**SENIOR SEMINAR: STRATIFICATION AND INEQUALITY**

**SOCIOLOGY 410 “S”**

**Spring 2014**

Tuesdays 1-4pm, 110 Asbury Hall

Professor Danielle Kane

Office: 331 Asbury Hall

Office hours: Thursday 1:30-4:30 and by appointment daniellekane@depauw.edu

This seminar takes as its focus stratification and inequality, arguably the defining theme of sociology. The seminar represents the culmination of your work in sociology at DePauw, and its primary goal is to support you in conducting an independent piece of empirical research and defending it. This experience will prepare you to speak knowledgeably and concretely about research design; data collection and analysis; and a literature in which you develop some expertise and may make a contribution. While most graduation requirements relate to time spent in class (ie credit hours), the senior seminar provides an important opportunity to develop a product that you can use to showcase your skills to potential employers or graduate school admissions committees and mentors.

For all of these reasons, the seminar is organized around conducting your senior thesis, which is also a requirement for the major. (See the last page of this syllabus for more details.) I have designed assignments to support your work this semester as you make the transition to an independent researcher. In addition, I’ve chosen some readings to get us started and will incorporate more that will support your projects as you develop them.

**Seminar Objectives**

1. To consolidate your understanding of stratification and inequality while developing expertise in one aspect of this topic

2. To refine your ability to develop a research question that is grounded in this expertise

3 To develop your ability to design a study that will address that research question

4. To conduct data collection on your own or in collaboration with colleagues

5. To develop your ability to interpret these data, particularly with respect to how they bear on your research question

6. To practice the skill of presenting and defending your work

7. To practice the skill of providing feedback to others

8. To write up your study in such a way that others could replicate it

**Three Special Features of This Seminar:**

1. This seminar fulfills the S requirement. As such, you will be presenting your work publicly as well as responding to others, which will help sharpen your speaking and listening skills. To be certified “S” competent you are required to do “C-“ or better work on (1) presenting your research; (2) facilitating class discussions; and (3) active participation in workshopping and class meetings. Please note that “S” certification and your letter grade for the class are two distinct assessments. It is possible to pass the course, but not be “S” certified.

2. The most efficient, effective way of developing research and writing skills is to get feedback from others; learning to give this feedback is an important, advanced skill in its own right. We will accomplish both of these aims through class workshops, smaller peer groups, and presentations, as well as one-on-one consultation with me. In other words, all of your work for this class will be shared.

3. The quality and quantity of data are key to a successful piece of research; they are a large part of what distinguishes a thesis from a long class paper. Because many senior theses use DePauw students as their sample, I urge you to take advantage of a special opportunity to coordinate data collection efforts with your classmates. Doing so will enable each student to reap the benefits of a good-sized sample, while only needing to conduct a few interviews him- or herself. We will devote some class time to coordinating data collection, and these discussions will also provide deeper understanding and engagement with the interviewing method. (Collaborating with others is also fun!) While I do not require you to participate, I urge you to make use of this opportunity. If you elect to do your own data collection independently, you should plan on conducting at least 10-15 interviews (if you choose this method).

**Assignments**

Attendance and participation: Because we meet only once a week and because of the intensive nature of our work, which relies heavily on collaboration, it is crucial that you attend every class and be proactive in providing feedback to colleagues. For work due that is ungraded on the original deadline: failing to complete this work on the first deadline will result in a 5-point deduction on the graded product.

Identifying a research question/One page proposal (**Due 2/4**)

In one page, discuss the research question you want to answer with this project and why it is important both personally (eg develops ideas you explored in other sociology classes or has some personal resonance) and for the literature. What gap does this fill? Then briefly describe how you plan to answer this question and what you expect to find.

Annotated bibliography (10 sources) (**Due** **2/18**)

The idea of an annotated bibliography is to think about sources in terms of your work. Take a look at the document on Moodle, and follow the instructions under “Actions to Take.” (Also take a look at the example they give as a model.) Please use ASA format.

*In-class: Revising your one-page proposal based on your annotated bibliography and continued thinking; identifying a theoretical framework. Introduction to IRB*

Literature review (20-25 sources); theoretical framework; and research design (12-15 page document and 10-minute presentation) (**Due 2/18**)

This assignment asks you to create what we sometimes refer to as “**the front end**” of a journal article – effectively the literature review and theoretical framework that culminate in your research question. Make sure that this document has a “direction” – in other words, you might think of the research question as the thesis and you organize this paper to demonstrate why this question is important and how it fits into existing literature. (Take a look at the Literature Review handout on Moodle.) **\*\*\*For the presentation, make sure to include a discussion of your research design. What will be your data and your method?**

*In-class: presentations*

**Research Design and IRB workshop (2/25):**

Bring copies of your instrument (eg your interview and coding sheet) and a draft of the project description for IRB

*In-class: workshop, IRB completion and submission*

IRB project description and materials (**due ¾**)

Results and Discussion (5-10 pages) (**due to Moodle 4/1**)

Small group workshops peer feedback (due **4/8)**

Group 1 Thesis draft and 10-15 min presentations due (**4/15**)

Group 2; Thesis draft and 10-15 min presentations due (**4/22**)

**\*\*\*Final draft due 4/29\*\*\*** Include a letter describing the changes you made in revising.

**\*\*Thursday, May 1st Senior Symposium\*\*\***

**OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

**Senior Symposium**. Each Spring, all sociology and anthropology seniors present their senior thesis to the wider DePauw community, parents, and friends. This year it is scheduled for the evening of Thursday, May 1, 2013. Please mark your calendars for this celebratory event and have your family do the same! [You should also consider this advanced notice that you are required to present at this event even though it is outside our regular class meeting time.] The event is set up like a mini-conference with concurrent sessions organized by theme. Each presenter will have 10 minutes, followed by Q&A. Your presentation should be professional and polished. A trip to the S-Center as preparation is highly recommended. Everyone is invited to a short awards ceremony afterwards. Failure to present at this event will result in a 50 point deduction from your total points for the course.

**Senior comprehensive requirement**. Fulfilling the senior comprehensive requirement in Sociology or Sociology/Anthropology involves writing a 25-35 page senior thesis of satisfactory (C- or higher) quality. A thesis of unsatisfactory quality will need to be redone in order to graduate and will lower your overall course grade.

**Required Texts**

This course has one required text, which is available at Eli’s Books. Other readings will be available on Moodle.

Armstrong, Elizabeth A. and Laura T. Hamilton. 2013. Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality. Cambridge, MA: Harvard.

**Schedule of Assignments**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| January 28 | Read for class:* Hout, Michael. 2012. “Social and Economic Reforms to College Education in the United States. *Annual Review of Sociology* 38:379-400.
* Stevens, Mitchell L., Elizabeth Armstrong, and Richard Arum. 2008. “Sieve, Incubator, Hub: Empirical and Theoretical Advances in the Sociology of Higher Education. *Annual Review of Sociology 34*: 127-51.
* Brint, Steven. 2013. “The ‘Collective Mind’ at Work: A Decade in the Life of US Sociology. *Sociology of Education 86*:273.

In-class: discussion; dissecting a journal article; creating an annotation; brainstorming for research proposal |
| February 4 | Due: 1-page research proposal Reading: Armstrong and Hamilton, Introduction, Chapters 1-3In-class: Library presentation; identify 5 sources; get started on annotated bibliography. What should a literature review accomplish? |
| February 11 | Reading: Armstrong and Hamilton, Chapters 4-7In-class: Refining research proposal; discussion of theoretical framework and research design\*\*\*Keep working on your annotated bibliography!! Aim for 10 additional sources at this point. |
| February 18 | Due: Lit review (about 5 pp) + annotated bibliographyReading: TBAIn-class: Develop research design  |
| February 25 | Due: Front End -- Paper and Presentations |
| March 4 | Due: IRB project description, informed consent, instrument, and any other necessary materialsReading: TBAIn-class: IRB workshop  |
| March 11 | Reading: Armstrong and Hamilton, Chapters 8-9; other readings TBANote: Begin data collection as soon as you get IRB approval |
| March 18 | Individual ConferencesData collection |
| March 25 | SPRING BREAK |
| April 1 | Due to Moodle: Results and Discussion sectionIn-class: Individual ConferencesData collection/analysis |
| April 8 | Results and Discussion workshops |
| April 15 | Due: thesis draft and presentations |
| April 22 | Due: thesis draft and presentations |
| April 29 | \*\*\*Final draft due\*\*\* |
| May 1 | \*\*\*Senior Symposium\*\*\* |

**Grades**

S-related assignments:

Weekly class discussion 10

Front end presentation 10

Thesis draft presentation 10

Workshop facilitation/feedback 10

Front end draft 20

Final draft of thesis and letter of revision 30

The following assignments are ungraded, but you will lose the following number of points if they are not completed on time:

2/4 proposal 5 points

2/18 annot bib 5 points

4/1 results to moodle 10 points

4/15thesis draft 15 points

5/1 senior symposium 15 points

**Honor Code**. As with all courses at DePauw University, you are bound by the policy on academic integrity. I highly encourage you to reread the policy if you have not reread it this semester: http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/student/acadlife/app/aip/dishonesty/

**Special Accommodations**. According to Pamela Roberts, Coordinator of Academic Success and Student Disability Services, “DePauw University is committed to providing equal access to academic programs and University administered activities and reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Amendments (ADAAA). Accommodations are determined on a case by case basis. Any student who feels she or he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability or learning challenge is strongly encouraged to contact Pamela Roberts, Coordinator of Academic Success and Student Disability Services for further information on how to receive accommodations and support. Academic Success and Student Disability Services is located at 101 E. Seminary St., 765-658-6267. It is the responsibility of the student to share the letter of accommodation with faculty and staff members. Accommodations will not be implemented until the faculty or staff member has received the official letter. Accommodations are not retroactive. It is the responsibility of the student to discuss implementation of accommodations with each faculty and staff member receiving the letter.”