

Sociology Research Methods: Applied Methods
Brandeis University
Soc82
Summer 2024

Instructor: Charlotte Powley, PhD. MPH, M.Ed., M.A.
Office Hours: By appointment (and/or Tuesday after class)
Email: charlottepowley88@gmail.com
Class Meetings: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 11:10pm-1:40pm
Start Date: June 3rd, 2024
End Date: July 5th, 2024
Class Location: <https://brandeis.zoom.us/j/9242310216?omn=99511152729>

Important Class Documents:

[Course Slide Deck](#)

Course [Key Terms](#)

[Course Baseline](#)

[Missed Class form](#)

Article Sign Up [Sheet](#)

[Discussion Posts](#)

[Summer 2024 Partner Survey Directions and Rubric](#)

Important Dates for the rest of the semester:

- Survey rough draft due:
- Final survey due:
- Submit write up by
- STATA quiz #1:
- STATA quiz #2:
- Presentation date options:
- Final exam (in class) _____ (note: multiple choice in class); I'm happy to have essay options be due outside of class.

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to research methods and quantitative analysis commonly used in sociology. The course assumes no prior knowledge of research methods, but it does assume an interest in why we conduct research, how research studies are designed, and a willingness to analyze the research methods and results of different research studies. This class fulfills Brandeis' Quantitative Reasoning (QR) requirement, which means that there will be a strong focus on understanding numeric data. Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend on average a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion posts, STATA exercises).

Class Texts and Resources:

No textbook required. All readings/videos will be available on Latte.

Trigger Warning

The readings will encompass a wide variety of viewpoints and perspectives. The purpose of assigning a variety of readings is to help you understand how data is used to support different arguments. When I assign a reading, it is not because I necessarily agree or disagree with the content or the argument. Rather, it is important to understand how researchers are structuring arguments using data. If there is a reading that is very upsetting to you, I want to know. Together we will need to determine how you can still be a strong participant in the class even when confronted with a difficult research study.

Learning Goals

- To understand how a research study is constructed including research question(s), literature review, methods, findings, discussions, and limitations
- To demonstrate proficiency in analyzing data using STATA (a statistical software)
- To understand key concepts in data analysis such as dependent variable, independent variable, sampling methods, scales, and correlations
- To be able to articulate the importance of ethical guidelines in research and to understand the IRB approval process
- To understand how higher education reflects the social stratification found in U.S. society

Documented Disabilities

Brandeis seeks to welcome and include all students. If you are a student who needs accommodations as outlined in an accommodations letter, please talk with me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as you can. I want to support you.

In order to provide test accommodations, I need the letter more than 48 hours in advance. I want to provide your accommodations, but cannot do so retroactively. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Support (SAS) at 781.736.3470 or access@brandeis.edu.

Course Inclusion Statement:

"I am, somehow, less interested in the weight and convolutions of Einstein's brain than in the near certainty that people of equal talent have lived and died in cotton fields and sweatshops."- Stephen J. Gould

Gould wasn't just expressing concern for the underrepresented, but pointing out how much the world has lost because only a very small subset of people ever had a good chance to contribute in certain spaces. In this class, as members of a privileged institution, we have a chance to make a dent in this historical pattern. The promise of social science at its best is that the strength of your contribution does not depend on your identity. This promise has never been fully met, and part of my job as an instructor is to get social science closer to it. Being the instructor undoubtedly carries a certain degree of power and privilege and I intend to use this position to empower those who do not yet have the same power and privilege. If you find yourself wondering whether the ways in

which you are different from your peers or from the historical figures of the academic canon make you less qualified to be a student or mental health counselor, please remember this: the only thing we care about in this class is your effort and engagement with the material, and I promise to work to make sure you have what you need to be able to grow in this class. Our field needs more and more people like you (and unlike you) to address society's most pressing challenges. And if you feel empowered already, we hope you will join us in empowering your peers. (Inspired by a statement created at Brown University).

Attendance & Process:

Attendance in this course is required and essential. This course will involve both didactic and experiential components to facilitate learning. Regular attendance is mandatory since much of the course is based on group discussion and in-class activities that cannot be made up. In the event of an emergency (health illness, loss of loved one, etc.) please notify me as soon as possible that you will be unable to attend class. If you are ill or suffer some other catastrophe you are still responsible for material covered, announcements made and activities completed in lecture. **One** unexcused class absence will result in ***your grade dropping a FULL letter grade***. For example, if a student's final course grade is an "A," however, she/he/they had **one** unexcused class absence then he/she/they would receive a final course grade of "B." You are allowed one absence without loss of credit. With that said, if you miss a class, you are expected to complete the missed class form within 48 hours of the missed class in order to keep you up to date with the class material and any announcements (this is *not* in place of the class and does not substitute for class attendance).

Readings: Students are expected to read assigned material **BEFORE** class and come prepared to discuss the topic(s). Your active participation during each class session will contribute to the learning process for all involved. The more each of us gives, the richer the experiences will be for all of us. Come to class prepared to raise questions, discuss topics and participate in class activities. Additional readings may be assigned throughout the course.

Expectations of Professionalism:

1. Ask for clarification at any time.
2. Secure, activate and frequently check your Brandeis email (suggested once/day).
3. You are **required** to **frequently** check Latte during the week.
4. Attend class on time; late arrivals disrupt the learning environment.
5. Access all required assigned articles/videos.
6. Turn-off cell phones during class.
7. Be courteous and treat all persons in the classroom with respect; different opinions will be shared/expressed to the extent that not everyone will be in agreement (i.e., cultural, environmental differences).
8. Students have the right to express opinions in a respectful and timely manner.

If you are taking this class using the pass/fail option, remember that in order to have a pass (P) on your transcript, your final grade must be a 70 or above. If you have below a 70, the respective grade (D+, D, D-, F) appears on your transcript and is factored into your cumulative grade point average.

Final grades will be calculated using this distribution:

- 94-99 A
- 90-93 A-
- 87-89 B+
- 84-86 B
- 80-83 B-
- 77-79 C+
- 74-76 C
- 70-73 C-
- 67-69 D+
- 64-66 D
- 60-63 D-
- Below 60: F

University Policy on Academic Integrity

You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work, which means completing papers and assignments independently unless instructed in writing to do otherwise. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at LTS-Library guides.

Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of nine hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for the exams, etc.

All written work must be completed to receive a passing grade in this class.

Assignments

Assignment	Percentage/Rubrics	Due Date
Attendance and Class Participation:	20%	Due Date: ongoing
Discussion <u>Posts</u> :	15%	Due Date: Ongoing (noon before class)
Group Analysis of a Research Article:	10% Sign Up Here (Directions and Rubric within): <u>Summer 2023 Article Rubric and Sign Up Sheet</u>	Due Date: Ongoing Group Selection (See document to the left)

	Group Work Form: Group Feedback Form	
Survey Assignment:	15% Survey Directions and Rubric Group Work Form: https://forms.gle/MWsB2oZm2HSXEzdS6	Rough Draft Due: Final Due:
STATA Assignments:	20% (Two Quizzes: 10% each)	#1: #2:
Final Exam:	20%	

COURSE OUTLINE

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

(This table is subject to ongoing revisions!)

	Main topic	In Class	Readings and/or Assignments Due
Unit 1: Intro & Study Designs Content: Belonging lens, research methods overview Skills: Critical Thinking			
Class #1 6/3	Welcome to Sociology Research Methods	Review Syllabus Transparent learning objectives (review assignments) Key Terms List Latte Discussion Posts: Soc82 Latte Posts Template Common Writing Mistakes: Soc101 Common Writing Mistakes	Read through Syllabus Chapter 6 in Michelle Obama's "Becoming"

		<p>Sociology Research Methods: What do we already know? What do we want to know?</p> <p>Belonging in Higher Education & Discussion of "Becoming" Chapter</p>	
Class #2 6/4	Research Methods Introduction II	<p>Review of Research Methods Key Terms from Chapter One & Chapter Two from Social Science Research</p> <p>Review article assignment</p>	Please see slides for readings/videos due today.
Class #3 6/5	Research Methods Introduction III	<p>Intro to Different Types of Studies and Threats to Internal Validity</p> <p>Internal Validity Activity</p>	Please see slides for readings/videos due today.
<p>Unit 2: Ethical Research Practices and Study Designs Continued Content: Ethical/unethical research in history, study designs Skills: utilizing critical race lens and disability lens to understand patterns of abusive research</p>			
Class #4 6/6	Sociological Research: Ethical Practices Part I	<p><i>Key Terms/Questions:</i></p> <p>What does responsible, ethical sociological research look like?</p> <p>In what ways do you see themes of power and privilege manifesting in the Tuskegee study? Thinking about class, power, and stratification, why do you think this study existed and lasted as long as it did? Think about the role of individuals and institutions in the study.</p> <p>Watch Clinton's apology. What does it mean to "apologize" for these types of wrongdoings? How does that impact belonging (if at all) in different spaces? What does real restitution look like?</p>	Please see slides for readings/videos due today.

Class #5 6/10	Sociological Research: Ethical Practices Part II	<p><i>Key Terms/Questions:</i> What is the Belmont Report? Why does it exist? What are some cases of irresponsible, unethical sociological research?</p> <p>Three Basic Ethical Principles from the Belmont Report: Respect for Persons, Beneficence, Justice</p> <p>In class activity: Case Studies: Holmesburg HeLA Willowbrook Project 4.1 Guatemala</p> <p>Intro to STATA (have downloaded by today)</p>	Please see slides for readings/videos due today.
Class #6 6/11	Sociological Research: Ethical Practices Part III	How would I go about starting an *ethical* study? What are IRB applications like?	Please see slides for readings/videos due today.
Unit Three: Survey Research Methods Content: Belonging Skills: Survey design, Peer Editing			
Class #7 6/12	Intro to Survey Research	Complete CITI training	Please see slides for readings/videos due today.
Class #8 6/13	Intro to Survey Research II	<p>In class: Survey Activity</p> <p>Harvard Trauma Questionnaire: Harvard Trauma Questionnaire</p> <p>2019 YRBSS: 2019 State and Local Youth Risk Behavior Survey</p> <p>National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey: https://wwwn.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhanes/2013-2014/questionnaires/FSQ_Family_H.pdf</p>	<p>SET UP YOUR QUALTRICS ACCOUNT BY TODAY!</p> <p>Please see slides for readings/videos due today.</p>

		<p>2019 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Questionnaire (pages 106-125, starting with Module 22: Adverse Childhood Experiences): <u>2019 BRFSS Questionnaire</u></p> <p>Start to form your research question for your survey: Step One: brainstorm at least 2-3 ideas Step Two: share your ideas with a partner Step Three: decide on your research question Step Four: by the end of class you should okay your research question with me</p>	
Class #9 6/17	Belonging and Peer Editing Surveys	<p>Belonging Survey</p> <p>Using the belonging instrument - does this capture feelings of belonging? What is missing? What other factors are tied to belonging? (See literature)</p> <p>Designing your survey. Make sure you're asking yourself: does my survey capture some element of belonging in higher ed? Does it adhere to the guidelines (see rubric).</p> <p>Round 1: Give/receive peer edits</p> <p>Round 2: Workshop surveys as a larger group What were some strengths we saw when editing? What were some challenges we saw when editing?</p>	Please see slides for readings/videos due today.
Class #10 6/18		Take each other's surveys and provide feedback	Semi-Final Survey Due Today

JUNETEENTH NO CLASS			
Class #11 6/20		Generate data for surveys Look at data in excel Start process of getting data into STATA	Final Survey Due Today Please see slides for readings/videos due today.
Unit Four: Intro to STATA Content: Univariate data, bivariate data, P-values, Correlations, Simple linear regression, Multiple linear regression Skills: Data management and analysis in STATA/excel			
Class #12 6/24	Intro to STATS and correlation coefficients	STATA In STATA, use STATA datasets to find measures of central tendency and other info. Intro to Univariate data, bivariate data, P-values, Correlations.	Please see slides for readings/videos due today.
Class #13 6/25	Simple Linear Regression Intro	Review and practice with STATA Intro to simple linear regression (SLR)	Cheat Sheet and practice quiz due Please see slides for readings/videos due today.
Class #14 6/26	SLR II	STATA Quiz 1	STATA Quiz 1
Class #15 6/27	SLR & MLR	Review STATA Quiz 1 and practice SLR & MLR	Please see slides for readings/videos due today.
Class #16 7/1	Belonging in Higher Ed: Single Identity Spaces I	Recap Unit Four	Cheat Sheet #2 due (you can add it to #1) Practice Quiz 2

			Please see slides for readings/videos due today.
Class #17 7/2		STATA Quiz 2	STATA Quiz 2
Unit Five: Inequality and Higher Ed Speakers Content: Experiences of different demographic groups in higher ed spaces/single identity spaces Skills: Critical analysis, ability to utilize an intersectional lens			
Class #18 7/3	Belonging in Higher Ed: Single Identity Spaces I	Intersectionality & Intro to Women Centered Spaces	Please see slides for readings/videos due today.
Class #19 7/4 NO CLASS (?) To Be Confirmed	Belonging in Higher Ed: Single Identity Spaces II	Discussion on HBCUs and Women Centered Colleges and Universities Final Review	Please see slides for readings/videos due today.
Class #20 7/5	Final Exam	Final Exam	