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Fall 2007

SOCY 320 – Introduction to Social Research

Section 001: Tuesdays and Fridays, 12:45 to 2:00 PM, Ward 107

Section 002: Tuesdays and Fridays, 3:35 to 4:50 PM, Hurst 10

What often separates social scientific knowledge from other knowledge production fields is the application of a systematic process, rigor, and the promise that others can replicate one's study. However, what constitutes knowledge, and what, exactly, can become data sources (for example, whether to utilize a living person as a source of data versus thousands, or whether records and historical documentation can be utilized as data), is often discussed and debated in numerous sociological forums. We will engage such debates in this course. *Introduction to Social Research* is a course designed to teach and train students on a variety of approaches available to sociologists in order to best address a research question. As the title (and catalog) denotes it, this class is “*an introduction* to the major research methods in social science, their links to theory and practice, and their use in research projects.” As such, it centers on the criteria for selection of a particular method (or set of methods), as well as the learning of such method(s), in order to apply them to a particular project. It is not an advanced methods class on either quantitative or qualitative methods, but a general course offering discussions on the logic of research, whether studied at a comparative, historical, interpretative, or causal/multiple variable level.

SOCY-320 weaves throughout issues based on the sociology department's concentration on Race, Gender and Social Justice. Because any kind of social studies framework requires as baseline the recognition of social inequalities (and the possibilities for social change), many readings focus on aspects of inequality, including race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class variability, and more to the topic at hand, the impact of ourselves as *studiers* of subjects, and the notion of “subjects of study”—to begin with. Similarly, given the new emphasis on *Public Sociology*, including applied and policy issues, part of the material for discussion tends to applied research, community-based research, and evaluation and policy, among other topics.

This course will: (1) familiarize you with traditional social scientific research and more recent/experimental methods of social studies, (2) connect methods to sociological theory on a variety of social justice issues, (3) offer “hands on” experience to many of the methods discussed in class, (4) expose you to researchers at the BA, MA, and Ph.D. levels, who have conducted similar research using a number of methods (some discussed in class), and (5) offer an opportunity for you to select a reading source of interest to critically engage with its methods. As junior/senior undergraduate students completing your BA, you will also be able to (6) write an original research proposal to address a particular research project, and (7) briefly present it to the rest of the classmates. *These last two aspects of the class objectives will assist you in either preparing a conference talk—a goal I fully support (see, for AU forums, the Ann Robyn Mathias Student Research Conference, <http://www.american.edu/cas/src.html>) and/or hopefully, have you complete a BA paper proposal with a well developed methods framework.*

Required Book:

- Chambliss, Daniel F., & Shut, Russell K. 2006. *Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation*, 2nd ed. Pine Forge Press/Sage.

Many other readings have been posted on Blackboard, and a few other readings will be provided as handouts throughout the semester.

The **course requirement breakdown** is as follows:

1. Attendance	10 %
2. Participation (through exercises, discussions, sharing feedback w/peers)	10 %
3. Short Essays (response ones on movies; relevant research steps)	15 %
4. Mid term exam (in class--Oct. 9)	25 %
5. Review of a methods article (see sample list attached--due Nov. 9)	10 %
6. Final methods proposal (due at the end of the semester)	30 %

Attendance is expected of all students every time the class meets. *Missing class, leaving early and arriving late will result in a grade reduction.* Your class work is your responsibility, and if you miss several classes, even with the assistance from others, your grade will suffer. Three (3) or more *unexcused* absences (an excused absence needs to be determined by me) *will initiate a process of point discount from your final grade.*

Active participation is expected of all students. An understanding of the readings, which is partly noticed through class participation, is beneficial to all (but especially to those whose grade borders between grades at the end of the semester). In addition to knowing the material, there will be practice exercises where we will enact a focus group, or a one-on-one interview, or conduct fieldwork/write fieldnotes of what was observed, and we will provide feedback to each other.

Short Essays: You will write a 3-4 page paper (double spaced, 1” margin in all four sides, with proper ASA citations when applicable, and correct use of footnotes, also when applicable) for each of the assignments: (a) the ethics film, (b) the research question (see instructions at the end of the syllabus), and (c) the proposal of your final paper.

Review of an article/book chapter of your choice (4-5 pages). I suggest some sources (end of syllabus) that in some way address a specific method, or pose a challenge in engaging with a particular method. I am aware that these sources reflect some of my own interests (gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, religion, HIV), hence, you are strongly encouraged to select an article from this list, but not restricted to it. (Notice, however, that most sources are recent articles from respectable sociology journals.) If you cannot find a source of interest from this list, let’s meet and discuss options to approve an article *within the first 3 weeks of the semester.*

The **mid-term exam** will be a few short answer and essay questions, mostly based on the early part of the course material. We will review examination material during the first five minutes of each session if needed. We may also have a *brief* review session right before the exam date.

Final methods proposal: The textbook’s last chapter offers an outline to follow. I have included a set of guidelines at the end of the syllabus for the 11-14 page paper (excluding references).

In fairness to all students who turn in their work on time, **written assignments** must be turned in when class starts, and NOT at the end; written assignments turned in at the end of the class time will suffer a deduction of several points. *For each hour after a paper is due, the grade will suffer a 5 point deduction from its highest possible grade depending on its quality. A paper turned in the day after the due date will count as a zero.*

The performance for this class will be measured using this **grade system**:

- A Excellent – Fulfills each course requirement thoughtfully, using strong analytical skills. *A grade of an A demonstrates **superior** work both in its written and oral components.*
- B Very Good – Fulfills course requirements with not as strong of an analytical component, but excellent quality work in either its written or oral component.
- C Satisfactory – Fulfills course requirements at a satisfactory minimum.
- D Unsatisfactory or incomplete work – Assigned work is not satisfactory or not completed as stipulated in the course deadlines. This also applies when failing to meet minimum attendance requirements.
- F Failure to meet minimum course requirements – This includes class participation and written and oral course requirements, as well as attendance.

An incomplete grade is not possible in this course other than for *documented* reasons of health or emergency. *Please be advised that you will not be able to get an incomplete in this class, partly because the tasks and responsibilities are outlined and the deadlines are made clear to you ahead of time, but also, because I will be on a teaching leave during the following semester.*

What this class will cover and what it will not

As a sociology major/minor preparing to take the capstone course in your last year(s) at AU, you will need to develop a research project and complete it. The sociology department conducts an undergraduate assessment that utilizes such project (in the form of your final paper for the capstone course) to assess, among other things, the use of a literature review, a theoretical framework, and a sound methodology. This class will only tend to the last aspect. You will have the opportunity to think about your research question, and examine several ways of testing it through various methods throughout the course of the semester, arriving at a method of your choice, but also a most sound method for your project.

All these methods discussions will allow you to learn multiple forms of sociological methods, some of which you might have not heard of before. The downside of this is that we will not have time this semester to conduct a new literature review. The literature review, which follows identifying and narrowing down a research question, is needed in order to produce a research plan and an appropriate selection of method(s). For this class, your literature review does not need to be a new review—I encourage you to utilize previous work in order to account for this aspect of the research plan. I will ask you to share with me and Ellen, as soon as possible, *but no later than the end of September*, a previously prepared literature review. What this means is that you will carry out a research project in this class which may or may not be the research project you chose to engage with in the capstone, but if you bring an old literature review, and develop appropriate methods about the research question linked to that literature review, this will help you progress in terms of a full proposal (with potential use in the capstone course).

In the unlikely event that you have never done a literature review, Ellen and I will work with you in helping you identify some relevant sources, as well as library resources and databases, so that you can complete this task as soon as the semester starts. You may start with the library's link on how to conduct a literature review, sample writing, and questions and answers to most common issues (refer to http://www.library.american.edu/Help/tutorials/lit_review/index.html for more guidance). Likewise, if you are not satisfied with the topic of your previous literature reviews, we can work during office hours in helping you re-focus on a new area of research; yet, I encourage you to utilize whatever literature reviews you have at your disposal in order to move through the semester and complete the task on hand. *I want to stress the fact that, whenever possible, you should consider using this exercise of bringing an old literature review into the methods class as the founding literature review and methods for your senior thesis.*

Because of time limitations and the focus of the class on various methods, you **will not** be required to produce an application of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and its Human Subjects. However, while this could be necessary for your research, especially for the capstone course, it is a rather simple process for enrolled students. If you wish to prepare the application for the IRB while enrolled in this course, Ellen or I will gladly talk with you outside class.

Resources:*

Office hours are scheduled for your benefit. So is the use of **email** in communicating with me. **Blackboard** is an alternate way of engaging in course-related discussions, should this be determined to be a feasible use for most students.

If you think you may have disability-related needs, please talk with me promptly about accommodations to support your learning. AU provides a wide range of services for students such as the Academic Support Center (243 Mary Graydon Center, 885-3360, www.american.edu/ocl/asc/index1.html); the computer services/technology (<http://www.american.edu/technology/sites/helpdesk/content.cfm?id=104>); Counseling Center (214 Mary Graydon, 885-3500, www.american.edu/ocl/counseling/index1.html); Disability Support Services (206 Mary Graydon, 885-3315, www.american.edu/ocl/dss/index1.html); the International Student Services (410 Butler Pavilion, 4th Fl, 885-3350, <http://www.american.edu/ocl/iss/>); the Writing Center (228 Battelle-Tompkins Hall, 885-2392, www.american.edu/cas/lit/writing_center/) and the Writing Lab (243 M. Graydon 885-2991 <http://www.american.edu/ocl/asc/writingsupport/Aboutus.html>).

Please take note of the **academic integrity** code to which you are in agreement by registering every semester and as part of your acknowledgment of general registration policies (<http://www.american.edu/american/registrar/AcademicReg/New/reg80.html>). Aspects covered in the academic integrity code include plagiarism, dishonesty in examinations, papers, or copyright violations. *You must know I take these violations seriously; students guilty of such behavior must be prepared to face charges based on those violations.*

SPECIAL NOTE: Please refrain from using text messaging or laptops while in the classroom.

* AU's Dean of Academic Affairs has recently released a memo with question and answer feedback for faculty, on students who appear to be distressed (partly after the Virginia Tech incident earlier this year). I provide a link for your benefit: <http://www.american.edu/academic.depts/provost/dean/faculty/Mental%20Health%20Issues%20in%20the%20Classroom.pdf>

What follows is the class schedule breakdown with readings, assignments, and important dates:

- Aug 28 Welcome, introduction to the course, requirements, first lecture
- Handout:** Robert R. Alford, *The Craft of Inquiry: Theories, Methods, Evidence*, intro and chapter one.
- Aug 31 *Chapter 1: Science, Society, and Social Research*
- Sept 4 *Chapter 2: The Process and Problems of Social Research*
- Article:** Coy, Maddy. 2006. "This Morning I'm a Researcher, This Afternoon I'm An Outreach Worker: Ethical Dilemmas in Practitioner Research." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 9, 5: 419-431.
- Sept 7 Ethics and Research
- Chapter:** Frankfort-Nachmias, Chava, David Nachmias. 1996. "Ethics in Social Science Research." Chapter 4 (pp. 76-96) in *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, 5th ed.
- Website:** American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics. See it at:
http://www.asanet.org/cs/root/leftnav/ethics/code_of_ethics_table_of_contents
- View film:** "Quiet rage: the Stanford prison experiment" [VHS 3789]
- [Write a Response Essay to the film, using these 2 sources – by Sept 11]**
- Sept 11 Politics of Research
- Article:** Berard, T.J. 2006. "From Concepts to Methods: On The Observability of Inequality." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35, 3: 236-256.
- Response Essay (on film "Quiet Rage") due today**
- Sept 14 *Chapter 3: Conceptualization and Measurement*
- Article:** Rhineberger, Gayle M., David J. Hartmann, and Thomas L. Van Valey. 2005. "Triangulated Research Designs—A Justification?" *Journal of Applied Sociology [Sociological Practice: A Journal of Applied and Clinical Practice]*, 22, 1 [7, 1]: 56-66.
- Guest Speaker:** Chad Kistler, completing his BA in sociology
- Sept 18 First Theoretical Intervention: Brighenti, Andrea. 2007. "Visibility: A Category for the Social Sciences." *Current Sociology*, 55, 3: 323-342.
- ✓ Sept 18 **Research question/statement due today**

Sept 21 *Chapter 4: Sampling*

Sept 25 *Chapter 5: Causation and Experimental Design*

Sept 28 *Chapter 6: Survey Research*

✓ Sept 28 **By today, all students must have turned in a short (5-7 pp.) literature review, in order to link it to the research question and proposed research.**

[While it is not a grade requirement, it is needed in conceptualizing your final research proposal, thus, turning this review adds to your **participation** grade.]

Oct 2 Second Theoretical Intervention: Steinbugler, Amy C., Julie E. Press, and Janice Johnson Dias. 2006. "Gender, Race, and Affirmative Action: Operationalizing Intersectionality in Survey Research" *Gender & Society* 20, 6: 805-825.

Guest Speaker: Briana Weadock, Sociology Ph.D. Candidate, AU

Oct 5 *Chapter 7: Qualitative Methods: Observing, Participating, Listening*

Oct 9 **MID TERM EXAM TODAY [In Class]**

✓ Oct 12 **Fall Break [no classes]**

Oct 16 Essentials of Ethnography

Chapter: Bailey, Carol A. 2007. "Observations." Chapter 6 (pp. 79-94) in *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*, 2nd ed. Pine Forge.

Handout: "Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research." Pp 1-16 in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw.

Oct 19 Interviewing

Chapter: Taylor, Steven J., Robert Bogdan. 1998. "In-Depth Interviewing." Chapter 4 (pp. 87-116) in *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods, A guidebook and resource*, 3rd ed. John Wiley and Sons.

✓ Oct 19 **[Last day to drop a class]**

Oct 23 Third Theoretical Intervention: Interviewing and Insider/Outsider Issues

Chapter: Naples, Nancy. 1996. "The Outside Phenomenon." Pp. 138-149 in: *In the Field: Readings on the Field Research Experience*. 2nd ed. Edited by Carolyn D. Smith and William Kornblum. Praeger.

Oct 26 Community-Based Research

Article: Willis, Jason, Jennifer Peresie, Vanessa Waldref, and Deirdra Stockmann. 2003. "The Undergraduate Perspective on Community-Based Research." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 9, 3: 36-43.

Guest Speakers: Marcy Campos and/or Amy Pucino, Community Service Learning

Oct 30 Oral His/Herstories

Chapter: Reinharz, Shulamit. 1992. "Feminist Oral History." Chapter 7 (pp. 126-144, endnotes 308-314) in *Feminist Method in Social Research*. Oxford.

✓ Oct 30 **Proposal for final paper (the research proposal)**

Nov 2 Focus Groups: The general "nuts and bolts"

Handout: Krueger, Richard A. 1994. "Asking Questions in a Focus Group," Chapter 4 (Pp. 53-69) in *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. Sage.

Guest Speaker: Kameisha Bennett, Sociology MA, AU

Nov 6 [And yet another theoretical intervention] Focus Groups: How group dynamics alter the discussions

Article: Hollander, Jocelyn A. 2004. "The Social Context of Focus Groups." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 33, 5: 602-637.

Nov 9 Visual Sociology (and inequalities)

Article: Bourgois, Philippe, and Jeff Schonberg. 2007. "Intimate Apartheid: Ethnic dimensions of habitus among homeless heroin injectors." *Ethnography* 8, 1: 7-31.

✓ Nov 9 **Article review due today**

Nov 13 Experimental Qualitative Methods: Is autoethnography a sociological method?

Article: Vidal-Ortiz, Salvador. 2004. "On Being a White Person of Color: Using Autoethnography to Understand Puerto Ricans' Racialization." *Qualitative Sociology* 27, 2: 179-203.

Article: Cho, Grace M. 2005. "Regression Analysis: Mother, Memory, Data." *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 5, 1: 45-51.

Nov 16 *Chapter 8: Qualitative Data Analysis*

Guest Speaker: Michelle Newton-Francis, Sociology Ph.D. Candidate, AU

Nov 20 Discourse Analysis

Review Article: Wodak, Ruth. 2006. "Dilemmas of Discourse (Analysis)." *Language in Society* 35, 4: 595-611.

Nov 23 {Holiday, No Classes}

Nov 27 *Chapter 9: Elementary Quantitative Data Analysis*

Nov 30 *Chapter 10: Reviewing, Proposing, and Reporting Research*

Article: Devers, Kelly J., and Richard M. Frankel. 2001. "Getting Qualitative Research Published." *Education for Health* 14, 1: 109-117.

Dec 4 Evaluation Research and Program Evaluation (Public Sociology, Part I)

Chapter: Dentler, Robert A. 2002. "Evaluation," Chapter 6 (pp.145-167) in *Practicing Sociology: Selected Fields*. Praeger.

Guest Speaker: Douglas Klayman, Ph.D., Public Sociology coordinator, AU

Dec 7 Policy Making and Methods (Public Sociology, Part II)

Article: Tolman, Deborah L., Celeste Hirschman, and Emily A. Impett. 2005. "There is More to the Story: The Place of Qualitative Research on Female Adolescent Sexuality in Policy Making." *Sexuality Research & Social Policy* 2, 4: 4-17.

Summary of class, brief updates on final proposal, and last minute clarifications

Final Exam Dates (when papers are due): [001] Dec 14 11:20 – 1: 50; [002] Dec 14 2:10 – 4: 40

Potential articles/book chapters for review, by topic:

Issues around the 'before and after' of qualitative interviewing:

Warren, Carol A. B., Tori Barnes-Brus, Heather Burgess, Lori Wiebold-Lippisch, Jennifer Hackney, Geoffrey Harkness, Vickie Kennedy, Robert Dingwall, Paul C. Rosenblatt, Ann Ryen and Roger Shuv. 2003. "After the Interview" *Qualitative Sociology*, 26, 1: 93-110.

Oliver, Daniel G., Julianne M. Serovich, and Tina L. Mason. 2005. "Constraints and Opportunities with Interview Transcription: Towards Reflection in Qualitative Research." *Social Forces* 84, 2: 1273-1289.

Aspects of experimental methods like personal narratives and autobiography/autoethnography:

Gannon, Sussanne. 2006. "The (im)possibilities of writing the self-writing: French poststructural theory and autoethnography." *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 6, 4: 474-495.

Spry, Tami. 2001. "Performing autoethnography: an embodied methodological praxis." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7, 6: 706-732.

Recent ethnographic accounts:

Guille, Zsuzsa, & Riain, Seán Ó. 2002. "Global Ethnography." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28: 271-295.

Guzmán, Manolo. 1997. "'Pa' La Escuelita con Mucho Cuida'o y por la Orillita': A Journey through the Contested Terrains of the Nation and Sexual Orientation." In Ramón Grosfoguel & Frances Negrón-Muntaner (Eds.), *Puerto Rican Jam* (pp. 209-228). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Wacquant, Loïc. 2004. *Body and Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer*. Oxford University Press. [Excerpts from the book]

Critiques/Critical Views on specific Methods:

Mukherjea, Ananya, & Vidal-Ortiz, Salvador. 2006. "Studying HIV in vulnerable communities: Methodological and reporting shortcomings in The Young Men's Study in New York City." *The Qualitative Report*, 11(2), 393-416. Retrieved Summer 2006 from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR11-2/mukherjea.pdf>.

Lancaster, Roger N. 2002. "The Uses and Abuses of Ethnography." Pp. 69-81 in *Caribbean Masculinities: Working Papers*, edited by Rafael L. Ramírez, Víctor I. García-Toro, and Ineke Cunningham. Published by the HIV/AIDS Research and Education Center, University of Puerto Rico.

Research conducted through the Internet:

Ward, Jane. 2007. Straight dude seeks same: Mapping the relationship between sexual identities, practices, and cultures. In M. Stompler, D. M. Baunach, E. O. Burgess, D. Donnelly, &

W. Simonds (Eds.), *Sex matters: The sexuality and society reader* (2nd ed., pp. 31-37).
New York: Allyn & Bacon.

Multi-method approaches:

Bryant, Karl. 2006. "Making Gender Identity Disorder of Childhood: Historical Lessons for Contemporary Debates." *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 3, 3: 23-39.

Peña, Milagros. 2002. "Devising a Study on Religion and the Latina Experience." *Social Compass*, 49, 2: 281-294.

Comparative and/or Historical Research:

Amirau, Valérie & Patrick Simon. 2006. "There are no minorities here: cultures of scholarship and public debates on immigrants and integration in France." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 47, 3-4: 191-215.

Coleman, Arica L. 2006. "'Tell the Court I Love My [Indian] Wife:' Interrogating Race and Self-Identity in *Loving v. Virginia*." *Souls*, 8, 1: 67-80.

Song, Miri. 2004. "Introduction: Who's at the bottom? Examining Claims about Racial Hierarchy." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 27, 6: 859-877. [Special Issue, Racial Hierarchy]

Quantitative Methods:

Barnes, Sandra. 2005. "Black Church Culture and Community Action." *Social Forces*, 84, 2: 967-994.

East, Patricia, Barbara Reyes, Beatriz Contreras, Richard C. Wu & Renee Contreras. 2005. "Positive Adolescent Sexuality as Evident in Consistent and Reliable Contraceptive Use A Study of Sexually Active Latino and Non-Latino Youths' Contraceptive Behavior." *Sexuality Research & Social Policy*, 2, 4: 42-53.

Viorst Gwadz, Marya, Michael C. Clatts, Huso Yi, Noelle R. Leonard, Lloyd Goldsamt, & Steve Lankenau. 2006. "Resiliency Among Young Men Who Have Sex With Men in New York City." *Sexuality Research & Social Policy*, 3, 1: 13-21.

Case Study Approaches:

Maclellan, Nic. 2007. "Fiji, Iraq and Pacific island security." *Race & Class*, 48, 3: 47-62.

Policy-related issues, various methods:

Welsh, John F. 2004. "Supporting Minority Student Access and Achievement: is there a role for the States?" *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 7, 4: 385-399.

Insider/Outsider Status:

Jacob, Michael M. 2006. "When a Native 'Goes Researcher:' Notes from the North American Indigenous Games." *American Behavioral Scientist*, 50, 4: 450-461.

Knowles, Caroline. 2006. "Handling your Baggage in the Field: Reflections on Research Relationships." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 9, 5: 393-404.

Here are specific instructions for the movie essay, research question, and final paper proposal:

1. Instructions for the Movie Reaction paper [Due Sept. 11]:

You will watch the film “Quiet rage: the Stanford prison experiment” and will produce a paper in response to the ethical questions raised by such study. Utilizing the readings required for Sept. 4, you will answer the following questions:

1. What are the specific ethical violations in the study exposed?
2. What codes of ethics are violated according to the book chapter?
3. What codes of ethics are violated based on the ASA codes of conduct?
4. Can you suggest different ways of studying the social relations in a jail besides the one in the study? Mention at least two viable alternatives.

2. Instructions for the Research Question assignment [Due Sept. 18]:

Your final paper will require a research question as a basic element for proposing your research. The research question does not need to be posed as a question, but it should encompass a level of inquiry that investigates, interrogates, or posits the study of a variable in relationship to other variables. As such, this assignment will require that you:

1. Identify your research question,
2. Present your research question through the interpretive, multivariate, and historical approaches introduced in Alford’s handout (first day of classes),
3. Indicate which approach would be the most feasible for your research, and
4. Briefly discuss how the research question is linked to a related literature review

3. Instructions for the Proposal for your final paper [Due Oct. 30]:

This proposal will basically outline the larger project of your final paper. In it, you will need to:

1. make a statement of the refined research question (I will provide feedback on your earlier draft of the research question),
2. provide a detailed description of the proposed method(s) you want to use (should you have the opportunity to conduct this research),
3. introduce a general sense of how you plan to analyze the data gathered, and
4. describe whatever outcomes you think will come out of engaging in this research

4. Instructions for the article review [Due Nov. 9]:

This article review will be loosely structured. You should (a) include a paragraph as a summary of the article, (b) point to its strengths, (c) discuss in some depth a challenge to the arguments, and (d) propose an alternative method to study the research question or inquiry at hand.

Please see Ellen or me if you have any questions about any of these assignments.

Guidelines for the Final Research Proposal (Final Paper) [Due Dec. 14]:

These are the general steps to follow in preparation of the 11-14 page (excluding references) final paper/research proposal (I indicate the expected length in **bold** and [inside brackets]):

1. Identify an area, story, or popular news opening to your research proposal. Sometimes researchers start with a news report, a phenomenon of much media coverage, or some other event (current or historical) that brings the reader into your research project. Begin the proposal document with such story in the opening section. **[between 1 ½-2 pages]**
2. Succinctly state your research question **[½ page]**
3. Offer a section on “Background,” whenever applicable. For example, when I submit presentations, publications, or a research proposal on my work on *Santería* (an Afro-Cuban religious-cultural practice also practiced in the United States), I write a background section to give a historical overview and a general structure of this religious cultural practice. (This section is sometimes called Background and Assumptions—if you want to explain terms or your own sense of how you “arrived” at the research question.) **[between 1-2 pages]**
4. Insert a *heading* for the literature review section—I don’t need to read the literature review since I already have read it for all of you. [For the capstone, you will need to incorporate a theoretical framework which should, ideally, link to both your research question and literature reviews, and be in some way connected to the choice of the method. That aspect of your research proposal is not necessary for this class.] **[one line]**
5. Provide the heart of this proposal (for the research class): the methods section. Succinctly, include:
 - (a) an introductory paragraph that outlines the contents of the section
 - (b) a *brief* illustration of how your research question matches the methodology proposed (you have the choice of *also* stating the research question’s relationship to the theoretical framework—but only if you have already done this)
 - (c) a discussion of (each of) the method(s) that you plan to use in this research
 - (d) a brief discussion on saturation sample issues, generalizability, strengths of selecting these methods, and limitations of these methods
 - (e) offer a timeframe for each of the steps you will engage in your research
 - (f) offer a budget, with sources of funding when applicable, and footnote how the lack of funding will impact your research**[between 6-8 pages]**
6. A general sense of what you think the methods’ selected will contribute to the larger field of study you are researching within. **[about 2 pages; 3 pages max]**
7. ASA style bibliography (see: <http://asanet.org/galleries/default-file/asaguidelinesnew.pdf>) **[at least 2 pages long]**

Please see Ellen or me if you have any questions about the proposal.