Sociology 499: Senior Honors
Winter 2014
Professor Karin Martin

This seminar is the third course in a three-course sequence leading to the completion of an honors thesis in sociology. It is organized around the research and writing needs of enrolled students, who are expected to be using the semester to conclude their empirical research and complete the writing of their thesis. Students will continue to work closely with me and with their faculty mentor throughout the remainder of the year. The bulk of the analysis or interpretation of data should be completed in the beginning of the semester, with the completion of a full draft and final version of the thesis the main objectives for the course.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Personal Syllabus: Due in class in hard copy by 1/15/14: A weekly plan with specific tasks you will accomplish each week. This could include the data analysis you will do, the memos you will write, the number of pages of the rough draft you'll write. The idea is to set very specific weekly goals that will get you to the finalized product you need at the end of the term. You can integrate the syllabus below into your personal syllabus. Share your personal syllabus with your mentor.

Rough Draft: Due in CTools by 3/17/14 12pm noontime (and to advisor by their preferred means): Rough drafts of the thesis should contain all sections that will appear in the final thesis: Introduction and Background section(s), Methods, Results, Discussion/Conclusions, References, and any tables, figures and/or appendices.

Requests for extensions on the rough draft will be considered only if the instructor is contacted by e-mail before Friday, January 18 at 5pm. If no extension is granted, then a student's grade for the course will be reduced by a whole letter grade for each successive 24-hour cycle that the rough draft is late. Each student's rough draft will be read by the course improve the thesis for final submission.

Final Draft: Due in CTools Drop Box by 4/21/14 12pm noontime (and to advisor by their preferred means): Students should also e-mail the abstract their thesis to Nicole Rutherford by this due date.

Requests for extensions on the final draft will be considered only if the course instructor is contacted by e-mail before Friday, January 18 at 5pm. If no extension is granted, then a student's grade for the course will be reduced by a whole letter grade for each successive 24-hour cycle that the final draft is late. A bound copy of the thesis, which will be kept on file by the Sociology Department, is due to Nicole Rutherford on Friday, April 26 at 5pm.

Participation/Checking in:

- Attend our class meetings and the symposium.
- Meet regularly with your faculty mentor.
- Monthly meetings with me (in addition to regular meetings with your faculty mentor) to discuss your progress and any problems you encounter. You are welcome to meet with me more often, but make sure we meet at least once
each month.
• Forum: post to our class forum at least once a month and respond to 2 posts once a month.

You will be evaluated on the following basis:

Participation (meetings, forums, symposium): 15%
Rough Draft: 30%
Final Draft: 55%

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 15       Class meets, bring personal syllabus
January 18       Requests for extension on rough draft or final thesis are due
February 12      Class meets, bring a memo, early draft, tables to discuss
March 12         Class meets, bring 5 pages of your results section to share
March 17         Rough draft due
April 1          Class meets – bring 2 copies of abstract draft
April 21         Final draft due by 12 pm.
April 26         Symposium slides, bound copy and release forms due to Nicole Rutherford by 5pm
April 23         Class meeting: Rehearsal for the research symposium
May 2            Research symposium from 8-10:00 am at Michigan Union

HONORS

Bear in the mind that a student’s letter grade is distinct from the level of honors that
he or she will receive. The level of honors will be determined by the instructor in conjunction with a student’s thesis advisor. There are four types of honors:

*Highest Honors:* This is a truly exceptional thesis that makes a unique contribution to our understanding of a sociologically significant question. The thesis is clearly situated within a well-defined field of sociological research; it asks a sociological significant question; it systematically and analyzes empirical data; and it draws the appropriate inferences. This thesis is publishable with minor revisions, and it gives evidence of exceptional scholarly promise. Very few students receive Highest Honors; it is rarely given.

*High Honors:* This is a very good thesis, but it may exhibit a substantial flaw beyond the control of the student (e.g., too few observations, lack of funding to sample a control group). These flaws often, though not always, stem from temporal or financial constraints. The thesis is January publishable with major revisions, and it shows evidence of unusual scholarly promise. Few students typically receive High Honors.

*Honors:* This is a sound thesis that gives strong evidence of academic accomplishment, but it may exhibit a substantial flaw within the student’s control to rectify, or it may exhibit a collection of small flaws. For example, it may not be situated within a well-defined field of sociological research; it may not ask a sociologically significant question; there may be flaws in the collection or analysis of the data; or it may draw inappropriate inferences. The thesis is generally not publishable without further data collection, analysis, and revision, but it does indicate significant scholarly promise on the part of the author. It shows mastery of a particular subject, independent initiative, analytical rigor, and the ability to present complex material. Most students in the class will receive Honors.

*No Honors:* This thesis does not reach the level of quality expected of the average honors student, despite the best good faith efforts of the instructor and the honors advisor. The student may have been informed about serious problems with the thesis but then failed to respond. This thesis is not publishable; it would not be recommended as a writing sample for a graduate school application. Few students typically receive No Honors, but it is a designation that has been given in the past on rare occasions.