

SOCY 91: THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

(COVID-19 Remote Edition)

Winter Quarter 2021

Synchronous Components: Tu/Th, 2:50-4:40pm, x-hour [K Block] **we will not use X hours in this course**

Location: <https://dartmouth.zoom.us/j/93770851603?pwd=RFh1WGcvR2diMk9WcHBhMlFhQnpEZz09>

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WE INTERRUPT THIS BROADCAST FOR AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:

We are living through a once-in-a-century global pandemic. To say that our lives have changed in the past nine months is a gross understatement. Even if we are beginning to get used to these changes, none of this is normal. Some of us have lost friends and loved ones, and we are all juggling new responsibilities as we navigate an uncertain world where the rulebook has been thrown out. All of us are managing the stress and anxiety of living through historically unprecedented times. Some of us have the resources necessary to help us cope with these strains, while some of us do not.

It is for these reasons that we cannot keep the same expectations we had before, and we cannot act as if these are normal times. We cannot make it through this without empathy, support, care, and grace. So, this course will look different than it usually does: We will not be meeting face to face. The grading criteria are more forgiving. We will rely on group-based, rather than individual projects. You all have enough stress and uncertainty in your lives right now, and we do not want this class to add to that burden. And yet, we hope that we can retain the best elements of this class. Namely, that we have a space to talk about interesting research questions, how to best ask and answer these questions, build community, and learn from one another. We trust that we can do this. We are looking forward to getting to know you and talking through this material with you.

AND NOW, BACK TO YOUR REGULARLY SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING.

Course Description

Sociologists have a dual commitment to adequately understand society through rigorous observation and to better the society they live in. In this capstone course, we will work together as a class to answer a research question that helps a community partner address key social problems in the Upper Valley and offer solutions. This term, we will study remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in partnership with the Dartmouth Center for the Advancement of Learning. We will draw upon shared knowledge of sociological research and theory accumulated over your Dartmouth career and seek out new knowledge, perspectives, and methods that help us answer our research question and better the community. As a capstone course, it is expected that students will take the lead during class meetings as well as in research design, execution, and analysis. Faculty will play an advisory role, providing methodological and substantive guidance along the way.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course you will: 1) learn how to translate a problem identified by our community partner into an answerable sociological research question; 2) apply sociological theories and research to this research question; 3) work as part of a research team to process, collect, and analyze qualitative and/or quantitative data on behalf of the community partner; 4) gain an appreciation and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses

of qualitative and quantitative methods and how they can complement one another to generate knowledge; 5) communicate research findings about the problem and offer sociologically informed solutions to the community partner.

Course Readings

There is no required textbook for this course. Readings will be made available on Canvas.

Course Structure in a COVID-19 Context

This class is officially listed as “online with synchronous components.” In practice, this course will be a mix of synchronous course meetings and synchronous/asynchronous work in teams on your research project. We may post occasional asynchronous lectures for the purpose of reviewing sociological methods and concepts.

Half of the students in this course will apply quantitative methods to our joint research question and half will apply qualitative methods. At the beginning of the term, we will assign you to a group of 3-5 students, who you will work with throughout the term. This group will be your core peer support network in the course. After our first few weeks of class, your group will indicate your preference for working on the qualitative or quantitative portion of the research project. Two groups will be assigned to conduct the qualitative research component and two groups will be assigned to the quantitative component. Groups within each component of the course will then work together to complete all class assignments. Representatives from the group can meet with their guiding professor at any time. Prof. Houle will lead the quantitative research group and Prof. Rogers will lead the qualitative research group.

Remote Learning: Canvas, Slack, and Zoom

We have created a Remote Learning Plan for this course, available on Canvas. This document describes the methods and technologies we will use to support remote learning (and how to get them installed and running on your devices) and explains what good participation looks like in a remote learning context. Please review this document as soon as you can and follow the steps for technological onboarding before our first class meeting.

Course materials will be made available and assignments will be submitted via [Canvas](#). Most online communications will occur via a [Slack](#) workspace for our course. Class meetings and office hours will be held via [Zoom](#). You may need to use Dartmouth’s [VPN client](#) to access library and other resources if you are working off campus. If you have any difficulties installing or accessing these technologies or are unsure of how to use their necessary features, please contact us as soon as possible.

Evaluation and Grading:

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments in this course are group assignments. Therefore, your individual grade for each assignment will be based on a combination of: 1) the grade earned by your group; 2) your contribution to the group, as determined by our observations and your confidential group evaluations. For example, if your group earns a 90% on an assignment, but your contribution is graded as an 80%, you would only be eligible for 80% of your group’s total points (individual grade = $90 \times .8 = 72\%$).

Weekly Progress and Goals Reports (10%): Staying on task and on schedule is key to any successful research project. At the end of each week, each group must post their progress and goals report on Slack, no later than Friday @ noon. This document should include: 1) a list of tasks (goals) that need to be completed in the next week, with a clear division of labor for each task (e.g., names of group members responsible for each task), and an explanation for how each task helps move the project forward; and 2) a list of the tasks/goals completed in the past week, including explanations for uncompleted tasks/goals and additional tasks/goals completed that were not included in the previous week’s report.

Project Assignments (25%): The final research project will be completed in stages, through a series of **six** project assignments. Project assignments include but may not be limited to: (1) Research Question/Proposal; (2) Literature Search and Annotated Bibliography; (3) Methods 1: Interview Guide Construction and Data Collection [Qualitative] / Data Coding and Manipulation [Quantitative]; (4) Methods 2: Data Analysis; (5) Results: Interpretation of Results; (6) Conclusions and Implications.

Presentations/Workshops (20%): In the class period prior to the due date for each major project assignment, groups will present their initial findings or plan for that assignment in a short (10-15 minute) presentation. These are low-stakes presentations that will provide research groups with an opportunity for feedback from their peers to get a sense of what works and what needs improvement on their portion of the research project. The “conclusions and implications” presentation will be an informal workshop in lieu of a formal presentation.

Final Research Presentation (20%): We will present our research project and findings to our community partner (DCAL) in the last week of class. The quantitative and qualitative research groups will work together to produce a streamlined presentation of the project. Representatives from the quantitative and qualitative projects will present for approximately 10-12 minutes each (total presentation time: 20-24 minutes), then moderate a Q&A session with DCAL afterward. See the documentation for tips on successful research presentations.

Final Research Paper (15%): The quantitative and qualitative research groups will each produce a final paper that represents the culmination of the term-long research project. This paper should be structured like an academic journal article (abstract, introduction, literature review, data/methods, results, discussion/conclusion), include fully formatted tables and figures, and a references section. For more information, see the handout on “how to write academic journal articles” and Chapters 5 and 6 of *Writing in Sociology*, which are available on Canvas.

Confidential Group Evaluations (5%): Each student will complete confidential evaluations of their group mates at regular intervals (see due dates on Canvas). These evaluations are required, and will be used to assess individual contributions to the group research project. (*Note: this is an individual, not group, assignment*)

Class Participation (5%): An active class participant is one who: (1) attends synchronous classes regularly; (2) meets with their research team outside of class (synchronously or asynchronously); (3) is actively engaged in classroom activities (e.g., speaks regularly in class, asks questions in the Q&A session of our presentations/workshops, posts actively on the Slack discussion forums). (*Note: this is an individual, not group, assignment*)

Final Grade: Your numeric grade will be converted into a letter grade using the scale below. A description of the quality of work necessary to receive a certain letter grade in the course is available [here](#).

A	95-100	B+	89-91.99	B-	80-82.99	C	73-76.99	D	60-69.99
A-	92-94.99	B	83-88.99	C+	77-79.99	C-	70-72.99	E	0-59.99

Late Policy

All students will receive one 24-hour extension on any class assignment of their choosing, no questions asked. Students should notify us via email if/when they plan to use their extension. After that, on any assignment, your (completion) grade will be reduced by 8 percentage points for each day late (e.g., 1 day late a grade of 100 would be reduced to a 92; 2 days, 84; and so on). These are extraordinary times and we are willing to be flexible with this policy, within reason. Please talk to us if you are having difficulty keeping up with the coursework.

Academic Responsibility

Dartmouth College is a community of scholars and learners committed to academic and personal honesty, responsibility, and respect for others. All students should conduct themselves in accordance with the Dartmouth community standards, particularly the [academic honor principle](#). Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the Dartmouth community and compromise the worth of work completed by others. As such, cheating, plagiarism, use of the same work in multiple courses, and unauthorized collaboration will not be tolerated. Minor violations of the honor principle may result in loss of credit or failure for a given piece of work or in the course. Major violations may result in suspension or expulsion from the College.

Academic dishonesty often occurs when students feel too much pressure to perform and that they do not have the tools to achieve their goals. If you are falling behind or feeling overwhelmed, please come chat with us before you decide to cheat. [Writing and research support](#) are available through the Institute for Writing and Rhetoric. For additional resources on the Academic Honor Code, plagiarism, and proper citation of sources, please see: <http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth>.

Accommodations

Students with disabilities who may need disability-related academic adjustments and services for this course are encouraged to see us privately as early in the term as possible. Students requiring disability-related academic adjustments and services must consult the [Student Accessibility Services](#) office (Carson Hall, Suite 125, 603-646-9900, Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu). Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to us. As a first step, if students have questions about whether they qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential, but please note that the Student Disabilities Coordinator may be consulted to verify the disability.

Access to Campus Resources

We recognize that the academic environment at Dartmouth is challenging, that our terms are intensive, and that classes are not the only demanding aspect of your life. Many of you may be facing greater challenges than usual given the changes to your living and learning environment, public health concerns, and a host of other factors (e.g., housing or food insecurity, new or changing caregiving responsibilities, accessibility and visa concerns, access to health and mental health support, and so on).

There are a number of campus resources available to support your needs. For concerns about health and wellness, you may reach out to the [Dartmouth Health Service](#) (603-646-9400), [Counseling Services](#) (603-646-9442), and the [Student Wellness Center](#). For academic needs, you may contact your [undergraduate dean](#) (603-646-2243), [Student Accessibility Services](#) (603-646-9900), and the [Academic Skills Center](#) (603-646-2014). Students with concerns related to campus employment may connect with the [Student Employment Office](#) (603-646-3641). Those with visa-related concerns may reach out to the [Office of Visa and Immigration Services](#) (603-646-3474). We encourage you to take advantage of these resources, and to speak with us if you need support in the class.

Please note that faculty and staff are required by law to report certain matters to relevant parties on campus, including disclosures of sexual or gender-based harassment, sexual assault, relationship and interpersonal violence, and stalking. You can find more information about confidential versus non-confidential resources and support options [here](#).

Tentative Course Schedule

Class	Topic	Readings	Assignment Due Dates
Th 1/7	And Now for Something Completely Different: An Introduction and Orientation to the Course	Syllabus	
Tu 1/12	Introduction to our data (visit from DCAL) and crafting the research question	Firebaugh, 7 Rules, Chapter 1; review all data documentation	Nothing due, but come prepared to discuss data and research with DCAL
Th 1/14	Presentation 1: Research Question/Proposal Pitch	Lareau 2002	
Tu 1/19	Research Question Workshop; Develop our Conceptual Model		1 page Research Proposal due today; Complete quant/qual preferences survey (one per group)
Th 1/21	Lit Searches; Writing the Progress Report	Moskovitz, Writing in Sociology, Chapter 7	**Quant and Qual Research Groups Assigned Today*** Progress Report 1 due Friday
Tu 1/26	Presentation 2: Introduction/Literature Review	Moskovitz, Writing in Sociology, Chapter 5	Confidential Eval 1 due today
Th 1/28	Methods <i>Qual</i> : Interview Guide Construction, Data Collection <i>Quant</i> : Coding/Manipulating Existing Data	Methods readings/lectures will be made available as needed on Canvas	Annotated Bibliography due today; Progress Report 2 due Friday
Tu 2/2	Methods, Continued		
Th 2/4	Presentation 3: Methods 1		Progress Report 3 due Friday
Tu 2/9	Data Analysis <i>Qual</i> : Coding Scheme Creation, Coding, Theme Identification <i>Quant</i> : Descriptive and Inferential Statistical Analysis	Analysis readings/lectures will be made available as needed on Canvas	Methods 1 due today; Confidential Eval 2 due today
Th 2/11	Data Analysis, Continued		Progress Report 4 due Friday
Tu 2/16	Presentation 4: Methods 2		
Th 2/18	Interpreting/Writing Up Results	Moskovitz, Writing in Sociology, Chapter 6	Methods 2 due today; Progress Report 5 due Friday
Tu 2/23	Results, continued		Confidential Eval 3 due today
Th 2/25	Presentation 5: Results		Progress Report 6 due Friday
Tu 3/2	Presentation 6 (Informal Workshop): Conclusions and Implications		Results due today
Th 3/4	Final Project Workshop/ Catchup Day		Conclusions/Implications due today; Progress Report 7 due Friday
Tu 3/9	FINAL PRESENTATIONS		Confidential Eval 4 due today
FINAL PAPER AND FINAL CONFIDENTIAL EVAL (#5) DUE BY MONDAY, MARCH 15 @ 5 PM EST			