

Sociology 419-01: Survey Research Methods

Theoretical Model Paper

*This paper is due at the **beginning** of class on Monday, September 11, 2017.*

OVERVIEW

The research proposal will be completed through four assignments this term. The four assignments are:

1. Theoretical Model (due 9/11/17)
2. Preliminary Questionnaire (due 9/25/17)
3. Research Proposal Rough Draft (due 10/9/17)
4. Final Research Proposal (due 10/27/17)

The purpose of the theoretical model paper is to begin to construct your research proposal. You will provide an overview of your topic, a review of previous research, and the first steps in formulating your own research.

You should already be thinking about your research topic. If you are having trouble coming up with your topic and research questions, please come see me during office hours so I can help you determine your topic, based on your areas of interest within sociology. Having a clear sense of your topic sooner than later will aid you in completing the assignments for this term.

PAPER STRUCTURE

1. *Problem/Objective/Topic*. The first part of the paper should be an overview of your topic, problem, and/or objectives. Another way to think about this is to answer the question, what is your research question? What do you hope to study? What do you hope to learn from your research? What puzzle are you trying to solve? This first part of the paper should be 1-3 paragraphs.
2. *Literature Review (Annotated Bibliography)*. Your final research proposal will contain a literature review on your topic that examines previous research. For this first assignment, you need to write an annotated bibliography. The annotated bibliography should provide the full citation for each article you find, followed by one paragraph summarizing the article. Your goal for this first assignment is to find at least five sources of previous research on your topic. All sources should come from books or peer-reviewed journals.

Please refer to Chapter 4, "Citing Sources" and Chapter 10, "Critical Evaluation of Sociological Literature" in *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual* for helpful information and guidance on citations and annotated bibliographies. These chapters will also be useful references for your research proposal later in the term.

3. *Theory*. Based on your topic and review of previous research, you should construct the beginnings of your theory. This third part of the assignment should briefly describe your theory, what you expect to prove or find when you conduct your research. Be bold! Take a stand on what you expect. Better to be strong and be wrong than have weak theories. This section of the paper does not need to be more than one paragraph, although you should feel free to write more if you have more to say for this section.
4. *Variables*. Based on your topic and theory, what variables do you plan to use? What measures do you plan to include on your survey? Another way to think about this section is to ask yourself what concepts or variables do I need to test my theory?
5. *Hypotheses*. Using your variables you have described above, what specific hypotheses do you plan to test? Be as specific as possible in this section. This is an important section of your assignment. Refer to the “Hints for Stating Hypotheses” box on page 48 of Babbie (as well as all of Chapter 2) for additional information and advice about writing hypotheses.

Please see me if you have any questions or if you have any difficulties with this assignment. I encourage you to come to my office to talk or schedule an appointment to meet with me before you finish the assignment. This paper is the first step in your research project. I will be glad to talk through the sections of the paper with you to help you clarify your research focus and objectives. Do not let this first assignment scare you. While the research proposal is 50% of your grade, this assignment is only worth 5% of your grade. I expect that some of your sections may need significant revisions after this assignment, but this is why you will have a chance to revise these sections through your rough draft and final draft assignments. Part of your grade for the rough draft and final draft will be based on the revisions you make compared to your first assignments. Be sure to take the revisions seriously based on the feedback and comments I provide.

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