

SOCIOLOGY 494H1F 2019
RESEARCHING SOCIAL NETWORKS

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Class Time: R10-12
Office Hours: R2-4

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Social network analysts view the social world through a lens that focuses on connections. We study the origins of patterns in social networks and the consequences of those patterns. 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.

You will collect and analyze social network data to uncover how the structure and composition of people's social networks are related to other aspects of their lives. Each year this course will focus on a different population, social setting, or phenomenon. This year you will conduct original empirical research on the recent university graduates as a class to collect data and then analyzing it independently. You will each write an individual research paper to answer your own research question. No previous knowledge of social network analysis is required.

The **prerequisite** is a 300 level course. The prerequisite will be enforced without exception. Students not having the prerequisites can be removed at any time without notice.

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, their causes and their consequences
- vi) Relate network properties to their causes and consequences

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Your final grade in the course will be based on an empirical research project which you will complete in several stages, on a problem set, and on submission of short reflection papers and online participation. Full descriptions of all course assignments are available on the course web site.

Research Project

Topic Ideas	10
Literature Logs	10
Interviews	10
Proposal	25
Presentation	10
Final Paper	25

Engaging the Course Material

Participation	10
Total	100%

SOFTWARE AND READINGS

Readings are at the University of Toronto Bookstore and online via the University of Toronto Libraries. I recommend that you install the myaccess bookmarklet for easiest access to the readings when working off campus. A video demonstrating how to do this is available on the course web site. In addition, you will need to have access to the following software:

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

Excel is available on many computers across campus. SPSS will be required to write your final paper. It is available in the computers at the Map and Data Library on the fourth floor of Robarts library. You may also download a free trial from the web site, but that trial will only operate for a limited time.

KEEP SCROLLING

COURSE OUTLINE				
1	Sep 5	Course and Ego Network Introduction	Crossley, N., Bellotti, E., Edwards, G., Everett, M.G., Koskinen, J. and Tranmer, M., 2015. Social network analysis for ego-nets: Social network analysis for actor-centred networks. Sage. Chapters 1-2	Post Paper Topic Ideas Online by Sept. 19
2	Sep 12	Network Forms	Borgotti and Kidwell in Scott, J. and Carrington, P.J., 2011. The SAGE handbook of social network analysis. SAGE publications.	
3	Sep 19	Ego Network Survey Methods	Crossley et. Al. Chapter 3 Campbell, K.E. and Lee, B.A., 1991. Name generators in surveys of personal networks. Social networks, 13(3), pp.203-221.	
4	Sep 26	Ego Network Data and Measures	Crossley et. al chapter 4.	Comment on others' topic ideas
5	Oct 3	Networks, Community and Social Support	Fischer, 1982. To Dwell Among Friends. (Selections) Fischer 2011. Still Connected: Family and Friends in American Since 1970 (Selections) Due: Proposal	
6	Oct 10	The Origins of Ego Networks + Data Entry Tutorial	Class will be held in the Sociology Computer Classroom this week. Feld, 1982. The Focussed Organization of Social Ties. American Journal of Sociology 86: 1015-1035. Kossinets, Gueorgi, and Duncan J. Watts. 2009. "Origins of Homophily in an Evolving Social Network". American Journal of Sociology 115: 405-450.	
7	Oct 17	Graduates' Networks	Due: Interview Data Upload Readings TBA	
8	Oct 24	Data Analysis Tutorial	Class will be held in the Sociology Computer Classroom this week. No readings.	
9	Oct 31	Networks and the Life Course	Moore, Gwen, 1990. "Structural Determinants of Men's and Women's Personal Networks." American Sociological Review. 55:726-35 McDonald, S. and Mair, C. A. (2010), Social Capital Across the Life Course: Age and Gendered Patterns of Network Resources. Sociological Forum, 25: 335-359.	
10	Nov 14	Presentations	Due: Presentation.	
11	Nov 21	Writing	Selections from: They say, I say. Your choice of two articles from peer-reviewed sociology journals that you have read for your paper. Please bring hard copies of your selected articles.	
Note: November 21 at 11:59 pm is the deadline for submitting literature logs.				

12	Nov 28	Sociology Careers	Due: Final Papers Readings Optional, Available Online
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COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE AND PREPARATION

Attendance is required. 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.

COMMUNICATION

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 and assignments to the blackboard web site and to participate in online discussion boards. All students are responsible for checking their official utoronto.ca email addresses and the blackboard web site regularly, including the evening before class. 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 "SOC494" in the subject line.

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.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are due online at the beginning of class on due date provided. Topic ideas, proposals final papers and problem sets will be penalized 5 percentage points per day, including weekend or holiday days. Late interview data will be penalized 10% in total and will not be accepted more than 2 days late. Students who do not attend class on the presentation date will be penalized 10% and will instead write a 5-6 page paper on an assigned topic to be completed the by next class. Reflection papers. Online participation must occur before the beginning of the last class of the semester. Literature logs will not be accepted after the final date for submission.

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> as soon as possible.

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.

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.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH PROJECT

Your major assignment in this course will be to use social network data to answer a research question of your choosing. 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.

This project will be completed in stages. During the first weeks of class you will post your topic ideas online and provide feedback on other students' topic ideas. During the first part of the semester, you will each conduct 4 interviews and submit that data from your interviews. Next you will submit research proposals. I will combine the data from all students' interviews into a single data set and you will analyze the data to answer your research question. When your analyses are done you will present your findings to the class and submit a final paper.

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 interview data on time.** If your data aren't in on time your classmates won't have data to analyze.

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: _____

Other: _____

KEEP SCROLLING!!

SOC496 - RESEARCH PAPER

Your final paper in this course will be a research paper in which you use data collected by the class to answer your own research question.

Step 1: Choose a Topic

This semester we will survey a convenience sample of respondents who have been in the workforce for 5 to 10 years. The survey to be used is available on the course web site. You may write your paper on any topic and research question that can be answered with those data.

Submit your topic and question ideas on the course web site and comment on your classmates' topics and questions.

Step 2: Start Reading

Next start read scholarly sources to learn about your topic and start developing your question, hypotheses, and plan for analysis. Submit literature logs online. In each literature log you will let me know what you have read and how it will be used/relevant in your papers. More importantly, each literature log will allow me to suggest additional sources you may find useful and help you to think about how you are using each source. **You must submit 10 literature logs over the course of the semester and may submit no more than 2 per week.**

Online sources must be either from peer-reviewed journals, from government web sites, or specifically approved by me. To request approval for an online source email me with the source and a brief description (a sentence or two) about what use you expect to make of the source.

Step 3: Interviews

You must interview 4 people using the class survey, enter the data into a spreadsheet and upload this to the course web site. You will be provided with hard copies of the survey and the documents required by ethics. Your respondents must be

- A) Over 18 years of age.
- B) Have graduated from University in the past 3 years
- C) Interview at least one man and at least one woman.

The spreadsheet for data entry is available online. You may begin entering data when you have completed your interviews and there will be a data entry tutorial. I suggest that you wait until the tutorial to enter your density matrix data.

Step 4: Proposals

Your proposal is a 4-6 page paper that provides a detailed description of your plan for your final paper. It includes the title, abstract, introduction, hypotheses methods, and variables and measures section of your final paper. In addition to including only the first few sections of the paper, your proposal will differ from your final paper in that it is not required to include a literature review. The purpose of your research proposal is to persuade the reader 1) that your research question is *sociologically* interesting and worthy of study and that 2) your research plan is well-suited to answering your question. When writing your proposal, remember that everything you include should work towards those purposes. See Step 6 for additional details about the contents of each section, evaluation criteria and things like formatting requirements.

Step 5: The Presentation

You will give a 10 minute oral presentation of your findings. Your presentation will summarize your research question and hypotheses and show your findings and conclusions. The presentation is essentially an oral overview of your final paper. Please send your presentation slides to me the day before your presentation so that I may pre-load all presentations and so I may use your slides to aid in evaluation. Your presentation will be evaluated based on both its content (persuasiveness of argument, coherence of content) and the presentation itself (organization, clarity, presentation style).

Step 6: The Research Paper

Your final paper will be an expanded version of your research proposal. You will revise the proposal based on feedback received, add references to the sociological literature to support your argument, and of course include your analyses and findings.

The purpose of your research paper is to persuade the reader that

1. Your research question is *sociologically* interesting and worthy of study
2. You test your hypotheses as rigorously as possible within the constraints of the assignment
3. You have correctly interpreted your findings and answered your question

Everything you include should work towards those three purposes.

The paper you will write will be in a format similar to many of the journal articles that you read in your sociology courses. So these articles are good resources for understanding what the different parts of a research article do and how they fit together.

Your paper should include the following sections:

- Title* You should have one, and it should not be “Research Paper” or “SOC455 Final Paper.”
- Abstract* Your abstract summarizes your paper, including your question, hypotheses methods and findings in one paragraph of about 300 words. Abstracts should be on their own (unnumbered, uncounted) page between the title page and the beginning of the paper.
- Intro/Lit Review:* This is where you introduce your topic and research question **and explain the sociological significance of your question.** That is, you should explain how answering your question would help us to understand social networks and/or the social world better. In completing these tasks you will support your arguments with evidence from the sociological literature. Avoid grand oratory (e.g. “Inequality has been with us since the dawn of time”) and empirically unverifiable statements (e.g. One of the most important problems facing society today is X).
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- Hypotheses* Explain what you expected the answer to your question to be and why you expected these answers. In addition to your detailed explanation, state each hypothesis in the form of a clear, testable hypothesis. A good hypothesis will state in clear language what concepts you expect to be related and what you expect the relationship to be. You may have one hypothesis or two or three *closely related* hypotheses.
- Data Collection* All students are using data collected as part of a class effort. As you did in your proposal, you must describe the data collection procedure here. Remember to edit your proposal to use the past tense “Each student interviewed three people...” instead of “each student will interview...”. Avoid the passive voice.
- Variables and Measures* Define each of the concepts in your research question and your hypotheses. Describe the measures you will use for these concepts. Explain why your measurements are well suited to measuring your theoretical concepts and also explain any potential problems with your measures.
- Analysis and Findings* Explain how you analyzed the data to test your hypotheses. For example, “I divided my the data by sex and correlated network diversity and network density separately for each sex.” For each analysis describe the findings and explain what they means for your research question and hypotheses. For example “As table 1 shows, for men, network diversity showed a correlation of -.128 with network density while for women the correlation was -.372. This findings confirm the hypothesis that...” Remember that the tables contain your analyses, not “the data.”
- Discussion* This is the section in which you place your research in perspective. This entails two tasks:
1. Describe the take-away message from your findings. For example “People with denser networks tend to have lower network diversity and this is especially true from women, suggesting that...” If your hypotheses were confirmed, discuss what this means for your original line of reasoning. If they weren’t, attempt to understand why: were you mistaken? What line of reasoning might better account for your findings? Did the research design affect your findings?
 2. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your research design. How did the limitations of the methods available, of your measures, and perhaps of your own research choices, affect your findings the conclusiveness with which your question has been answered.
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Conclusion: Briefly (2-3 sentences) summarize your research question, hypotheses, methods, and findings. Suggest steps for moving forward to better understand this topic – i.e. what should future researchers do to confirm and build on your findings or any new hypotheses you have generated? Avoid grand oratory and editorializing (e.g. “We as a society must take action on...”).

References A list of works cited in ASA format.

Tables Make tables showing the findings from your analysis. Number your tables beginning with 1 and give each table an appropriate title. Refer to your tables in the text of your paper where you discuss them and omit any table that you don't refer to (Because if you don't need to refer to it to explain your findings, it's not relevant), but remember: Your tables should make sense without reading the text of your paper. And the text of your paper should make sense without viewing your tables.

FORMAT

Your paper should be printed in 12 pt. Times New Roman font. Double space and set your margins to one inch all around. Number your pages. Papers should be between 14 and 17 pages, not including title page, abstract, references, and tables. I encourage you to conserve paper by using double-sided printing. Your title page and abstract page are unnumbered. The page on which you begin your introduction is page 1. Do not skip lines or add blank space between paragraphs; if your word processing software does this automatically, change your settings.

SOURCES

The works you reference should be primary academic sources. That means two things. First if you are referencing a piece of research it should be based on reading (and you should be citing) the article in which the people who did the research describe the research. In other words, you should not be citing textbooks, popular magazine or newspaper coverage, or encyclopaedia articles. Second, your sources will likely consist primarily of articles in peer reviewed journals or books published by academic presses.

Some academic sources, such as peer-reviewed journals, may be accessed online through the library web site. **All online sources used should be peer-reviewed, provided on government web sites (such as Statistics Canada), or specifically approved by me.** If you would like to use an online source that is not peer-reviewed or published by a government source, please submit a brief (<1 page) request for source approval. Your statement should provide the URL for the source and address the following questions:

- a) What use you plan to make of this source (e.g. Is this a source for data that you will analyze? An argument you will present? A source of factual information?)
- b) Why this is the most appropriate source for that purpose?
- c) Why do you believe the source to be credible for your purposes?

Wikipedia articles *will not* be approved as sources of analysis or factual information

Evaluation

Your paper will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. The persuasiveness of the sociological reasoning
2. How well it uses the data to answer the research question and test the hypotheses, including the fit between each part of your argument.
3. The clarity, organization and quality of the writing

In addition, points may be deducted for failing to follow formatting instructions, using non-approved sources, or incomplete/missing references.

Frequently Asked Questions

May we use the word "I" in the paper?

Yes. For example, you might say "I will use data from a survey conducted as part of a class project" However phrases such as "I believe," "I feel," or "I think" are superfluous (obviously if you're writing it, you think it) and irrelevant. It doesn't matter what you think, believe, or feel, so there's no point writing about it. It matters what you can convince the reader to think, so spell out your reasoning.

How many references are required?

There is no specific number of references required. However, I expect that you will make your argument persuasively and that you will support statements that you make with evidence.