

Soc. 600
Fall, 2011
Class: Mon. 7:00-9:45
TA: Whitney Gecker
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FOUNDATIONS OF APPLIED SOCIOLOGY

This required course in the Graduate Program in Applied Sociology introduces applied sociology as a profession and begins to develop the skills that will provide a foundation for your career in and after your graduate work at UMass Boston. We will study how applied sociology fits into the history of the discipline of sociology, how it connects to theories of society, and how it has been applied to today's social issues. We will also review the resources available for graduate study at UMB and practice using the skills needed for success in advanced academic work.

Class discussion will be a critical component of the course experience, but you will also spend much time reading, writing, and even doing some arithmetic in relation to applied sociology. Most importantly, you will *learn* about applied sociology 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) How social programs operate;
- 4) Methods used by applied sociologists;
- 5) Techniques for oral presentations and written reports.

REQUIRED READINGS

The assigned readings are selected to 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, as well as how to perform some of the tasks required by applied sociologists. To develop your skills as an applied sociologist, Rubin and Rubin's book will help you to learn qualitative interviewing, which is the primary method we will use in our applied class project. Lee Cuba's book on writing will help you develop the single most important skill that applied sociologists (and most other professionals) must use; practicing writing will also serve you in good stead as you progress through the rest of our program. My new book on homelessness provides a good example (if I don't say so myself) of what applied sociology means in practice, what it can contribute, and some of the issues that applied sociologists must consider.

The articles in the e-reserve collection are also essential reading and will take you into the historical controversy in our profession about applying sociology and show you where things

stand today. These articles will also provide the primary source material for two in-class debates as well as some examples of applied research products. Other books listed in the course bibliography provide a broader picture about the history and role of applied sociology. 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).

BOOKS

- Cuba, Lee J. 2002. *A Short Guide to Writing about Social Science*, 4th ed. NY: Addison-Wesley.
- Rubin, Herbert J. and Irene S. Rubin. 2005. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schutt, Russell K. 2011. *Homelessness, Housing and Mental Illness*, with Stephen Goldfinger. Contributions by Larry J. Seidman. 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.
- Coleman, James S. 1987. "The Role of Social Policy Research in Society and in Sociology." *The American Sociologist* 22:127-133.
- Hauser, Phillip M. 1981 "Sociology's Progress toward Science." *The American Sociologist* 16:62-64.
- Iutcovich, 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.
- 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.
- Richardson, Barbara. 2002. "Ellen Swallow Richards: "Humanistic Oekologist," "Applied Sociologist," and the Founding of Sociology." *The American Sociologist*, Fall: 21-57.

- Rossi, Peter H. 1980. "The Presidential Address: The Challenge and Opportunities of Applied Social Research." *American Sociological Review* 45:889-904.
- 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.
- Turner, Jonathan H. 2008. "The Practice of Scientific Theorizing in Sociology and the Use of Scientific Theory in Sociological Practice." *Sociological Focus*, 281-299.
- Turner, Jonathan H. 1998. "Must Sociological Theory and Sociological Practice be so far Apart? A Potential Answer." *Sociological Perspectives* 41:243-258.
- Whyte, William Foote. 1982. "Social Inventions for Solving Human Problems." *American Sociological Review* 47:1-13.

Examples of Application

- 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](http://www.bentham.org/open/tohspj/openaccess2.htm), 1:19-26. <http://www.bentham.org/open/tohspj/openaccess2.htm>.
- Koppell, Ross. 2008. "The Utility of Sociology." *Sociological Viewpoints*, Fall: 5-16.
- Neeley, Elizabeth. 2008. "Doing Sociology: Applied Sociology for Justice System Policy Reform 1." *Sociological Origins*, 5: 39-44
- Schapira, Lidia and Russell K. Schutt. 2011. "Training Community Health Workers about Cancer Clinical Trials." [Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health](http://www.springerlink.com/content/g6p05g3113951q11/). Online First at <http://www.springerlink.com/content/g6p05g3113951q11/>.
- 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.
- Schutt, Russell K., Elizabeth Riley Cruz, and Mary Lou Woodford. 2008. "Client Satisfaction in a Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program: The Influence of Ethnicity and Language, Health, Resources and Barriers." [Women & Health](#) 48:283-302.
- Schutt, Russell K., Jessica Santiccioli, Jennifer Maniates, Silas Henlon, Lidia Schapira. 2008. *Community Health Workers and Cancer Clinical Trials: Experiences, Knowledge and Concerns*. Research report for project funded by National Cancer Institute.
- Schutt, Russell K. 2005. *Case Management in the Women's Health Network: A Comprehensive Evaluation*. Report to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. With Jacqueline Fawcett. University of Massachusetts Boston.

RECOMMENDED (OPTIONAL) READING

Schutt, Russell K. 2009. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*, 6th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press/SAGE Publications

ACTIVITIES, PROJECTS AND GRADING

I expect you to read each assigned chapter and article before the corresponding class session. Discussion is an important part of the course and so you need to prepare each week by studying the assigned readings and completing the “activities” assigned for that week. You will also need to refer to the assigned readings frequently as you work on the class project you’re your course paper. Some additional reading from the course bibliography will help on the debate and in your final course paper. Extra reading (beyond what is assigned) is not required for the class debates, but it will definitely be helpful.

Our discussion of many course topics will regularly be supplemented by presentations of students in the course and of sociological practitioners. Each student will summarize and discuss one of the assigned articles on e-reserve or a book in the bibliography, or other material that you select (that I must approve in advance). Your class participation grade will be based in large part on the quality of your brief presentation (5 minutes or so) and on the thoughtfulness of your comments and questions about other students’ article presentations. The sociological practitioners will most often be graduates of our program; in a few cases, some will be program faculty. These presenters will share unique perspectives on the application of sociology and offer advice about building careers as sociologists. We will focus particular attention on the application of sociology in the areas of medical sociology, criminal justice, and immigration.

Our learning in the course will be enriched by “doing.” In the first part of the course, you will participate in one of two debates about the value and challenges of applied sociology (either historically or at present). Your specific focus in the debate will be the topic of a short (8-10 pp.) paper you write in the middle of the semester. In the second part of the course, you will contribute to a preliminary investigation of an innovative community program, Teen Empowerment. This program will continue to be a focus of class effort in the Methods of Research I course you will take in the spring semester. You will interview participants or conduct observations at one of the Teen Empowerment sites. In your final course paper, you will review what you have learned about the program, relate that to sociological theory, and suggest research questions and methods for the class investigation of Teen Empowerment in the spring.

The first paper will be based on one of two in-class debates with a group of 8-9 students (divided into two sides). The first debate will focus on the decision to split sociology from social work and criminal justice, while the second will focus on the role of applied sociology in graduate training and professional practice today. You will need to work with other students to

prepare a “pro” or “con” argument and points with which to rebut the argument of the other side in the debate. The articles assigned from the “e-reserve” list for the relevant weeks will be your primary readings for the debate and the paper that you submit after the debate. It would also be helpful to read some of the extra related sources in the class bibliography. After the debate, you must write an 8-10 page paper in which you present your position and evidence, consider opposing arguments, and come to some conclusion (expanding on what you presented in the debate itself). The bibliography for this paper is to include only those articles and books or other sources (such as newspaper or magazine articles or web sites) that you actually use in the paper. A separate class handout provides more details.

Your second, longer paper will be based on an investigation that we conduct of Teen Empowerment, an innovative program in the Boston area (with one site also in Rochester, NY) for reducing violence and engaging teenagers in disadvantaged neighborhoods in constructive social activities. We will first learn about the program in a class presentation by its director, from their website (<http://www.teenempowerment.org/>), and by meeting program staff and participants. For your own portion of this investigation, you will develop a qualitative interview guide or an observational protocol that will help you to learn about a sociologically important question in this setting. Whitney Gecker, our TA, will handle arrangements for all visits and interviews and will keep track of your progress in the project. The final paper will include your statement of a research question, a review of related literature, a brief methodology section, the findings from your interviews or observations, and a conclusions section. The paper must also include, as appendices, an implications section in which you suggest a direction for further research on the program in Methods I (Soc. 650)—based on what you have learned about the program so far—and a reflections section, in which you comment on what you have learned from your experience about the value of and problems with applied sociology.

Interviews can be taped (given subject consent on a form that you will help to prepare), but a transcript of each interview must be included as an appendix to your paper. Observational notes should be submitted, accompanied with a detailed write-up of what was observed. You should use quotes from the interviews or from your observational notes to illustrate key points. I encourage you to share notes from interviews/observational sessions with up to 4 classmates, but your paper, including your analysis, must be your own. The paper should be 20 pages in length, again following ASA format guidelines.

You will also present to the class your work on the final paper, although you may not have finished the paper by the time of your presentation. 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.

Course grades will be computed as follows:

Debate:	15%
First paper :	25%
Second paper:	40%
Presentation:	10%
Class participation:	10%

100%

Throughout the course, you should feel free to speak with me 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). Be sure to refer to Cuba's text in developing all your course papers and presentations.

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--receiving an incomplete will hinder your progress toward your degree and rarely leads to a better final grade.

The Blackboard site for the course includes additional resources and web links. You can use this site to communicate with other students as you prepare for debates and to ask questions about general course issues.

If you have a disability that requires accommodations in order to complete course requirements, please contact the Ross Center for Disability Services (M-1-401) at (617)287-7430 within the first week or two of the semester. They evaluate needs and will develop an accommodation plan.

Of course, academic honesty is an absolute requirement for all coursework. Please see the Code of Student Conduct for a definition of academic dishonesty and a discussion of plagiarism, and the related procedures and penalties:

http://www.umb.edu/student_affairs/vc/judicial/CSC.pdf.

COURSE OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION (September 12)

Welcome! This session provides an opportunity to learn more about our program, about each others' backgrounds and interests, and to discuss how "applied sociology" can work for you. Course goals and expectations will be presented and some of the relevant campus and Web resources identified. We will review the structure and operations of our program and discuss the concept of "applied sociology." Acting Graduate Program Director Professor Reef Youngreen will speak during the last part of class.

Online reading: Trends in Sociology (ASA)
http://www.asanet.org/research/statistical_information.cfm

Post-class activities: (1) Read our graduate program manual at
<http://www.sociology.umb.edu/index.htm> and come to the next

class with at least one question; (2) Locate at least one peer reviewed journal article related to your sociological interests through SocINDEX at the Healey Library website, <http://www.lib.umb.edu/databases>, print out the page and bring it to class; (3) Complete the online RefWorks tutorial at <http://www.refworks.com/tutorial/>.

DOING APPLIED SOCIOLOGY: PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES (September 19)

This session provides an overview of the practice of applied sociology. I will review the history of a series of applied sociological projects that I have directed or co-directed for the Department of Public Health in the past decade. Current and former GPAS research assistants will help to describe project operations. We will connect these projects to the social policy questions we addressed, the methods we used, the practical challenges we faced, and the theories to which we connected. I will also introduce the research on homelessness that is the basis of my latest book. This session will highlight the primary features of applied sociology and allow a comparison to academic sociology (with a focus on medical sociology). We will include some instruction about how to use research tools available through the Healey Library and elsewhere.

Reading: Schutt (2011) Preface, Chapter 1.

E-reserve articles: Neeley; Schapira and Schutt (2011); Schutt et al. (2010); Schutt et al. (2008); Estabrook et al. (2008); Schutt et al. (2005b).
Online articles: 50 years of medical sociology

http://hsb.sagepub.com/content/51/1_suppl.

Speakers: Elizabeth Cruz, Camila Mejia, Jessica Santiccioli.

THE HISTORY OF APPLIED SOCIOLOGY (September 26)

We will review the history of the discipline of sociology, the role of applied sociology within it, and the controversies about it. Does engagement in applied activities diminish or enhance the development of the discipline of sociology? This question has been asked repeatedly throughout the history of sociology and answered in different ways in ASA presidential addresses and the research and career decisions of sociologists. We will join the debate!

E-reserve reading: Calhoun, Hauser, Janowitz, Parsons, Richardson, Smelser, Whyte.

Online reading: ASA history

Pre-class activities: (1) Visit the ASA website at http://cfid153.cfdynamics.com/research/briefs_and_articles.cfm and review “Beyond the Ivory Tower” or another brief or fact sheet and prepare some comments; (2) Review the ASA’s descriptions of past ASA presidents, pick one, read their presidential address or other material and discuss how they approached the applied-academic distinction.

Debate 1: Should sociology and social work (and criminal justice) have split?

CURRENT CONTROVERSIES IN APPLIED SOCIOLOGY (October 3)

Does the Ivory Tower protect the pursuit of truth or insulate us from the real world? Should sociologists “go public” with their findings? We will review recent debates about these issues and conduct one of our own.

E-reserve reading: Berk, Burawoy, Coleman, Koppell, Rossi, Tittle, Turner.

Online reading: ASA’s Sociology in the News; Research on the discipline <http://www.asanet.org/research/>

Pre-class activities: (1) Visit the “public social science” website of either Robert Putnam of *Bowling Alone* fame, at <http://www.bettertogether.org/> or of former ASA president Amitai Etzioni, at <http://www.gwu.edu/~ccps/index.html> and consider their approach to applying sociology (or political science, in the case of Putnam). (2) Inspect the site for the National Institute of Health’s Office of Behavioral and Social Science and learn what it is doing to promote the application of social science research findings, at <http://obssr.od.nih.gov/content>. (3) Review one of the applied research reports that I have developed with groups of your predecessors in the GPAS. Be prepared to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this approach.

Debate 2: Does academic sociology need a divorce from applied sociology or some type of marital counseling?

PAPER 1 DUE OCTOBER 17

HOLIDAY (October 10)

DOING APPLIED SOCIOLOGY: TEEN EMPOWERMENT (October 17)

In this session we will learn about the Teen Empowerment Center, its history and philosophy. We will review the social science literature on

empowerment and on community and consider connections to sociological theories. We will discuss with TE staff possible research questions about their program and an approach to investigating it. I will make some comparisons to processes I analyze in my book and Prof. Reef Youngreen will draw some connections to social psychological theory.

Reading: Schutt (2011), chapters 2, 3, 5, 9.

Pre-class activities: (1) Visit the UMB research compliance website at <http://www.umb.edu/research/orsp/compliance/fedregs.html>, read the Belmont Report, and familiarize yourself with the other materials; (2) Read the UMB compliance statement at <http://www.umb.edu/research/orsp/compliance/requiredtraining.html>; (3) Register at the CITI ethics training site, <http://www.citiprogram.org/>, and COMPLETE THE CITI COURSE.

Speakers: Stanley Pollock, Director of Teen Empowerment; Reef Youngreen, PhD.

PROTECTING HUMAN SUBJECTS (October 24)

Protection of human subjects has been an increasing concern in applied sociology. Attention to potential problems developed in part as a result of violations in Nazi Germany, increased with the exposure of some egregious examples of insensitive research practices in the United States, and then grew to a fever pitch when problems at several universities led to suspensions of federal funding. Now, all members of the university community, including students, are required to undergo human subjects training and submit their research plans for review by the university's institutional review board. We will review the history of these issues and current policies and practices. GPAS alum Kathryn Stoeckert will discuss her experiences with medical research at Dana Farber Cancer Institute and now at the UMass Medical Center.

Reading: E-reserve article by Iutcovich and Hoppe.

Schutt (2009), Chapter 3, Research Ethics and Philosophies.

Online reading: ASA Code of Ethics at:

<http://cfd153.cfdynamics.com/images/asa/docs/pdf/CodeofEthics.pdf>

Pre-class activities: (1) Visit the UMB research compliance website at <http://www.umb.edu/research/orsp/compliance/fedregs.html>, read the Belmont Report, and familiarize yourself with the other materials; (2) Read the UMB compliance statement at <http://www.umb.edu/research/orsp/compliance/requiredtraining.html>; (3) Register at the CITI ethics training site,

<http://www.citiprogram.org/>, and COMPLETE THE CITI COURSE.

Speakers: Paul Nestor, PhD (Chair, UMB IRB); Kathryn Stoeckert (Dana Farber Cancer Institute).

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWING (October 31)

Wherein we focus intensively on the process of interviewing. There are three reasons for this: (1) to get a “feel” for the logic of empirically-based inquiry; (2) to develop some expertise with one of the most useful “tools of the trade”; (3) to prepare for the data collection portion of the class project.

Reading: Rubin & Rubin, chapters 1-9

Special activity: Design a TE interview schedule; practice interviewing

CRIMINAL JUSTICE, SUBSTANCE ABUSE (November 7)

We will learn about sociological practice in the area of criminal justice, substance abuse, and their intersection with mental health issues—the focus of our Forensic Services Graduate Certificate Program. I will also review the history of another GPAS project, the Changing Lives Through Literature evaluation.

We will prepare this week for writing the final course paper.

Reading: Schutt, chapter 6.

Pre-class activities: (1) Read the article about the Changing Lives Through Literature Project at
<http://ctl.umassd.edu/pdf/outreachnewsletter8.pdf>.

Guest speakers: Andrea Leverentz, PhD (Forensic Services Certificate program director), Melissa Morabito, PhD, Bianca Bersani, PhD.

Special activity: Writing practice.

November 10: Course withdrawal deadline

IMMIGRATION AND GLOBALIZATION (November 14)

Immigration has brought populations from around the world into physical contact, while broader processes of globalization have connected the countries of the world ever more tightly through economic ties and communication links. We will hear about these processes and their implications for applied sociology from several of our own experts. We will also prepare to analyze the interview and observation data from the class project.

Reading: Rubin & Rubin, chapters 10-12;

Online reading: ASR millennium issue.

http://www.asanet.org/members/special/asr_022000.cfm.

Pre-class activities: (1)

Guest speakers: Jorge Capetillo, PhD; Phil Kretsedemas, PhD; Cinzia Solari, PhD, Lakshmi Srinivas, PhD.

HOUSING, PUBLIC POLICY, DISABILITIES & AGING (November 21)

Just beneath the surface of social problems like homelessness and health problems like mental illness lurk contentious debates about the role of social factors and the most appropriate social policies. We will use my book on homelessness and mental illness as an example as we consider such debates and their ramifications for applied sociologists. Our discussion will be enriched by presentations by GPAS alums from the fields of public policy, disability studies, gerontology.

Reading: Schutt (2011), chapters 4, 7, 8, 10, 11.

Speakers: Tatjana Meschede, PhD; Andrea Tull, PhD, Lidia Todd, MA, Frank Smith, MA.

SURVEY RESEARCH (November 28)

Surveys are the most common method of data collection in the discipline of sociology and in the work of applied sociologists. We will visit UMass Boston's Center for Survey Research and learn about the process of and rationale for conducting surveys. We will also prepare in this session for writing the final paper.

Reading: Cuba, chapters 1, 4-8; Schutt et al. (2005a)

Pre-class activities: (1) Review a project at the website of our Center for Survey Research at <http://www.csr.umb.edu/>; (2) Review

information about the national social research firm, Abt Associates in Cambridge, at <http://www.abtassociates.com/>.

Special activity: CSR tour.

Guest speakers: Dragana Bolcic-Jankovic, MA; Dana Hunt, PhD.

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS I (December 5)

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS II (December 12)

FINAL PAPER DUE DATE: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Halliday, Terence C. and Morris Janowitz, eds. 1992. *Sociology and its Publics: The Forms and Fates of Disciplinary Organization*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
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