

SOCIOLOGY 455H1S
RESEARCHING FROM A SOCIAL NETWORK PERSPECTIVE

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Class Time: W12-2
Location: FE36
Office Hours: T3-5
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In *Introduction to Social Network Analysis* you learned that social network analysts study patterns of relations and the sources and consequences of these patterns. You also learned what researchers have found when applying a social network perspective to a variety of sociological topics such as community, health, immigration, and crime.

In this course *you* will be the social network analyst. You will learn what social network data looks like, you will learn how to describe the properties of social networks and positions within social networks, and most importantly you will learn how to use these skills to answer your own sociological questions. Your primary task in this course will be to complete the research that you proposed in the final paper that you wrote for SOC355.

The **prerequisites** to take this course is SOC202H1, SOC355H1 **and** at least .5 more FCEs at the SOC300 level. These prerequisites will be enforced without exception. Students not having the prerequisites can be removed at any time without notice.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Each week the first hour of class will consist of a research-practicum-style seminar. We will focus on the research of two or three students in the class, reading articles related to those students' topics as well as those students' work in progress. The second hour of each class will be devoted to learning methods of analyzing social network data. You will learn to work with ego network data and analyze these data to answer your research question.

COURSE GOALS

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- i) Describe, read, and enter social network data.
- ii) Distinguish between different kinds of social networks and network ties
- iii) Demonstrate knowledge of social network data collection methods
- iv) Understand and calculate simple ego network measures by hand and with software
- v) Analyze ego network data to show relationships between network properties and other variables
- vi) Critically analyze in-progress research and adapt research based on the feedback of others'

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Research Paper

Short Form Proposal	10%
Literature Logs	10%
Interviews	10%
Final Paper	20%

Class Work

Seminar Preparation and Response	30%
Participation	10%
Online Integrated Quizzes	10%

All assignments *except* seminar preparation will be submitted only online. Submit seminar preparation online *and* bring three hard copies to class.

SOFTWARE AND READINGS

Readings are available the University of Toronto Libraries or on the course web site. I recommend that you install the myaccess bookmarklet for easiest access to the readings when working off campus. In addition, you will need to have access to the following software:

- Microsoft Excel
- SPSS (Student version is fine!)

Both programs are available in the classroom where this class is taught. These may also be available at other computer labs in the University, including the computer lab at the Map and Data Library in Robarts library.

Because readings will be based on students' research topics, a list of readings will be available *after* the organizational meeting and these readings may be subject to change over the course of the semester.

COURSE OUTLINE			
Week		Seminar Topic - Tutorial Topic	Readings and Due Dates
1		Thinking About Measures and Design - Reading Codebooks and Data	Marsden, Peter. 2011. "Survey Methods for Network Data." Pp. 370-388 in <i>The Sage Handbook of Social Network Analysis</i> , edited by J. Scott and P. Carrington. London: Sage. Fischer, Claude S. Northern California Community Study, 1977. [Codebook] ICPSR07744-v2. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2011-10-17. http://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR07744.v2 (Look over, no need to print)
2		Learning to Think about the Literature - Network Data	Due: Short Form Proposal
3		- Aggregating and Merging Data	Extension Due Date: Short Form Proposal
4		- Categorical Independent Variables	Receive Surveys
5		- Continuous Independent Variables	
6		- Data Entry	
7		- Dichotomous Dependent Variables	Due: Uploaded Interview Data
8		- Student Data Analysis	

9		- Writing	
10		- Network Data Quality	
11		- Qualitative Network Analysis	
12		Sociology and Networks Beyond the Fourth Year (Seminar Only)	Due: Final Papers

ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE POLICIES

WHAT IS A RESEARCH PRACTICUM?

A research practicum is a type of course in which the primary purpose of class meetings is to help students progress in their research. Each week the focus of the class meeting will be on particular students' research. We will read materials that will prepare us to discuss their research and come prepared to discuss their research topics, the kinds of measures they have been using and any problems or questions they may be encountering in their research. Computers will not be needed nor permitted in this portion of the class.

WHAT ABOUT THE DATA ANALYSIS PART OF THE COURSE?

In this portion of each class meeting we will work with ego network data collected as part of the Northern California Community Study to practice using SPSS to work with network data, calculate measures of network properties, and conduct analyses of the data. During this portion of the class each student will have a computer with the necessary software and engage in hands-on work with real network data. Students will prepare for this portion of the class by watching short video demonstrations online and completing short (2-4) question quizzes integrated into these videos. You will use the methods you learn here to complete your final research paper.

ATTENDANCE AND PREPARATION

Attendance is required and participation is essential for the success of the seminar portion of the course. Students are responsible for all material presented in class. Students who are unable to attend class on a given day are responsible for obtaining from their classmates notes on all material covered as well as information regarding any administrative announcements that may have been made. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings in advance of the class period for which they are assigned.

SEMINAR PARTICIPATION AND RESPONSE

The seminar portion of each class will be devoted to discussing the research of 2-3 students studying thematically related topics. In preparation for class students will read materials related to these topics and learn about the research that will be discussed that week. Students whose work is not the focus of that week will prepare a short (~1 page) written reflection based on questions that will be made available online. In class we will discuss the reading materials, the theme that the weeks' research topics share, and the research itself. Your written reflections will be provided to the students' to help their thinking and progress on their research projects. Following the class in which your research is discussed, each student will submit a short (~1 page) online response to what was learned and the feedback received in the seminar.

Seminar preparation reflections will be worth 15% of your final mark and responses will be worth 15%. Because seminar preparation is designed to aid your in-class participation, you may not submit these late, nor may you submit these for a class you do not attend in its entirety. Your two lowest seminar preparation marks, including any 0s due to missed classes, will be dropped. This is to account for any classes you may miss for legitimate reasons. If you miss more than two classes for legitimate, documented reasons, you may submit documentation for all missed classes to avoid penalty.

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Your major assignment in this course will be to use social network data to answer the research question that you posed in your SOC355 research proposal. For many of you, this will be the first time you have had the opportunity to conduct a research study. This may be intimidating, but rest assured that we will tackle the project together in stages, and when each stage comes you will know what you need to know. If you have trouble applying what you know, help will be available both in my office hours and in class time set aside for this purpose during weeks 6 and 8.

As part of this project, the entire class will conduct interviews to collect the data that you will all analyze. **Given that you will need to depend on your classmates to collect your data and that your classmates will be depending on you to collect theirs, it is extremely important that you submit your short form proposal and interview data on time.** If your survey questions aren't in on time your classmates won't be able to ask them. If your data aren't in on time your classmates won't have data to analyze. Therefore, late short form proposals will be penalized 15% per day and will not be accepted more than 2 days late. Late interview data will be penalized 10% in total and will not be accepted more than 2 days late.

If you do not submit a short form proposal on time your survey questions will not be included in the interviews. Therefore, you will need to see me in office hours to develop a paper topic that you can write using the existing survey questions. This is entirely do-able and not the end of the world, but I assume you would rather write on a topic that interests you, so be sure to submit your proposal on time.

ONLINE LITERATURE LOGS

Your final research paper will include a review of the literature on your topic. You will use this literature to situate your topic theoretically, to explain the significance of your question, to explain why we should expect your hypotheses to be correct, to explain your methodological choices, or to discuss the implications of your findings, the limitations of your research, or any additional sociological questions your findings may raise. You should be researching and reading throughout the semester to help you prepare for this. Other students and I will likely make suggestions in class about works or topics that you might investigate. I am also happy to talk with you during office hours about the literature you are reading or how you might locate appropriate works if you're having trouble. To help me guide your research, you must complete 10 online literature logs over the course of the semester. You may submit no more than 2 per week. These consist of four questions answerable in about a sentence. They should take you no more than 10 minutes to complete.

EMAIL

When emailing me, you must use your utoronto.ca address, as this is the only address I can be sure is yours. Please also be sure to include "SOC455" in the subject line. All students are responsible for checking their official utoronto.ca email addresses regularly, including the evening before class.

USE OF WRITING CENTRES

All students are encouraged to use their available writing centres. Writing tutors provide help you to think through your ideas, develop a thesis, organize your paper, present your evidence effectively, argue logically, and express yourself more clearly and concisely. Proofreading and copyediting for spelling, grammar, or format are *not* within the primary scope of the writing centres' services.

ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Including references to sources that you did not use.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including
 - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work,
 - having someone rewrite or add material to your work while "editing".
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers
- Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor's notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

To remind you of these expectations, and help you avoid accidental offences, I will ask you to complete an online Academic Integrity Checklist for your final paper. These will be available on Blackboard. There will be a 10% penalty for students who do not complete the checklist.

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the *Code*. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek out additional information from me, or from other available campus resources like the [U of T Writing Website](#). If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please speak to me or seek the advice of your college registrar.

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are due online by the beginning of class on due date provided. In addition to submitting online, please bring three hard copies of your seminar participation to class.

- Late seminar participation forms will not be accepted. Students may not submit a seminar participation form for classes they do not attend for the full class period. Late seminar feedback responses will be penalized 2% per day.
- Late short form proposals will be penalized 15% per day and will not be accepted more than 2 days late.
- Late interview data will be penalized 10% in total and will not be accepted more than 2 days late.
- Late final papers will be penalized 3% per day, including weekend or holiday days.
- Students who do not attend the class at which their research is discussed will receive a mark of 0 for their seminar feedback response.

ACCESSIBILITY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO IS COMMITTED TO ACCESSIBILITY. IF YOU REQUIRE ACCOMMODATIONS OR HAVE ANY ACCESSIBILITY CONCERNS, PLEASE VISIT [HTTP://STUDENTLIFE.UTORONTO.CA/ACCESSIBILITY](http://STUDENTLIFE.UTORONTO.CA/ACCESSIBILITY) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

TURNITIN.COM

NORMALLY, STUDENTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT THEIR COURSE ESSAYS TO TURNITIN.COM FOR A REVIEW OF TEXTUAL SIMILARITY AND DETECTION OF POSSIBLE PLAGIARISM. IN DOING SO, STUDENTS WILL ALLOW THEIR ESSAYS TO BE INCLUDED AS SOURCE DOCUMENTS IN THE TURNITIN.COM REFERENCE DATABASE, WHERE THEY WILL BE USED SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETECTING PLAGIARISM. THE TERMS THAT APPLY TO THE UNIVERSITY'S USE OF THE TURNITIN.COM SERVICE ARE DESCRIBED ON THE TURNITIN.COM WEB SITE.

COURSE WEB SITE

THE COURSE WEBSITE PREPARED ON THE BLACKBOARD SYSTEM WILL CONTAIN THE COURSE SYLLABUS, ALL HANDOUTS, LINKS OF INTEREST, AND COURSE ANNOUNCEMENTS. IN ADDITION FILES REQUIRED FOR COMPLETION OF THE FINAL PAPER WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AND EACH STUDENT WILL BE REQUIRED TO UPLOAD INTERVIEW DATA TO THE BLACKBOARD WEB SITE.

STUDENT CONTACTS

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL MATERIAL PRESENTED IN CLASS, INCLUDING ANNOUNCEMENTS. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND CLASS, YOU SHOULD OBTAIN NOTES FROM A CLASSMATE. WRITE DOWN THE NAMES AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR TWO OF YOUR CLASSMATES BELOW SO YOU'LL HAVE SOMEONE TO CONTACT IF YOU NEED NOTES.

NAME: _____

NAME: _____

E-MAIL: _____

E-MAIL: _____

PHONE: _____

PHONE: _____

OTHER (IM, SKYPE ETC.): _____

OTHER (IM, SKYPE ETC.): _____