

Sociology 99: Senior Thesis Seminar

2020-2021

Instructor: Nicolette Bardele, nbardele@g.harvard.edu

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Website: <http://socthesis.fas.harvard.edu> (for resources) and course Canvas page (for latest updates)

Class Meeting Times: Wednesdays, 4:30-5:30pm ET or Thursdays, 9:00-10:00am ET

Course Description

This course is designed to be a resource to you, our sociology thesis writers, as you progress through the research and writing process. We will meet throughout the fall and the beginning of the spring semesters to provide support, feedback, and tips and tricks. The course also features guest speakers who will share with you their advice, as well as stories of their own research-related setbacks and struggles. Research and writing are our collective challenges; the goal of this course is to aid you in conquering them.

Attendance Policy and Class Meeting Times

Attendance for Sociology 99 is mandatory. Your attendance is crucial to the success of your thesis project, and it is expected that students will attend each class session. The class days and times will be set by the instructor at the beginning of the semester based on a poll of student schedules (after students have enrolled), and it is expected that you will arrange your schedule accordingly. It is possible that the class will be split up into two groups that meet separately depending on everyone's availability/time zones. Absences will be excused for medical reasons or for religious observance. In these cases please email the instructor in advance, unless there is a medical emergency, in which case you should contact the instructor within 24 hours.

Grading and Participation

Sociology 99 is graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. To receive a passing grade for the fall semester, you must submit a chapter of your thesis to your advisor and a progress report to the Undergraduate Office by the dates indicated in the Deadlines section below. You are also expected to attend and participate in every class. I will aim to structure activities/discussions in a variety of ways throughout the semester in an effort to ensure that this is a comfortable environment in which everyone can participate. If participation in class is challenging for you, please meet with me, and I am happy to talk through possible solutions with you. In order to build community within Sociology 99 and maximize everyone's engagement, please also keep your video turned on while in class (Zoom backgrounds are great, too!). If this is not possible for you for any reason, don't hesitate to reach out to me so we can talk this through further.

Data Analysis Assistance

Role	Name	Email Address	Office Hours
Departmental Writing Fellow (2020-2021) For more info: https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/sociologydwf/departmental-writing-fellow	Sean Bock	seanbock@g.harvard.edu	Tuesdays/Thursdays 3-5pm ET (sign up online) and by appointment
Quantitative Advisor (2020-2021)	Sean Bock	seanbock@g.harvard.edu	TBD and by appointment
Qualitative Advisor (Fall 2020)	Joseph Wallerstein	jwallerstein@g.harvard.edu	TBD and by appointment

Deadlines

Prospectus and completed approval form	Friday, October 2, 2020
Chapter and progress report due to advisor	Wednesday, December 9, 2020
Thesis due date	Tuesday, March 9, 2021

For more information: <http://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/pages/writing-senior-thesis>

Schedule

Session 1: Introduction September 9th/10th

- Guest speaker: Hilary Holbrow, Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies
- Introduce the thesis process and this class

Session 2: Getting started—research questions & design; the prospectus September 16th/17th

- Workshop research topics, questions, and design
- Discuss the prospectus and go through examples
- Brief overview of thesis chapter organization

Session 3: Recruitment; writing the literature review September 23rd/24th

- Guest speakers: Sean Bock, Sociology Quantitative Advisor and Departmental Writing Fellow; Joseph Wallerstein, Sociology Qualitative Advisor

- Recruitment tips
- Discuss structure and scope of literature review

Session 4: Finding literature/sources; data analysis
September 30th/October 1st

- Guest speaker: Kathleen Sheehan, Research Librarian
- Discuss searching for/accessing materials and using reference management software (organizing sources/notes)
- Discuss and practice coding and analyzing data (mostly qualitative)

→ Deadline: Thesis Prospectus and Completed Approval Form, Friday, October 2, 2020

Advisor signature required

Session 5: Group catch-up
October 7th/8th

- Project updates
- Workshop ideas and brainstorm questions/concerns together

Session 6: Writing the thesis
October 14th/15th

- Discuss tips and tricks for writing the thesis
- Review chapter organization/how each component fits together

Session 7: Time management
October 21st/22nd

- Guest speakers: Khaleem Ali and Margaret Rennix, Academic Coaches at the Academic Resource Center
- Discuss strategies for structuring time (and avoiding procrastination)

Session 8: Panel of former senior thesis writers on navigating the process
October 28th/29th

- Guest speakers: Harvard sociology class of 2020 alums
- Discuss experiences with writing the thesis (and advice)

Session 9: Tailoring the thesis to your desired audience
November 11th/12th

- Discuss identifying an audience—and how to tailor thesis accordingly

Session 10: Group catch-up
November 18th/19th

- Project updates
- Discuss next steps

→ Deadline: Chapter and Progress Report Due to Advisor, Wednesday, December 9, 2020

Session 11 (in late January/early February 2021): Group catch-up

- Project updates
- Workshop ideas and brainstorm questions/concerns together

→ Deadline: Completed Thesis, Tuesday, March 9, 2021