

Soc. 600
Fall, 2013
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FOUNDATIONS OF APPLIED SOCIOLOGY

This course in the Graduate Program in Applied Sociology introduces applied sociology as a profession and as an approach within the broader discipline of sociology. You will practice some of the skills and review some of the topics that will provide a foundation for your career in and after your graduate work at UMass Boston. We will study the role of and controversies about applied sociology, how it connects to theories of society, and how it has been used in relation to today's social issues. We will also review the resources available for graduate study at UMB and learn some of the practical skills needed to succeed in graduate school.

Class discussion and related activities will be a critical component of the course experience, but you will also spend much time reading and writing, and even collecting some data. You will *learn* about applied sociology not just by talking and reading, but by *doing* applied sociology and *meeting* applied sociologists.

Course goals are to learn:

- 1) Trends and controversies in the application of sociological methods and theories;
- 2) Conceptual and practical challenges that applied sociologists confront;
- 3) Substantive contributions made by applied sociologists;
- 4) Techniques needed in research investigations, oral presentations, and written reports.

REQUIRED READINGS

The assigned readings will help you develop your understanding of what applied sociology is, what it contributes to society and the profession, and why its professional role continues to be a subject of debate. Some of the readings will also help you perform tasks needed by applied sociologists.

We begin with the articles on e-reserve at the Healey Library (<http://umb.docutek.com/eres/coursepass.aspx?cid=1282>; our password is "foundations"). Many of these articles take you into the historical controversy in our profession about applying sociology and some help you see where things stand today. Other articles provide examples of different ways of applying sociology. You will also read one or more research reports that represent applied projects conducted by graduate students in our Methods of Research I class or in which students in our program served as research assistants.
http://www.faculty.umb.edu/russell_schutt/RESEARCH%20REPORTS.htm.

To develop your skills as an applied sociologist, Gorden's book will help you to learn qualitative interviewing, which is the primary method we will use in our applied class project. My new book on homelessness provides a good example (if I don't say so myself) of how sociology can help understand the complexities of the social world and how sociologists can deal with some of the challenging issues in theory and method that arise when applying sociology to social problems.

I have posted online just one chapter from my research methods text, but you may find the book a good addition to your library at this point if you would like a broader introduction to research methods (or if you would like to begin to prepare more systematically for our first methods course). Other books listed in the course bibliography provide a broader picture about the history and role of applied sociology.

BOOKS

Gorden, Raymond L. 1992. *Basic Interviewing Skills* (reissued). Long Grove, IL: Waveland.

Schutt, Russell K. 2011. *Homelessness, Housing and Mental Illness*, with Stephen Goldfinger. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

ARTICLES (on e-reserve) History and Controversy

Berk, Richard. 1981. "On the Compatibility of Applied and Basic Sociological Research: An Effort in Marriage Counseling." *The American Sociologist* 16:204-211.

Burawoy, Michael. 2005. "For Public Sociology." *American Sociological Review* 70:4-28.

Calhoun, Craig. 2007. "Sociology in America: An Introduction." Pp. 1-38 in *Sociology in America: A History* edited by Craig Calhoun. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Hauser, Phillip M. 1981 "Sociology's Progress toward Science." *The American Sociologist* 16:62-64.

Janowitz, Morris. 1972. "Professionalization of Sociology." *American Journal of Sociology* 78:105-135.

Parsons, Talcott. 1959. "Some Problems Confronting Sociology as a Profession." *American Sociological Review* 24:547-559.

Smelser, Neil J. 2003. "Sociology: Spanning Two Centuries." *The American Sociologist* 34:5-19.

Tittle, Charles R. 2004. "The Arrogance of Public Sociology." *Social Forces* 82: 1639-1643.

Examples of Application

Brown, Phil. 2004. "Integrating Medical and Environmental Sociology with Environmental Health: Crossing Boundaries and Building Connections through Advocacy." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 54:145-164.

Coleman, James S. 1987. "The Role of Social Policy Research in Society and in Sociology." *The American Sociologist* 22:127-133.

Elliott, Eva and Gareth Williams. 2008. "Developing Public Sociology through Health Impact Assessment." *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 30:1101-1116.

- Estabrook, Robin E., Russell K. Schutt, and Mary Lou Woodford. 2008. "Translating Research into Practice: The Participatory Expert Panel Approach." *The Open Health Services and Policy Journal*, 1:19-26. <http://www.bentham.org/open/tohspj/openaccess2.htm>.
- Iutovich, Joyce Miller and Sue Hoppe. 2001. "Ethics and Sociological Practice." Pp. 53-74 in *Handbook of Clinical Sociology*, 2nd ed., edited by Howard M. Rebach and John G. Bruhn. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Koppel, Ross. 2008. "The Utility of Sociology." *Sociological Viewpoints*, Fall: 5-16.
- Montez, Jennifer Karas and Anna Zajacova. 2013. Explaining the Widening Education Gap in Mortality among U.S. White Women. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 54:166-182.
- _____. 2013. Policy Brief. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 54:165.
- Neeley, Elizabeth. 2008. "Doing Sociology: Applied Sociology for Justice System Policy Reform 1." *Sociological Origins*, 5: 39-44
- Rossi, Peter H. 1980. "The Presidential Address: The Challenge and Opportunities of Applied Social Research." *American Sociological Review* 45:889-904.
- Schapira, Lidia and Russell K. Schutt. 2011. "Training Community Health Workers about Cancer Clinical Trials." *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*. Online First at <http://www.springerlink.com/content/g6p05g3113951q11/>.
- Schutt, Russell K., Xiaogang Deng, and Taylor Stoehr. 2013. "Using Bibliotherapy to Enhance Probation and Reduce Recidivism." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 52:181-197.
- Schutt, Russell K., Lidia Schapira, Jennifer Maniatis, Jessica Santiccioli, Silas Henlon, JudyAnn Bigby. 2010. "Community Health Workers' Support for Cancer Clinical Trials: Description and Explanation." *Journal of Community Health* 35:417-422.
- Turner, Jonathan H. 2008. "The Practice of Scientific Theorizing in Sociology and the Use of Scientific Theory in Sociological Practice." *Sociological Focus*, 281-299.
- Whyte, William Foote. 1982. "Social Inventions for Solving Human Problems." *American Sociological Review* 47:1-13.

RESEARCH REPORTS

http://www.faculty.umb.edu/russell_schutt/RESEARCH%20REPORTS.htm

<http://www.teenempowerment.org/pdfs/Teen-Empowerment-Somerville-Evaluation-2013.pdf>

ACTIVITIES, PROJECTS AND GRADING

The readings introduce the controversies in the discipline about the application of sociology and give you many interesting examples of doing applied sociology. You should find them fascinating, but be sure to read assigned chapters and/or articles before the corresponding class session, since discussion is a very important part of the learning process in this course. Articles highlighted in **bold** are the ones to start with in a given week. Review of the listed websites will further enrich your understanding of applied sociology. You will need to refer to some of the assigned readings and websites in your course papers. I have provided relevant additional readings in the course bibliography to help you explore topics of interest in greater depth.

Invited speakers from our faculty, our alumnae, and local practitioners will supplement the readings and enrich the classroom experience. We will focus particular attention on the application of sociology in the areas of medical sociology, criminal justice, and migration.

Our learning in the course will be enriched by “doing.” First and foremost, you will share your thoughts about the issues we discuss in class and react to the comments of other students. By participating in discussion, you will help other students sharpen their perspectives. You will also frequently give presentations in class, in relation to the activities marked with an * or **. Every class participant will give a short presentation (no more than 5 minutes) for each of the three **activities. These presentations can be coordinated, but still allow 5 minutes per student. The presentations will help you to prepare for the first paper, on applied sociology as a profession. For one of these three mini-presentations, you can prepare a response to another student’s presentation—but if you do this you must also read the same article. You must also give a presentation in response to three of the six *activities. You can sign up for these activities on the course Blackboard Learn site, beginning in the second week. Details about these activities are in a separate handout.

In the second half of the course, you will learn how to do qualitative interviewing and use these skills to contribute to a multi-student study of a social program or of practitioners in some area of applied sociology. You will present your preliminary findings to the class, with other students working on the project. You will sign up for a 15-minute presentation slot (allowing 5 minutes for discussion) in the last 2 weeks of the course. Some type of audiovisual aid is required, such as a PowerPoint show or paper handouts. Your final paper will report the results of your investigation. A separate handout provides more details.

Course grades will be computed as follows:

Professions presentation:	10%
Professions paper:	25%
Research presentation:	10%
Research paper:	40%
Activities:	<u>15%</u>
	100%

Throughout the course, you should feel free to speak with me and/or with Julianne about the course material in general and about specific issues pertaining to grades. I will be available during my regularly scheduled office hours (see above) and at other times by appointment or when it is mutually convenient. You also can communicate with me by email (address above).

Each 2.5 hour class session corresponds to one week of class time, so it is important to attend each session and to keep up in the coursework. I will not give a grade of "Incomplete" in

other than the most extreme circumstances, and when we have developed a plan; receiving an incomplete will hinder your progress toward your degree and will not result in a better grade.

The Blackboard Learn site for the course includes additional resources and web links. You will use this site throughout the course to arrange presentations and coordinate activities.

If you have a disability that requires accommodations in order to complete course requirements, please contact the Ross Center for Disability Services (CC-UL-211) at (617) 287-7430 within the first week or two of the semester to request an accommodation plan: <http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/disability>.

Of course, academic honesty is an absolute requirement for all coursework. See the Code of Student Conduct's definition of academic dishonesty and description of procedures and penalties: http://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/code.

COURSE OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION (September 9)

We will learn about this course and our program, about each others' backgrounds and interests, and about the state of the discipline of sociology. We will inspect some campus and Web resources and review how to use research tools available through the Healey Library and elsewhere.

- Reading: Trends in sociology (ASA)
<http://www.asanet.org/research/stats/degrees.cfm>
<http://www.asanet.org/images/research/docs/pdf/Idealist%20vs%20Career%20isst.pdf>
<http://www.asanet.org/images/research/docs/pdf/Health%20of%20Sociology%202007.pdf>
<http://www.asanet.org/research/>
- New doctorates in sociology (ASA).
<http://www.asanet.org/images/research/docs/pdf/New%20Doctorates%20in%20Sociology.pdf>
- Sociology careers and families
<http://www.asanet.org/images/research/docs/pdf/PhDs%20at%20Mid%20Career.pdf>
- The MA in Sociology
<http://www.asanet.org/research/MastersDatabriefJuly2010.pdf>
http://www.asanet.org/research/are_masters_programs_closing_databrief.pdf
<http://www.asanet.org/research/MAinSociology.pdf>

http://www.asanet.org/research/sociology_masters_graduates_in_the_workforce.pdf

Report on applied sociologists

[Beyond the Ivory Tower: Professionalism, Skills Match, and Job Satisfaction in Sociology](http://www.asanet.org/research/current_research_projects.cfm#phd)

http://www.asanet.org/research/current_research_projects.cfm#phd

- Activities: Read Applied Sociology Graduate Program Manual
http://www.umb.edu/academics/cla/sociology/graduate_programs/forms_and_resources/;
 Try SocINDEX at the Healey Library website,
<http://atoz.ebsco.com/Customization/Tab/961?lang=en&lang.menu=en&lang.subject=en&tabId=6522>.
 Study *RefWorks*
<http://umb.libguides.com/SOCIOL600Hartwell>

APPLIED SOCIOLOGY AS A PROFESSIONAL PROBLEM (September 16)

Does engagement in applied activities diminish or enhance the discipline of sociology? This question has been asked repeatedly throughout the history of sociology and answered in different ways by different sociologists, including ASA presidents.

- Reading: Berk, **Burawoy**, Calhoun, Coleman, Hauser, Janowitz, Parsons, Rhoads, Smelser, **Tittle**.
<http://www.asanet.org/introsociology/documents/Field%20of%20sociology033108.htm>
http://www.asanet.org/about/Rhoades_History.cfm
http://www.asanet.org/about/Centennial_History_Index.cfm

- Activities: **Prepare a recommendation to the ASA about “practice” based on one article
(1-2 students per article. First come, first served on Blackboard.)
 *Read about one past ASA President’s perspective and relate it to the controversy over Applied Sociology.
http://www.asanet.org/about/past_presidents.cfm
(One student per president. First come, first served on Blackboard.)

APPLIED SOCIOLOGY IN PRACTICE (September 23)

This session provides an overview of the practice of applied sociology, focusing particular attention on the work to which students in this program have contributed. Current and former applied research partners and graduate students will discuss project operations. We will connect these projects to social policy questions, research methods, practical challenges, and social theories.

- Reading: Montez, Neeley, Schapira and Schutt (2011), **Schutt, Deng, Stoehr (2013)**, Schutt et al. (2010), **Estabrook, Schutt, Woodford (2008)**, Schutt, Cruz, Woodford (2008).
<http://www.teenempowerment.org/pdfs/Teen-Empowerment-Somerville-Evaluation-2013.pdf>
http://www.faculty.umb.edu/russell_schutt/RESEARCH%20REPORTS.htm
- Activities: *Summarize one of the articles or reports describing an applied project. The following may be relevant, depending on the project:
<http://www.teenempowerment.org/>
http://www.faculty.umb.edu/russell_schutt/RESEARCH%20REPORTS.htm
- Speakers: Stanley Pollack, Whitney Gecker

APPLIED SOCIOLOGY AS A PROFESSIONAL SOLUTION (September 30)

What role should sociologists play in relation to policy and practice?

- Reading: Brown, Coleman, Elliott & Williams, **Koppel, Rossi, Turner, Whyte**.
[http://www.asanet.org/images/asa/docs/pdf/TF%20on%20PS%20Rpt%20\(54448\).pdf](http://www.asanet.org/images/asa/docs/pdf/TF%20on%20PS%20Rpt%20(54448).pdf)
- Websites to inspect:
http://www.asanet.org/press/sociologists_in_the_news_archive.cfm
 Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, at <http://www.bettertogether.org/>
 Amitai Etzioni, <http://www.gwu.edu/~ccps/index.html>
 National Institute of Health's Office of Behavioral and Social Science
<http://obssr.od.nih.gov/content>.
http://obssr.od.nih.gov/scientific_areas/translation/dissemination_and_implementation/index.aspx
- Activities: **Prepare a brief recommending funding for further research or publicity to extend a project you have chosen as exemplary. Cite readings.
(1-2 students per project. First come, first served on Blackboard.)

HOMELESSNESS, HOUSING, MENTAL ILLNESS USING MIXED METHODS (October 7)

Homelessness emerged as a major social problem in the 1980s. Social researchers described the population and proposed solutions. My book is an example of how sociology can contribute to such issues.

- Reading: Schutt (2011), chapters 1-8.
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2818505/?report=classic>
- Activities: **Summarize one assigned chapter and pose a question about another.
(1-2 students per chapter. First come, first served on Blackboard.)

HOLIDAY (October 14)

PAPER 1 DUE OCTOBER 15

CONTRIBUTING TO POLICY AND PROTECTING HUMAN SUBJECTS (October 21)

We will wrap up our discussion of HHMI with a review of methodological, theoretical, and policy lessons. Then we turn to the ethics of research. Federal policy requires that all members of the university community, including students, complete human subjects training and submit their research plans for review by the university's Institutional Review Board.

Reading: Schutt (2011), chapters 9-11.
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2788308/>
Iutovich and Hoppe.
Schutt (2012), Chapter 3: Research Ethics and Philosophies.
ASA Code of Ethics at:
<http://www.asanet.org/about/ethics.cfm>
UMB compliance statement
at:http://www.umb.edu/research/policies_procedures/research_compliance/institutional_review_board_irb/citi_training_and_human_subjects_education

Activities: *Select from HHMI a research conclusion, theoretical implication, or policy recommendation to discuss.
*Prepare to discuss one ethics case presented in the readings.
Register at the CITI ethics training site, <http://www.citiprogram.org/>, and COMPLETE THE CITI COURSE. *Required for research project.*

Speakers: Kristen Kenney (UMB IRB administrator)

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWING I/CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESEARCH (October 28)

We will use Gorden's book and associated exercises to learn about designing qualitative interviews and you will begin to focus on a social program or area of sociological practice for investigation. Faculty speakers will discuss applied research in criminal justice.

Reading: Gorden, chapters 1-5
http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/support_programs/veterans_upward_bound

Activities: Gorden 2-A, 2-B, 3-A, 4-B, 5-B (complete one in class in a group of 3)

Speakers: Bianca Bersani, Andrea Leverentz

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWING II/HEALTH-RELATED RESEARCH (November 4)

We will practice conducting an interview and analyzing the resulting data, again following Gorden. You will prepare to conduct interviews for your

investigation. Faculty speakers will discuss applied research in health, public health, and mental health.

Reading: Gorden, chapters 6-11

Activities: 6-A, 7-A, 8-A, 9-B, 10-A, 10-B (complete one in class in a group of 2-3)

Speakers: Paul Benson, Stephanie Hartwell, Megan Klein-Hattori, Mary Lou Woodford

HOLIDAY (November 11)

MIGRATION AND GLOBALIZATION (November 18)

Migration and globalization have brought populations from around the world into closer contact. We will hear about these processes and their implications for applied sociology from several of our own experts, including Julianne Siegfriedt. We will also review progress on the interview project.

Reading: ASR millennium issue.
http://www.asanet.org/members/special/asr_022000.cfm.

Activities: *Discuss the implications of one article for applied sociology

Speakers: Julianne Siegfriedt, Phil Kretsedemas, Leslie Wang

SURVEY RESEARCH (November 25)

Surveys are the most common method of data collection in the discipline of sociology and in the work of applied sociologists. We will learn about the process of and rationale for conducting surveys, about the organizations that conduct much applied survey research. We will also prepare in this session for writing the final paper.

Activities: Review a project at the website of our Center for Survey Research at <http://www.csr.umb.edu/>
CSR tour.
*Review information about a major social research firm:
Abt Associates, <http://www.abtassociates.com/>.
Advocates for Human Potential, <http://www.ahpnet.com/>
Mathematica, <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/>
NORC, <http://www.norc.org/Pages/default.aspx>

Speakers: Philip Brenner

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS I (December 2)

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS II (December 9)

FINAL PAPER DUE DATE: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Sampson, Robert J., Gregory D. Squires and Min Zhou. 2001. *How Neighborhoods Matter: The Value of Investing at the Local Level*. Washington, DC: American Sociological Assoc.
- Schutt, Russell K. 2012. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*, 7th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Turner, Stephen Park and Jonathan H. Turner. 1990. *The Impossible Science: An Institutional Analysis of American Sociology*. Newbury Park: Sage.