**HUNTER COLLEGE, FALL 2025 – SOC240 INTRO RESEARCH METHODS (#6117)**
Tuesday and Friday 11:30AM - 12:45PM, Hunter West 424 (in person)
Instructor: Sam Stabler (ss5346@hunter.cuny.edu)
Office Hours:
Tuesdays 2:30-3:45PM and Fridays 2:30-3:45PM
In Person: 1618 Hunter West
Online: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8542204453
Book at https://profstablerofficehours.youcanbook.me

Course Description: In today's world, learning to navigate scholarly research is easier and harder than ever before. Research is easier because web-based technologies have put the tools scholarly research in your pocket. For a generation raised on Facebook surveys, "Google-ing it", and Social Media Analytics, many of skills taught as the core of social research (formulating survey questions, developing search strategies, assessing quantitative metrics) have become second nature. On the other hand, the ease at which one can access massive amounts of information means that feeling overwhelmed is common. When any knowledge you desire is at your fingertips, how do you decide which knowledge to trust? Social questions are particularly difficult as the things they ask about (the people, and the groups they form) can consciously evade the truth, be biased by forces beyond their control, and harbor suspicions about the researcher's motivations. How does one become an expert of anything in such a world?

To help overcome these challenges, this course overviews how sociologists ask worthwhile questions, conduct research to answer those questions, and then make those answers public. It asks students to select a topic for research, survey the strengths and weaknesses of the various ways sociologists have studied such topics, and concludes by having students develop a research proposal to present in other venues across Hunter Sociology (SOC 471, 472 Honors Independent Study and/or Undergraduate Research Conference). To keep students on track, the course requires students participate in a research blog where they summarize scholarly journal articles, formulate research questions, and offer constructive feedback on one another's projects. In completing these assignments, the students build skills in assessing the quality of existing research, planning (sociological) research projects, and presenting the results of research.

Changing the syllabus: This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. All changes will be posted on the course's website.

**ALL** Required Readings will be available via the course's Brightspace website:
https://brightspace.cuny.edu/

Grading Components (% of overall grade):

*Attendance/Participation (5%):* It is *essential* that you show up to class regularly and are prepared to contribute to class discussion. In turn, I will take attendance each day. If students do not offer up comments regularly or show up without having read the assigned material, I will be forced to call on people specifically to get the discussion rolling. Should problems persist, I may assign additional homework to ensure participation. Each student

is allowed **three(3) absences with no impact on their grade**. After accounting for these absences, each additional absence will count negatively towards participation credit.

*Short Papers (20%):* Students are required to complete **two stand-alone 625-825-word papers** over the course of the semester. These may be handwritten or typed but should always be handed in via the Brightspace at the designated time on the schedule. The instructor will provide a prompt for each of these assignments, but generally they are designed to help students summarize research writing from the discussion boards (see below). Each paper will be graded according to the following rubric:

| Criteria | ✓+ | ✓ | ✓- | - | . |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sociological Coverage | Synthesizes the relevant concepts in a useful and systematic way. | Includes relevant concepts in its discussion, but somehow either over or under describes what's happening. | The discussion is disconnected from the relevant concepts because it either uses far too few concepts to make its point, or it uses concepts incorrectly. | Barely sociological. | Nothing handed in. |
| Sociological Accuracy | By linking evidence to concepts reveals something fundamental about social life. | Makes clear and reasonable conceptions between sociological concepts and the evidence presented, but somehow feels stuck at the surface level. | Far off from the sociological "main drift". While concepts may be used correctly in a narrow sense, the choice of applying to a particular piece of data reveals a deeper misunderstanding of social life. | Barely sociological. | Nothing handed in. |
| Sociological Precision | Understands the sociological concepts to represent them in their full complexity and demonstrates through linking them to evidence. | Correctly explains link between sociological concepts and evidence, but exaggerates or understates the significance of linking concept to evidence. | Varies wildly in ability to correctly use sociological concepts/ideas, often uses concepts incorrectly, but at times gets close. | Barely sociological. | Nothing handed in. |
| Sociological Coherence | Ideas are organized in a meaningful manner, and produce novel insights. | Student's ideas are expressed clearly but, the organization of ideas and the relationship between concepts is either muddled or surface level. | Student struggles with clarity of presentation, often making the connection between sociological concepts and evidence hard to follow. | Barely sociological. | Nothing handed in. |
| Quality of Composition | High quality writing. | Troubled composition. One or two more revisions with attention to flow, structure, and/or thesis would help immensely. | Extremely troubled composition. As a result, it is hard to understand student's ideas. | Not enough to go on, or otherwise incomprehensible. | Nothing handed in. |

*Quizes (15%):* There are **two quizzes** across the duration of the course. Quizzes contain 10 multiple-choice questions; which students will have 20 minutes to answer. Quizzes will begin promptly at the start of class, and late students will not be given extra time. If students know they will miss the quiz in advance they should contact the professor at least one week before the quiz to set up a time for a make-up quiz. Otherwise, students should schedule an office hour meeting to make-up missed exams. At the end of the term students will be allowed to take an (optional) cumulative make-up quiz which will replace the lowest quiz from earlier in the term.

*Discussion Board (35%):* Throughout the semester students will be asked to find, read and summarize a new sociological research paper published in a peer-reviewed journal of the professor's choosing (*see example below*). Students are required to post ***four(4)* original entries and *four(4)* response entries to other students** on the course discussion board. Original posts

should (a) summarize the article the student read and (b) explain how the findings presented in the paper help the student think about their research project in a new way. Posts that do not provide a proper citation at the end of their post, and/or summarize papers from the journals selected by the professor will be given automatic deductions. In total the course requires that Original posts should be **at least 250 words** in length and **no more than 600 words.**

***Example: A 100% Blog Post***

Post Title (Use the Article Title): "After Gentrification: Social Mix, Settler Colonialism, and Cruel Optimism in the Transformation of Neighbourhood Space" by Jean-Paul D. Addle and James C. Fraser

Article Summary: Addle and Fraser's Article "After Gentrification: Social Mix, Settler Colonialism, and Cruel Optimism in the Transformation of Neighborhood Space" is a hybrid spatio-temporal analysis. The article highlights the crossroads between political and economic theories of gentrification and post-colonialism to explore the strategic pathways and effectiveness associated with neighborhood renovation and succession. They centered their research on the gentrification of Over the Rhine (OTR), a Cincinnati neighborhood. According to the findings, political parties collaborate with commercial enterprises to modify and receive state and federal financing through legal means. These collaborations shifted the focus of their revitalization of the city to a social issue of displacing community people. As illustrated in the text, "pre-existing populations of residents have been actively disabused of the notion that this is still their neighbourhood. Since its inception, we have observed 3CDC acquiring vacant and occupied properties pressuring social service organizations to relocate outside of the neighborhood, working with the City to increase the surveillance and regulation of public spaces." Addle and Fraser want to use their findings as a guide or a new strategy for teaching urbanists who claim to be thinking about the neighborhood's best interests to also consider social concerns and the many demographics affected by these changes.

Research Significance: Impacts of gentrification on the community have been the focus of my research, this article served as a new approach to understanding the subject. When people hear about gentrification, many often have preconceived notions about the individuals who migrate into these underserved areas. The essay made me realize that the government has a significant role to play in these choices and that they do not put the best interests of their community members first; everything is for economic profits or an attempt to make their party look more impressive. This viewpoint made me wonder about people's self-assessment (self-identity), and whether gentrifiers don't see themselves as a problem in the process because of government support and drive for "community redevelopment." The data in the article expands on the complex reasons for gentrification, allowing me to look outside of the box and avoid taking a one-sided approach to analyzing the issue of gentrifiers vs. local citizens.

Citation: Addie, J. P. D., & Fraser, J. C. (2019). After gentrification: Social mix, settler colonialism, and cruel optimism in the transformation of neighbourhood space. *Antipode*, *51*(5), 1369-1394.

Response posts should be **200-300 words** and thought of as an opportunity to connect with other students about ongoing research. In this, a student's response to another student help other students identify some sociological concept, perspective, or idea that is relevant to their research but which they may have missed before. This can include, but is not limited to, identifying points in common between two different articles, challenging the assumptions/conclusions reached by

the author of the original post, or an attempt at identifying relevant examples that can be of help to original poster. In general, response posts should be guided by three principles:

1. A response post should be substantive, posting comments or questions that enhance the discussion or help over the conversation forward. These may include follow up questions, examples, or new perspectives.
2. When not posting first, comments provided evidence that the participant has read at least postings from colleagues and doesn't simply repeat their points.
3. A response post should be generous to the original poster, it should be constructive and handle differences of opinion in a friendly manner.

Each set of posts (an original and response) will be graded according to the following two rubrics:

| Criteria | ✓+ | ✓ | ✓- | - | . |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sociological Coverage | Synthesizes the relevant concepts in a useful and systematic way. | Includes relevant concepts in its discussion, but somehow either over or under describes what's happening. | The discussion is disconnected from the relevant concepts because it either uses far too few concepts to make its point, or it uses concepts incorrectly. | Barely sociological. | Nothing handed in. |
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| Quality of Composition | High quality writing. | Troubled composition. One or two more revisions with attention to flow, structure, and/or thesis would help immensely. | Extremely troubled composition. As a result, it is hard to understand student's ideas. | Not enough to go on, or otherwise incomprehensible. | Nothing handed in. |

*Final Paper (25%):* Students must complete one final cumulative 1250-1750 word paper for the course. This paper builds on the earlier work in the course and consists of a research modified version of Dr. Karen's Foolproof Grant Template. Students are required to keep their graded homework after they have been returned for the purpose of completing this assignment. This paper should include a formatted (e.g. APA, MLA, etc) bibliography and the student's name. Bibliographies do not count as part of the total paper length. Every paper will be graded using a conventional letter system using the following rubric (compare to files to note distinctions) :

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|---|---|
| A+ | Authors perspective is clearly developed and interwoven into the presentation of the material. Methodological choices are described using enough subtly and precision to feel well understood, and properly represented. Conclusions are thoughtfully drawn. It is high quality work. |
| A | Authors perspective is clearly developed and interwoven into the presentation of the material. Methodological choices are described using enough subtly and precision to feel well understood, and properly represented. Conclusions are thoughtfully drawn |
| A- | Solid paper that could be revised one more time to connect up the dots. Mostly, the arguments, evidence and narrative provided by the author is great, but the specific theoretical sell, or methodological choices made are either over sold or under-described in some way. |
| B+ | On the whole, the proposal needs more systematic statements about how to link theory to evidence. While the paper proposes interesting theoretical questions and research materials, these methods are still too underdeveloped (or oversold) to qualify as a coherent "research plan". |
| B | While the methodology and proposed research strategy are a good start, the paper's lack of analytic depth means the project will produce sub-par results in the end. Someway, somehow, this paper would be vastly improved by more systematic statements about the importance of linking theory and evidence. |
| B- | The proposal is a good start but lacks the cohesive feel of a thought through essay. Sections handle ideas incorrectly, and often fail to draw out the relevant points for the reader. In turn, the relevant connections, contradictions, and overall importance of linking theory to data falls flat. |
| C+ | Paper is a first pass and lacks the cohesive feel of a thought through proposal. Often the text can be described as "stream of consciousness" in a negative sense: sections handle ideas incorrectly, and often fail to draw out the relevant points for the reader. Composition problems (grammar, spelling, etc.) and/or structural problems (weak thesis, conclusion, or structure) make clear interpretation of the author's ideas difficult. |
| C-/D/D-/F | Varying degrees of serious errors. Consult professor. |

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: According to the University's Academic Integrity Policy (http://bit.ly/2bYSa6p) :

- **Cheating** is the unauthorized use or attempted use of material, information, notes, study aids, devices, or communication during an academic exercise.
- **Plagiarism** is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writing as your own
- **Obtaining Unfair Advantage** is any action taken by a student that gives that student an unfair advantage in his/her academic work over another student, or an action taken by a student through which a student attempts to gain an unfair advantage in his or her academic work over another student

If the instructor suspects any of these activities, they will contact the student directly. If the instructor determines that any of these activities has occurred the student will not receive credit for the course. In addition, the instructor will file a report with the Academic Affairs.

From the College: "Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g. plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures"

ACCOMMODATIONS: In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical and/or Learning) consult with the Office of AcessABILITY, located in Room E1214B, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call (212) 772- 4857.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: During class, behavior that disrupts other students' work or attention to class is prohibited. This includes using computers and/or cell phones or talking to other students in class. Violations of this policy could result in a lower grade.

The classroom should be thought about as a safe space for further engagement and growth. Intentionally mean, disparaging, or offensive talk will simply not be tolerated. With that said, criticism also requires point out the flaws in one another's thinking. As such, students are encouraged to politely challenge one another's views in the hopes that together we can reach a shared understanding

Students are **not** allowed to record lectures utilizing visual or audio devices, nor are they allowed to distribute materials associated with the course without written consent from the professor.

IMMIGRATION ISSUES: The uncertainty surrounding immigration rights, safety, and security can be confusing and nerve-wracking, to say the least. As your professor, I will do everything that I can do to support you. Here are some links with helpful videos and information to help you understand your rights:

- NYC ICE Watch Instagram account, which has useful info on trainings and visuals, including important info on differences between judicial and administrative warrants.
- Know Your Rights/Community Resources for Immigrant New Yorkers.
- Red Cards (printable): Know Your Rights Cards for your wallets, backpacks, etc. in a variety of languages.
- We Have Rights videos/infographics in English, Urdu, Arabic, Spanish, Mandarin, Haitian-Creole, and Russian.
- More useful info from the Immigrant Defense Project.

- Hunter College's Immigrant Student Success Center.

**HUNTER COLLEGE POLICY ON SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**: "In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College.

a. **Sexual Violence:** Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444).

b. **All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct:** Students are also encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123.

EXTENSIONS, ETC: All extensions will be handled via email. All requests for extension must be submitted at least 48 hours prior to the due date. Late assignments will be deducted 5% for each class meeting they are past due. Scheduling conflicts regarding quizzes need to be dealt with at least one (1) week prior to the date of the quiz.

EMAIL: All emails regarding the course should be sent to ss5346@hunter.cuny.edu . Students should expect that their emails will be answered within one 48-hour period during regular working hours (M-F 9AM-5PM).

**FOR OFFICE HOURS, SIGN UP AT: HTTPS://PROFSTABLEROFFICEHOURS.YOUCANBOOK.ME**

## RESEARCH METHODS FALL 2025

| Unit Theme | Regular Calendar | Lecture # | Lecture/Reading | Assignments Due |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Basics of the Course and Science | 08/26 | 1 | Topics and Puzzles [No Readings] | |
| | 08/29 | 2 | Adler and Dorren - How to Read a Book | |
| | 09/02 | 3 | Wardle et al – What Writers Say | |
| | 09/05 | 4 | Bornmann and Daniel - What Do Citation Counts Measure | |
| | 09/09 | 5 | Luker - Reviewing the Literature & Esposito and Evan-Winters - Introduction to | |

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| | | | Intersectional Qualitative Research | |
| | 09/12 | 6 | Kelsky - The Foolproof Grant Template & Example Final Paper | |
| | 09/16 | 7 | Abbott - Digital Paper (Librarian Day) | Discussion Board 1 Due 11:59PM |
| | 09/19 (Async) | 8 | Maxfield and Babbie - Ethics and Criminial Justice Research (Recorded Lecture) | Discussion Board 1 Response Due 11:59PM |
| | Hunter Cal: 9/22-24 No classes scheduled | | | |
| Sources of Sociology Data | 09/26 | 9 | Emerson - Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes (selections) & Adler and Adler - The Promise and Pitfalls of Going into The Field (selections) | |
| | 09/30 | 10 | Weiss - Learning from Strangers & Weiss - In Their Own Words | |
| | 10/03 | 11 | Schaffer and Presser - The Science of Asking Questions & Schaeffer and Sykema - Advances in the Science of Asking Questions | Discussion Board 2 Due @ 11:59PM |
| | 10/07 | 12 | Hill - Archival Strategies and Techniques | Discussion Board 2 Response Due @ 11:59PM |
| | 10/10 | 13 | Beer - Using Social Media Data Aggregators to Do Social Research | |
| | Hunter Cal: 10/14 - Classes follow Monday schedule | | | |
| | 10/17 | 14 | Gerring, What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for? | |

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| Analyzing Sociology Data | 10/21 | 15 | Babbie - Human Inquiry and Science **&** Design and Measurement | Discussion Board 3 Due @11:59 |
| | Hunter Cal: 10/24 - Classes follow Monday schedule | | | |
| | 10/28 | 16 | Wickham – Tidy Data | Discussion Board 3 Response Due 11:59PM |
| | 10/31 | 17 | Ragin - Using Comparative Methods to Study Diversity | Quiz 1 Due 11:59 PM |
| | 11/04 (Async) | 18 | Steinmetz - Historical Comparison and Odiousness (Recorded Lecture) | |
| | 11/07 | 19 | Ragin - Using Quantitative Methods to Study Covariation, Taubes – Do We Really Know What Makes Us Healthy? & Silberzahn - Many Analysts, One Data Set | Discussion Board 4 Due 11:59PM |
| Planning a Sociology Project | 11/11 | 20 | Luker - On Sampling, Operationalization, and Generalization & Luker - What is this a Case of, Anyway | Discussion Board 4 Response Due 11:59PM |
| | 11/14 | 21 | Morris - Developing the Interview Guide & Selecting Finding and Accessing Research Participants | |
| | 11/18 | 22 | Pelto "Gaining Entry to a Study Site" & "Key informants" | |
| | 11/21 | 23 | Jerolmack and Khan - Talk is Cheap | |
| | 11/25 | 24 | Gedes - How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get & Seawright and Gerring - Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research | Paper 1 Due (Glossary) @ 11:59PM |
| | Hunter Cal: 11/27 – 11/28 - College is closed | | | |

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| | 12/02 | 25 | Katz - From How to Why Pt 1 & 2 | |
| | 12/05 | 26 | Burawoy – Revisits | |
| Ending Thoughts | 12/09 | 27 | Abbott - Methods of Discovery | Paper 2 Due (Research Questions) @ 11:59 PM |
| | 12/12 | 28 | Vaughn - Analogy, Historical Ethnography, and the Challenger Launch Decision | Quiz 2 Due 11:59PM |
| | **Final Paper & Make Up Quiz Due 12/19 at 11:59PM** | | | |