HBSC 7111: Applications of Social & Behavioral Sciences to Health[*]
Spring 2017
North Classroom 3018C, T 3.30pm – 6.20pm

Professor:	jimi adams, PhD
Email:	jimi.adams@ucdenver.edu
Office:	North Classroom, 3025C
Office Hours:	MT 1:45-3:00pm, or by appointment (http://jimiadams.youcanbook.me)
Shared Folder:	http://bit.ly/HBSC7111

Course Description & Aims

> "Getting it right" means putting the argument so clearly that the paper begins by
> asserting what it later demonstrates."   (Becker 2007:19)

The aim of this course is to assist as you select and propose your dissertation topic, which you will compile into a draft of your prospectus. The structure of the course will allow you to receive (and provide) feedback from (to) your colleagues in the course as you develop your project.

We will break up the composition of the course into identifying a topic, conducting a literature review, developing a theoretical perspective, and designing the research methods to explore your identified research topic. The course will be comprised of independent discussions of each of these topics combined with hands-on opportunities for students to present and discuss ideas for those components of their own projects. This course structure will serve to model the iterative process of refining each of these stages for any research project, here tailored to the application in your dissertation research.

By the end of the course, you will have feedback from fellow course participants on each of the above components, which you will then incorporate into refining the formulation of your dissertation prospectus. To facilitate in-class discussions, students will identify and assign pertinent literature for all to read about their dissertation topic.

Objectives
By the end of the course, participants will have:
- Formulated a concrete research topic and accompanying **specific aims**
- Conducted a **literature review** on the identified dissertation topic
- Designed an appropriate (set of) **research method(s)** to address your project aims
- Provided and received **critical feedback** on a dissertation-scale project
- Compiled a **response memo** addressing colleagues' feedback
- Produced a complete *revised* draft **dissertation prospectus**.

Required Readings
- Abbott, Andrew. 2003. *Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences*. WW Norton & Company.
- Becker, Howard S. 2007. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press.
- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008. *The Craft of Research, 3rd Edition*. University of Chicago Press.
- Knopf, Jeffrey W. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review." *Political Science & Politics* 1:127-132.
- Additional readings will be assigned at a later date. These will either be: (a) readily available online (e.g., via JSTOR, EBSCO, etc.) or (b) will be posted to Canvas.

---

[*] This course benefited from syllabi/materials for similar courses taught by Karen Lutfey, Debbie Main (CU Denver), & Jenny Trinitapoli (Chicago). I gratefully acknowledge their influence in developing the course.

Course Structure & Requirements

The primary outcome of this course is for you to produce a complete draft of your dissertation prospectus. This aim will be broken up into a variety of sub aims, and the course will provide multiple opportunities to revise most of these elements. As a group, we will also be doing background reading pertinent to the general process of conducting and writing about research, in addition to the substantive foci of each student's research project. The course is intended to be participatory. As such you should show up (on time) to each class session, prepared to participate, and plan to be engaged for the duration of each meeting. The assignment structure described below is broken up into these component parts.

Developing your Dissertation Prospectus

Specific Aims (7% of course grade)
This is a 1-page, single spaced (500-750 word) summary of your project. This should include your research question (1 paragraph), brief justification (1-2 paragraphs), 3 specific aims (1-2 sentences each), and overview of approach (1 paragraph). **DUE: Monday Jan 23rd, 11:59pm**.

Memo 1 - Condensed Literature Review (10% of course grade)
This is a 2 page, single spaced (~1200 words) overview of the 2-3 bodies of literature that provide the background for your planned project. **DUE: Monday, 11:59pm**, 8 days before your scheduled 1st presentation.

Memo 2 - Data & Methods Overview (10% of course grade)
This is a 2 page, single spaced (~1200 words) overview of the data source and primary methods you propose to use for your planned project. **DUE: Monday, 11:59pm**, 8 days before your scheduled 2nd presentation.

Presentations (20% of course grade, combined)
Each student will present for 2 weeks of the course, with opportunities to discuss their planned research question, specific aims, theoretical approach, and hypotheses (1st presentation) and data and methods (2nd presentation). Sign up for these will be on a first-come, first-served basis, via Canvas. To facilitate these presentations, students will distribute the appropriate memo & 2-3 additional readings a week before their presentation date. See more details on the content of these below.

Memo 3 - Revisions (10% of course grade)
Students will be required to submit a (~1500 word) response memo to the feedback they receive. The aims of this memo are to synthesize the received feedback, and address specifically how that feedback is incorporated into the revised final paper. These will provide the basis for each student's (ungraded) revised presentations during the final course meeting. **DUE: Monday, May 1, 11:59pm**

Final Paper (20% of course grade)
The primary product of this course is a complete draft of your dissertation prospectus. This document (~13 pages, single spaced) will build on each of the components described above, and incorporate the feedback received from your colleagues. See more details on the content of this below. **DUE: Tuesday, May 9, 7:00pm**

Peer Feedback

Peer Reviews (15% of course grade)
Each week that you are not presenting, you will provide written feedback to the presenting student. This should highlight the project proposal's (not presentation's) strengths and weaknesses. One week can be missed without penalty. **DUE: Thursday, 11:59pm, weekly**

Participation (8% of course grade)
In-class meetings will be centered on presentations and discussion. As such, *active* student participation is vital to the course's success. Be prepared to provide critical feedback during each class session.

Tentative Course Schedule & (Required Readings)

<mark>Please note that this is subject to change; any changes will be announced in class AND posted to Canvas.</mark>
17 Jan - 1. What is your Goal? (Booth, ch's 1-3)
24 Jan - 2. What approach(es) is available to answer your question? (Abbott, full book)
          DUE: Specific Aims
31 Jan - 3. Conducting a Literature Review (Booth remainder of section II & Knopf)
07 Feb - 4. Questions, Theory & Background - Sarah Brewer (TBD)
14 Feb - 5. Questions, Theory & Background - Rachel Gordon (TBD)
21 Feb - 6. Questions, Theory & Background - Ryan O'Connell (TBD)
28 Feb - 7. Questions, Theory & Background - Julie Fricke (TBD)
07 Mar - 8. Generating Evidence (Booth, section III)
14 Mar - 9. *Writing for Social Scientists* (Becker, full book)
21 Mar - NO CLASS – Spring Break
28 Mar - 10. Data & Methods Presentations - Rachel Gordon (TBD)
04 Apr - 11. Data & Methods Presentations - Sarah Brewer (TBD)
11 Apr - 12. Data & Methods Presentations - Julie Fricke (TBD)
18 Apr - 13. Data & Methods Presentations - Ryan O'Connell (TBD)
25 Apr - 14. Revisions, (Booth section IV)
02 May - 15. Revised Presentations (none)
          DUE: Revision Memo
09 May - Final Paper Due by 7pm

Grading

Final Grade Computation:
All grades will be recorded as letter grades or equivalents (i.e., A=4, B+=3.3, etc.). Final grades will be computed as a weighted average over each of the required components:

Dissertation Prospectus Elements
- Specific Aims   7%
- Literature Review   10%
- Data & Methods   10%
- Presentations   20%
- Revision Memo   10%
- Final Paper   20%

Peer Feedback Elements
- Participation   8%
- Peer Reviews   15%

Total: 100%

Grading Expectations:
Participation, presentation, and paper grades you earn will reflect how thoroughly your work demonstrates the particular assignment requirements *and* overall course aims, which will correspond to the following sets of expectations:
- F   Work that **fails to address** an assignment's **minimum requirements** will earn grades in the F range.
- D   Work that **incompletely addresses** an assignment's **minimum requirements** will earn grades in the D range.
- C   Work that **addresses only** an assignment's **minimum requirements** will earn grades in the C range.
- B   Work that, **in addition to** meeting an assignment's **minimum requirements**, also *occasionally* reflects appropriate application of previous course content in ways that *meet* **course objectives** will earn grades in the B range.
- A   Work that, **in addition to** meeting an assignment's **minimum requirements**, also *consistently* reflects appropriate application of previous course content in ways that *exceed* **course objectives** will earn grades in the A range.

A Note about Grading:
If you haven't figured it out by now – grades in grad school should not matter. If you do well on all of the components described above, you will earn an A in the course. If you do not contribute to in-class discussion, or write a poor proposal, you will not earn an A. I do NOT discuss individual student's grades in class or over email; that should be reserved for office hours.

Presentation Elements:
Final Papers will comprise a complete dissertation prospectus. This will be facilitated by the smaller component assignments throughout the semester. The presentations will also cover the bulk of this material - in two separate components. These should include (at minimum):

Presentation 1 -
1. Specific aims - What are your questions?
2. Literature Review - Why are those questions worth answering?
   a. Summary & organization of the field's existing knowledge. Literature reviews have a perspective, and are not merely annotated bibliographies.
   b. Draw on 2-3 (bodies of) literature that guide your perspective. Explain how these apply to motivate your specific aims / generate your hypotheses.
3. Strengths & Weaknesses of the above - *as they pertain to your question*, not just generally.

Presentation 2 -
1. Data Collection
   a. Study Design & Methods
   b. Sampling design
   c. Data collection approach
   d. Measures (dependent variable(s), primary independent variables, controls)
2. Data Analysis plan
   a. Be as specific as possible with software, methods (e.g., types of models, etc.)
3. Strengths & Weaknesses of the above - *as they pertain to your question*, not just generally.

For each week, presenters are responsible to assign the required readings (at least 1 week ahead of time), present (using Powerpoint, Keynote, etc.), and to facilitate the in-class discussion. It is likely helpful to make use of office hours to strategize how to best make use of this class time. Rely on these presentations as opportunities to get (and make use of) feedback from your colleagues and the instructor.

Paper Components:
- Specific Aims (1 page)
- Background
  o At minimum, this will detail your questions & include your literature review.
  o Hypotheses if appropriate
- Research Experience & Preliminary Findings (if appropriate)
- Approach
  o Data collection / source
  o Data analysis plan
- Limitations (& ideally, alternatives)

As appropriate, tailor your presentation of this material to funding mechanism's criteria, e.g., NIH (Significance, Innovation, Approach, Investigators, Environment), NSF (Intellectual Merits, Broader Impacts, Feasibility & Preparation, Contributions to the Field, Transformative Potential), AHRQ, etc. The differences between these would lead to substantially different lengths/organizations of the sections addressing these details.

Course and College Policies

Course Communication:
- *The Syllabus* has answers to the most common questions pertaining to the course. Be sure check the syllabus first, before asking me about due-dates, assignment requirements, etc.
- *Canvas* will **only** be used in this course for the submission of your homework assignments and final paper.
- *E-mail* should be used for quick communications (things that can be responded to in no more than a few sentences); use office hours for anything requiring more depth. You should only use your UCD email account for communication related to this course; I will not read/reply to emails from your personal accounts (e.g., Yahoo!, Gmail, etc). Please consider e-mail as subject to the same standards of communication as you would all other forms written material in this course (i.e., you should use complete sentences, proper punctuation, etc.). I will typically respond to email within **48 hours**. I will **NOT**, **under any circumstances** discuss grades over email.
- *Office Hours* are available to add to your experience in this course. Please make use of them. These are meant to supplement required course work and in-class elements. As such, while I am happy to discuss course materials or other aspects of sociology/academia in general with you during this time, they should not be viewed as an opportunity to ask, "What did I miss in class?" (You should find peers in the class with whom you can share notes for that purpose.)

Turning in Assignments, Due Dates & Late Work Policy:
In this course, **all** assignments are to be submitted as attachments (.doc, .docx, .pdf) via Canvas.
- All written elements' due dates are listed in the syllabus.
- Final papers are due by 7:00 pm on Tuesday, 9 May.
- *Late proposal/paper elements are deducted **2 letter grades per day**, and will **NOT** be accepted after 3 days.* Late Participation & Review elements will **NOT** be accepted and cannot be made up without a documented excuse.

A note on reading:
As you are likely aware by this point of grad school, assigned readings will occasionally constitute more than you can reasonably complete in the time allotted. As you continue in your career, you will find this is often the case. As such, you should develop a strategy for extracting the key elements of each reading.

Electronic Devices:
You are welcome to use laptops/tablets in this course **for class purposes only**. Any other uses will lead you to lose this privilege. All other devices (phones, etc.) should be silenced for the duration of class.

Academic Dishonesty
This is a capstone graduate course. As such, standards of academic honesty should be abundantly clear to you by now. Any documented Academic Dishonesty will result in **failure for the course**. Don't risk it. Cite your sources, etc. Be sure you have read and understand the CLAS policy below. If you have questions, ask.

CLAS Academic Dishonesty Policy: Students are required to know, understand, and comply with the CU Denver Academic Dishonesty Policy as detailed in the Catalog and on the CLAS website. A university's reputation is built on a standing tradition of excellence and scholastic integrity. As members of the University of Colorado Denver academic community, faculty and students accept the responsibility to maintain the highest standards of intellectual honesty and ethical conduct. Academic dishonesty consists of plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and falsification, multiple submission of the same work, misuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. If you are not familiar with the definitions of these offenses, go to http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/CLAS/faculty-staff/policies/HandlingAcademicDishonesty/Pages/Definition-of-Academic-Dishonesty.aspx .

Disability Services Information:
The University of Colorado Denver is committed to providing reasonable accommodation and access to programs and services to persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who want academic accommodations must register with Disability Resources and Services (DRS) in Academic Building 1, #2116, Phone: 303-315-3510, Fax: 303-315-3515. Website: http://www.ucdenver.edu/student-services/resources/disability-resources-services/Pages/disability-resources-services.aspx. I will be happy to provide approved accommodations, once you provide me with a copy of DRS's letter.