against Istanbul.

Qualitative Research Paper Due Date (Friday, July 17th)

Session 9 (Monday, July 20th)

Lectures to watch/listen to:
Unit 23: Studying language use
Unit 24: Textual analysis (what people write)
Unit 25: Content analysis and natural language processing (what people write)
Unit 26: Conversation analysis (what people say)

Required readings
Understanding the principles


Example of research


Why are you reading these selections?

- Krippendorff’s textbook is the classic content analysis introductory book. The selection here is a history of developments around content analysis, but it does a great job of giving you a basic understanding of what content analysis does and why people use it. This is going to be especially useful for Unit 25, but also a bit for Units 23 and 26.

- The Eisenstein reading is scary. Don’t be scared. I am not testing you on the math, or even if you really understand it all. I mainly want to give you a taste of why we don’t just lump together content analysis and natural language processing—they each have a very different feel, as you’ll be able to see in this short excerpt. This is useful for Unit 25.

- Liddicoat overviews what conversation analysis is about in this introductory chapter, without getting too much into the weeds. This is mainly useful for Unit 26

- Wu, Wang, and Evans, meanwhile provide a nice short example of how we can use something like natural language processing to discover interesting things. This helps in giving a basic sense of what we’re talking about in Unit 25.

- Stivers and her colleagues give a great demonstration here of the types of findings that conversation analysis can produce. The method is hidden away in this article, but it still stands as a fine example.

Session 10 (Wednesday, July 22nd)

*Lectures to watch/listen to:*

Unit 27: Prediction and real-world applications
Unit 28: K-Nearest Neighbors
Unit 29: Decision trees and random forests
Unit 30: Neural networks

*Required readings*

*Understanding the principles*

Ng, Annalyn and Kenneth Soo. (2017). *Numsense! Data Science for the Layman*. Ng & Soo, Selected excerpts.
Example of research

Further reading (NOT required)
Nielsen, Michael. 2019. “Using Neural Nets to Recognize Handwritten Digits,” in *Neural Networks and Deep Learning*. (Note: Read as much or as little as you would like. This is the gentlest introduction I know of.)

Why are you reading these selections?
- It’s hard to find easy-to-read introductions to these more unique forms of analysis. Ng and Soo here do a very nice job introducing people to the principles without going too heavy on the math. The excerpts address Units 27, 28, 29, and 30.
- Davidson’s article is the unusual example of neural networks being used in sociology. He also takes the time to explain why we don’t tend to use them in sociology, which is helpful in thinking through all of the units in this session, but especially Unit 30.

Research Diary #2 due date (Friday, July 24th)

Session 11 (Monday, July 27th)
*Lectures to watch/listen to:*
Review Session

Session 12 (Wednesday, July 29th)
*Lectures to watch/listen to:*
Nothing! It’s exam time!

Quantitative Research Paper due date (Friday, July 31st)
No class

Research Diary #2
Final Exam
Quantitative Research Paper