SYA 5969 Syllabus

Course Information

- **Course Hours:** 11am-noon Thursday + asynchronous activities on Canvas
- **Course Meeting Location:** Zoom
- **Credit Hours:** 3 hours

Course Description

This course is intended to help bridge the space between successful completion of prelims and defending a dissertation prospectus in sociology. Students will read selections from several prospectus-writing “How To” books, study examples of past sociology dissertation proposals that vary in methodological approach and area of concentration, complete a progressive series of assignments designed to make steady progress on their proposals, and workshop classmates’ dissertation ideas. The main goal of the course is for students to complete working draft of the dissertation prospectus. The course is pass/fail.

Course Instructor

John Reynolds, Professor of Sociology  
[mailto:jreynolds@fsu.edu](mailto:jreynolds@fsu.edu)  
850-644-6416  
Office Hours: Meeting scheduled by request; send instructor a Zoom invite.  
Emails will be responded to within 24 to 48 hours.

Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this course, students will complete a working draft of their prospectus.

Course Materials

Assigned readings are available as HTML links or PDFs on the course Canvas site; these may draw from:

Student Responsibilities

- Read assigned chapters or review assigned dissertation proposals before class.
- Attend class meetings, arrive on time, and be an active, thoughtful participant in discussions.
- Present the proposal-in-progress in class.
- Provide constructive feedback to classmates on their proposals-in-progress.
- Complete writing assignments on the conceptual framework, methods, contribution.
- Submit the final draft at the end of the semester.

Course Requirements

Assignments: Spaced throughout the semester are three cumulative writing assignments that focus on different components of a dissertation prospectus. These culminate in a complete-as-you-can-get-it draft due in finals week.

Baseline. Students will write in class an overview of the state of their thoughts on the prospectus, including a statement of the problem, the research question, the major research areas it will draw from, and your current plans for studying the topic empirically.

Intro plus annotated literature review outline. Building on the feedback received on the baseline document, revise or rewrite the baseline material and then add (1) an outline of the literature to be used in framing the proposed study, (2) a description of key works and an explanation of why they are significant to the study, and (3) a summary of the conceptual or theoretical frame.

Intro and lit review plus description of methods. Building on the feedback received on the previous submission, draft the literature review and conceptual framework and then add a detailed description of your methods including information on how the data will be obtained, why they are well suited to address the proposal’s research question, how those data will be analyzed, and what the answers to the research questions will “look like” in the dissertation. Include as much detail as is possible at the time: number of interviews, days/hours in the field, sample sizes, special analytic techniques, etc.

Final Draft: The complete draft of your prospectus is due at the end of the semester, and should again incorporate the feedback received from the instructor, classmates, and the major professor. Preliminary findings from pilot studies, exploratory analyses, or initial interviews may be included in the final draft (optional for the purposes of this class).

Important notes about assignments:

Response to reviewers. All writing assignments beyond the baseline should include a summary of the feedback received from the instructor, classmates, and/or the major professor and how the current document addressed that feedback.

Required format. The submitted document should be double-spaced, have one-inch margins, make use of headings/subheadings, be page-numbered, and include references in ASA or APA format.

Presentations: Students will present their progress to the class two times – once early in the semester and again toward the end of the semester.

Discussion Boards: At various times throughout the semester you will have the opportunity to post and reply to a discussion board on the module topic. The discussion boards are not every week, but they are
intended to solicit from you questions and observations prior to our Zoom meeting so that we can be as productive as possible with our online meetings. Please contribute to these discussion boards to keep our class conversations rich and informative.

**Course Grades**

Students will be graded on a S/U basis. To receive a Satisfactory grade, students must complete all assignments and attend class. Incompletes will only be given in extreme situations. The instructor can assign a grade of Unsatisfactory if a student repeatedly misses class (more than 2 unexcused absences) or fails to submit one or more of the writing assignments.

**Course Schedule**

See the "Modules" section of the Canvas site.

**Canvas Support**

Need help with Canvas? Contact FSU Canvas Support:

**Email:** canvas@fsu.edu  
**Phone:** (850) 644-8004  
**Website:** support.canvas.fsu.edu  
**Hours:** 8am to 5pm, Monday - Friday

**University Policies**

**University Attendance Policy**

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

**Academic Honor Policy**

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and... [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (For more details see the [FSU Academic Honor Policy and procedures for addressing alleged violations](#)Links to an external site.)

**Americans With Disabilities Act**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

1. register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services; and
2. bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type.

Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Office of Accessibility Services has been provided.
This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the
Office of Accessibility Services (Tallahassee Campus)Links to an external site.
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
Email: oas@fsu.edu
https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas

Student Disability Services (Panama City Campus)Links to an external site.
Office of Student Affairs
4750 Collegiate Drive
2nd Floor Barron Building (Room 215)
Florida State University Panama City
Panama City, FL 32405
(850) 770-2172 (office)
(866) 693-7872 (toll free)
Email: sds@pc.fsu.edu
https://pc.fsu.edu/students/student-disability-services

Free Tutoring from FSU (Tallahassee Campus)

On-campus tutoring and writing assistance are available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options - see the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' websiteLinks to an external site. or contact tutor@fsu.edu. High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

Syllabus Change Policy

"Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice."

Acknowledgement

This syllabus drew heavily from Dr. Patrice Iatarola’s seminar EDH 6935 "Seminar in Higher Education -- Prospectus Development" in the College of Education.