

Applied Research and Careers in Sociology
SOCI 4850, Spring 2024
Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00pm to 3:20pm
GAB 330D

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursdays, 12:30pm – 2pm (please e-mail for appointment)

Course Description

Sociology majors apply core sociological concepts to develop a data-driven project, attain marketable skills in accessing and analyzing data, and explore careers.

From UNT Course Catalogue

This course is designed to be the culmination of students’ education in the undergraduate sociology curriculum at UNT. We will build directly from what you’ve learned in previous classes. Throughout the semester, we will move from primarily *consumers of knowledge* to applying the skills that allow us to become *producers of knowledge* to contribute to society, workplaces, and positive social change.

An additional function of this class is to help students acquire valuable skills that will allow their knowledge attained in the sociology curriculum at UNT to transfer into the labor market and non-academic settings. In pursuit of this aim, students will learn how design and implement data collection tools, access publicly available data, and analyze data to draw insight in social patterns, phenomena, disparities, and trends.

The course also functions to support students as they transition after graduation from UNT. We will identify the types of jobs and careers sociology majors are well-qualified for, as well as strategies to find and obtain these positions. We will also cover the process of applying to and enrolling in graduate school for those interested in that track.

Course Goals

The course contains two related goals:

1) Students will move from being consumers of knowledge to producers to knowledge.

We will achieve this goal by applying many of the concepts and skills you’ve acquired in prior sociology classes to directly investigate social phenomenon and glean new information about our society and our communities. In doing so, you will acquire and apply sociological tools of research. These will help us become producers of knowledge and also develop marketable skills to transfer to the labor market or to graduate school.

We will actively apply three types of research tools:

- *First*, we will engage in survey design. We will construct, field, and analyze a survey experiment. Each student will contribute a question to the survey based on their interests.
- *Second*, we will learn how to access and analyze federal data in order to generate community profiles in the form of infographics.
- *Third*, we will conduct qualitative interviews to gain crucial information about individuals' experiences within the social conditions we describe.

By directly applying sociological research tools, we will mobilize our education in ways that translate beyond purely academic settings. In the process, we will develop an understanding of our unique strengths as sociologists, acquire a vocabulary for describing these attributes, and clearly identify the contributions we bring to future workplaces, organizations, and communities.

2) Students will be prepared for their next steps after graduation, including employment and/or graduate school.

Once students have identified and refined their unique skill set (goal 1), we will then review practical strategies for obtaining employment and/or applying to graduate school. By the end of the course, students will have an understanding of the types of jobs they are competitive for and effective strategies for acquiring them. They will also know the requirements and steps needed for graduate school admission.

Communication

Please be sure to check your e-mail regularly, particularly on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Our class is scheduled to meet in the computer lab, but there are times when we may meet in a classroom instead. I will send e-mails prior to class in these instances.

Guest Policy

Children and dependents are welcome in class. Childcare arrangements often fall through. Please do not hesitate if you need to bring your loved ones to class.

Required Materials

All reading materials will be available on canvas. There are two data analysis software we will be using that would be beneficial for you to have personal access to. These are Stata and Atlas TI:

Stata

Stata is a quantitative analysis software. If you have never used Stata before, that is OK. We will use lab time to orient you to the software.

Stata is available in the computer lab we use in class. If you are OK with using the computer lab on campus to complete your assignments outside of class time, you will not need to purchase it. It is advantageous, however, to have your own license if you plan on focusing on quantitative analysis for your final project so that you can be unrestricted in the time you have to use the software.

There are many versions of Stata available. For our class, the cheapest version, Stata BE, will be sufficient. However, if you plan on further pursuing quantitative analysis, I suggest considering a more powerful version (such as Stata SE or MP).

A six-month student license of Stata BE is available for \$48. To purchase Stata, [visit this website](https://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/student-pricing/) and follow the prompts: <https://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/student-pricing/>

Atlas TI Web-Only Version

Atlas TI is a qualitative data analysis software that allows you to code the transcripts of interviews and analyze these codes efficiently. We will use the web-based version in our course that operates through a web-browser and stores data to a cloud.

For our course, you will only need the software for a few months. You can purchase it for \$10 a month [here](https://shop.atlasti.com/74/catalog/category.94367/language.en/currency.USD/?id=3h4UzhcUQX) (<https://shop.atlasti.com/74/catalog/category.94367/language.en/currency.USD/?id=3h4UzhcUQX>).

Importantly, do not wait until you need the software to purchase it. It takes several days for them to verify information and provide the student license. I suggest purchasing it no later than Spring Break and ending your lease at the end of the semester.

Grades

I use a typical 100-point rubric for the course with points being distributed across four categories: 1) Daily class assignments, 2) Project assignments, 3) Presentations, and 4) the Final project. Letter grades will be awarded based on the percentage of total points received (see table below).

Daily Class Assignments	15%
Project Assignments	60%
<i>Results of Survey Experiment</i>	15%
<i>Community Profile Infographic</i>	15%
<i>Results of Qualitative Interviews</i>	15%
<i>Job/Grad School Application Materials</i>	15%
Presentations	10%
Final Project	15%

Grading Rubric:
 90%-100% points: A
 80%-89.9% points: B
 70%-79.9% points: C
 60%-69.9% points: D
 59.9% or below: F

Assignments

Daily Class Assignments 15% of Grade

Throughout the semester, students will be assigned activities in class. Sometimes these will be completed during class time. On other occasions, they are to be completed and turned in prior to the following class. These assignments are intended as pedagogical tools to facilitate engagement

with the material and encourage student learning. These assignments will be distributed in class and the due date will be announced at that time.

Daily assignments also operate as an attendance mechanisms. Students who miss class and are not excused will not receive credit for the daily assignment. If you are feeling unwell, send me and e-mail and do not come to class. You will be excused. If there are extenuating circumstances preventing you from attending some classes, communicate these with me as soon as possible and we will make a suitable plan.

Project Assignments 60% of Grade

The bulk of students' grade comes from four assignments due throughout the semester. Each assignment corresponds to a valuable skill that sociology majors acquire in the course of their education and exercise in these applied projects.

- 1) Results of Survey Experiment 15%
In our class, each student will design a survey experiment. We will field the experiment to approximately 100 respondents. Students will analyze the results of their experiment and provide a written report. Details and rubric are on canvas.
- 2) Community Profile Infographic 15%
Students will pull federal data from the U.S. Census Bureau and/or other sources to create an infographic reporting specific aspects of a local community. This could be the community they're from, where they're currently residing, or a place of interest. It could also be the State of Texas or another state. The data reported on the infographic should follow a single theme chosen by the student. Examples include: economic productivity, population growth, educational disparities, employment situations, or commuting patterns, among several other themes. The aim here is to exercise our ability to describe communities and assess their needs and strengths. Details and the rubric are on canvas.
- 3) Results of Qualitative Interviews 15%
Students will conduct, transcribe, and code a small number of interviews on a topic of their choosing. They will write a brief report from these data describing their process of recruiting, interviewing, and coding the qualitative data as well as key findings from their analysis. Details and the rubric are on canvas.
- 4) Job/Grad School Application Materials 15%
For this assignment students may choose one of two options. The first option is to submit a cover letter and resume for a job they found and will be qualified for after graduating. The second option is to submit a personal statement and cv for a graduate program they are interested in applying to. Details and the rubric for this assignment are on canvas.

Presentations 10% of Grade

Students will complete two presentations throughout the semester. All students will present on their Community Profile Infographic. Half of the class will present the results of the survey experiment and the other half of the class will present the results of their qualitative interviews. Details on presentation guidelines are available on canvas.

Final Project: 15% of Grade

For their final project, students may choose one of the following two options:

- 1) **15-20 Page Thesis:** Students choosing this option should expand on one of the applied research project assignments (survey experiment, community profile, or qualitative interviews) to write a thesis paper. Students should incorporate results from these assignments into a 15 to 20 page (double-spaced) paper that motivates the analysis with a theoretical framing and hypotheses, discusses the methods used to obtain and analyze data, interprets the results of the analysis, and discusses implications of the findings.

The thesis should use the following template:

- I. Introduction
- II. Literature review and theoretical framing
- III. Statement of research question and hypotheses
- IV. Methods
- V. Results
- VI. Discussion of Implications
- VII. Conclusion

Further details on the thesis include:

- Page range of 15-20 pages double-spaced, Times New Roman font size 12
- Uses as least 10 citations
- ASA reference style should be used (see https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_ASA_Style.pdf)

****Students who plan to apply to graduate school in the future should choose this option. Many programs require a writing sample or 15-20 pages that includes original data analysis. I have designed this assignment to meet that requirement.****

Students choosing the thesis option should schedule a meeting with me in April for additional guidance.

- 2) **5-page Reflection on Future Plans:** Students choosing this option should submit a reflection that answers the following prompts:
 - What are some valuable skills and/or knowledge you've acquired while completing your degree in sociology?
 - How will you use that knowledge after graduation?
 - What are your future goals after graduation?
 - What are the necessary steps to complete those goals?
 - When will you complete those steps? Provide a timeline.

Assignment and Grade Policies

Late Assignments

Late assignments will be penalized 20% for every day that they are late, starting the minute after the deadline (e.g., if assignment is due at 11:59pm and submitted as 12:00am, it will be penalized 20%).

In some instances, there will be extenuating circumstances preventing the submission of assignments. Please communicate these with me. I will make every accommodation with respect to students' needs and challenges.

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades may only be assigned when the student is making satisfactory progress until the request for an incomplete is made. Incompletes will only be offered with medical documentation or other documentation that a highly unusual circumstance beyond the student's control (e.g. the death of a loved one) has made finishing the semester impossible. All requests for incompletes must be made prior to the final examination.

Make-ups

Other than medical emergencies and religious observations, no make-ups will be given for any in-class assignments.

Diversity and Global Issues Requirement for the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

This course fulfills the CLASS requirement for Diversity and Global Issues. At the end of this course, students should be able to do at least three of the following: 1. Identify the origins, influences, and limits of one's own cultural heritage. 2. Demonstrate the ability to learn from and empathize with perspectives and experiences different from one's own. 3. Show an understanding of the interrelationships of the self, local society, and global environments. 4. Describe the impacts of complex, worldwide systems. 5. Explain the reasoning for one's ethical responsibilities within worldwide systems.

Visit the UNT Learning Center

The UNT Learning Center provides a variety of free academic support programs from tutoring and supplemental-instruction services to academic skills workshops and coaching. **Contact Information:** Phone: 940-369-7006 | Email: Learning.Center@unt.edu | In-person: Monday through Friday, from 8a - 5p, Sage Hall, Room 170. For more information about the services provided, visit the LC online: learningcenter.unt.edu.

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences.

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. Students who engage in academic dishonesty will receive a zero in the assignment and potentially a zero in the course and administrative action from the university.

ADA Accommodation Statement

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct.

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648.

Religious Holidays

If you wish to observe a religious holidays that conflicts with the completion of a course module, notify me by the tenth day of the semester of the relevant module unless the religious holiday is observed on or before the tenth day of the semester. In such cases, you should notify me at least five days in advance of the date. I will make every reasonable effort to honor the request, not penalize you for missing material, and if an examination or project is due during the absence, I will give you an exam or assignment equivalent to the one completed in the module.

COURSE SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTIONS

Tuesday, January 16: Introduction to the Course and Each Other

Thursday, January 18: Taking Inventory of our Sociological Toolbox

Readings:

- Maris, Peter. 1990. "Witnesses, Engineers, or Storytellers? Roles of Sociologists in Social Policy." Pp. 75–87 in *Sociology in America*, edited by Herbert Gans. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
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PART 1: SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND SURVEY EXPERIMENTS

Tuesday, January 23: Survey Methodology

Readings:

- Scarborough, William J. and Allyson Holbrook. 2021. "Chapter 8: Surveying the Social Landscape." in *Sociology in Action* edited by Kristin Kenneavy and Catherine Harnois. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Thursday, January 25: Survey Experiments

Readings:

- Lambouths III, Danny, William Scarborough, and Allyson Holbrook. 2019. "Who Supports Diversity Policies? It Depends on the Policy." *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2019/10/who-supports-diversity-policies-it-depends-on-the-policy>

Tuesday, January 30: Survey Lab Generating Survey Experiment

Lab: Qualtrics survey design

Thursday, February 1: Sampling and New Methods of Data Collection

Readings:

- Jennifer A. Strangfeld "Chapter 5. Selecting Observations" in *Social Research Methods: Sociology in Action*, edited by Kristin Keneavy and Catherine E. Harnois. 2023. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- *Optional*: Shank, Daniel B. 2016. "Using Crowdsourcing Website for Sociological Research: The Case of Amazon Mechanical Turk." *The American Sociologist* 47: 47-55.

Lab: Fielding our survey

Tuesday, February 6: Analysis of Survey Results

Lab: Analyzing and interpreting results of students' survey experiment

Thursday, February 8: Presenting Results of Survey Experiment

Presentations: Students will present the results of their survey experiment

**FIRST PROJECT ASSIGNMENT, RESULTS OF SURVEY EXPERIMENT,
DUE ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11**

PART 2: COMMUNITY PROFILES USING FEDERAL DATA

Tuesday, February 13: Introduction to Data from the U.S. Census Bureau

Readings:

- United States Census Bureau. 2020. “The Importance of the American Community Survey and the 2020 Census.” <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about/acs-and-census.html>
- United States Census Bureau. 2020. “About the American Community Survey.” <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about.html>
- Video: How to Navigate data.census.gov:
<https://www.census.gov/library/video/2019/data-gems-how-to-navigate-data-census-gov.html>

Lab: Introduction to data.census.gov

Thursday, February 15: Spatial Mapping with Census OnTheMap Tools

Readings

- Watch all six videos: Data GEM Series: Visualizing Jobs and Labor Force Data with OnTheMap: <https://www.census.gov/data/academy/data-gems/2022/visualizing-jobs-and-labor-force-data-with-onthemap-series.html>

Lab: Introduction to OntheMap

Tuesday, February 20: Microdata and Introduction to the Current Population Survey (CPS)

Readings:

- United States Census Bureau. 2019. “Chapter 1: General Current Population Survey Information.” Pgs. 1-29 in *Design and Methodology: Current Population Survey – America’s Source for Labor Force Data*.
- Video: IPUMS CPS: Extract System Tutorial, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKZollxUDJ4>
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Monthly Employment Report: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>
- The New York Times. “December Jobs Report: U.S. Job Growth Remains Strong.” *January 5, 2024*. <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/01/05/business/jobs-report-december-economy>

Lab: Introduction to IPUMS

Thursday, February 22: Introduction to Infographics

Readings

- “How to make an infographic – ultimate guide.”
<https://www.canva.com/learn/how-to-make-an-infographic/>
- Before class: Submit an infographic you found online or elsewhere (not one that you created) through the canvas page.

Lab: Infographics

Tuesday, February 27: Descriptive Figures

Readings:

- Stata. Visual overview for creating Graphs.
<https://www.stata.com/support/faqs/graphics/gph/stata-graphs/>

Lab: Creating figures for infographic

Thursday, February 29: Descriptive Tables

Lab: Creates tables for infographic

Tuesday, March 5: Lab for Infographic on Community Profiles

Thursday, March 7: Presenting Infographic on Community Profile

Presentations: Students will present their infographics reporting specific aspects of a community

**SECOND PROJECT ASSIGNMENT, COMMUNITY PROFILE INFOGRAPHIC
DUE ON SUNDAY, MARCH 10**

PART 3: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Tuesday, March 19: Asking Qualitative Research Questions

Readings:

- Kathleen (Casey) Oberlin, "Chapter 9. Watching, Talking and Listening." in *Social Research Methods: Sociology in Action*, edited by Kristin Keneavy and Catherine E. Harnois. 2023. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Lab: Develop qualitative research question

Thursday, March 21: Developing Interview Questions and Protocol

Lab: Develop interview protocol

Tuesday, March 26: Conducting and transcribing interviews

Thursday, March 28: Coding Qualitative Interviews with Atlas.TI

Readings:

- McQueeney, "Chapter 13. Coding Qualitative Data: Revealing Patterns in Words and Images" in *Social Research Methods: Sociology in Action*, edited by Kristin Keneavy and Catherine E. Harnois. 2023. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Lab: Qualitative coding with Atlast.TI

Tuesday, April 2: Qualitative Coding Lab

Thursday, April 4: Presenting Results of Qualitative Interview

Presentations: Students will present the results of their interviews

**THIRD PROJECT ASSIGNMENT, RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS,
DUE ON SUNDAY, APRIL 7**

PART 4: CAREERS AND GRADUATE SCHOOL

Tuesday, April 9: Jobs and Careers for Sociology Majors

Readings:

- Video: American Sociological Association. *What Are You Going to Do With That? A Workshop for Undergraduate Sociology Students.*
<https://vimeo.com/395811876/55fb022a76>
- ASA Resource Page: <https://www.asanet.org/academic-professional-resources/major-in-sociology/>

Thursday, April 11: Findings jobs

Tuesday, April 16: Writing Cover Letters and Resumes

Readings:

- Video: American Sociological Association. *What are Employers Looking For? Building A Career with a Bachelors Degree in Sociology.*
<https://vimeo.com/206267357>

Thursday, April 18: Graduate School for Sociology Majors

Readings:

- Calarco, Jessica McCrory. 2020. "Introduction" and "Chapter 1: Choosing a Program" in *A Field Guide to Grad School: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum.* Princeton University Press.

Tuesday, April 23: Finding Graduate Programs

Readings:

- Video: American Sociological Association. *Practical Advice for Students Considering Graduate School*. <https://vimeo.com/185644167>

Thursday, April 25: Writing Personal Statements and CVs

Readings:

- Stanford University School of Humanities and Sciences. “Writing Your Personal Statements.” <https://humsci.stanford.edu/prospective-students/guide-getting-grad-school/writing-your-personal-statements>

**FOURTH PROJECT ASSIGNMENT, APPLICATION MATERIALS,
 DUE ON SUNDAY, APRIL 28**

CONCLUSIONS

Tuesday, April 30: Final Project Discussion

Thursday, May 2: Final Project Conversation and Course Reflection

**FINAL PROJECT
 DUE ON TUESDAY, MAY 7**
