WORKING GROUPS

UW Sociology embraces community-based scholarship and collaborative, interdisciplinary research. Group collaboration plays a critical role in sustaining vibrant community among graduate students, postdocs, and faculty. Our self- or quasi-organized working groups, centered around common research interests or methods, typically offer members opportunities to share their work at various stages in an encouraging environment.

In addition, some faculty members hold regular group meetings with their advisees. These meetings allow graduate students at different stages to give and get feedback and guidance from each other alongside their faculty advisors. Graduate students may also form small writing groups, focused on improving writing skills and meeting research goals through peer editing, active encouragement, incremental soft deadlines, and accountability.

There are currently four formal working groups active in the department:

COMPARATIVE LAW AND SOCIETY STUDIES (CLASS) WORKSHARE

The CLASS Workshare comprises socio-legal and human rights scholars from multiple departments. Although most participants are Law and Social Justice faculty and CLASS Fellows completing their certificate in socio-legal studies, students interested in our topics but not pursuing a certificate (yet!) are welcome to join. Individuals give and get feedback on a specific socio-legal work-in-progress. Papers are distributed before group meetings, and workshare participants read and come ready to discuss the work. If you are interested in participating, please email CLASS Center Director, Katherine Beckett. Visit the CLASS Center website to learn about the Center and CLASS certificate.

“Declass Workshare offers students a chance to see how scholarship is evaluated and constructively critiqued in the interdisciplinary world of socio-legal studies. For graduate students who are interested in becoming involved in the Law and Society scholarly community or publishing in socio-legal journals, this is a great opportunity to get a better sense of intellectual norms and standards in this area. I signed up for a Workshare last year, so it forced me to write my first draft of an article drawing from my dissertation research that I’m now readying for publication after getting excellent feedback from a diverse and interdisciplinary group of scholars.” – Anna Reosti (Grad Student)

COMPUTATIONAL DEMOGRAPHY WORKING GROUP (CDWG)
This CSDE-sponsored group meets to discuss demographic data and computational and statistical methods, to share tools developed by students and faculty via demos or tutorials, and to workshop research in progress. Prior topics include:

- "Using Twitter Data to Study Migration Processes" – Lee Fiorio (Geography)
- “Getting started with Spark for the Analysis of Large Data Sets” – Ott Toomet (I-School)
- “Using Facebook Data for Advertisers for Demographic Research” – Emilio Zagheni & Kivan Polimis (Sociology)
- “Discussion on Data for Climate Action Challenge” -- Afra Mashhadi (Sociology)
- “Using ORCA Card Data” Victoria Sass (Sociology)
- “A Systems Biology Perspective on Biodemography” Daniel Promislow (Pathology)

Everyone welcome; pizza or light refreshments are typically served at meetings. Those interested in receiving regular group announcements should sign up for our mailing list. For more information, please email Connor Gilroy.

“CDWG provides the opportunity for a deep dive into how people apply the computational methods they use to their substantive work. Often, when people doing novel things present their work publicly, you don't have the chance to hear the full details of the implementation. In CDWG, we get to see people's code, to hear what's worked well and what has been challenging.”

–Connor Gilroy (Grad Student)

CONTEXTS WORKING GROUP

CWG is interdisciplinary and graduate student-driven, providing them a forum for feedback on specific projects. We consider specific theory and method questions and a variety of professional development topics. The group’s broad range of interests provides members new interpretations, literatures, theoretical arguments, and methodological approaches to enrich their own work. Each week, participants talk about their recent research activities and progress. We thus catch up on news, identify opportunities for collaboration, help, and professional-development. After updates, the group turns its attention to a piece of work previously emailed to the group for feedback. The goal is to give the presenting student a clear path forward for their project. All graduate students, staff, and faculty are all welcome to participate and should contact Kyle Crowder to be added to the group mailing list.

“There are two main things that I really appreciate about this group. First, the opportunity to workshop my work in a low-stakes, safe space, where I feel comfortable showing its weaknesses and asking for help. Second, learning about my colleagues’ research at multiple stages of work, which brings everyone together and creates a sense of collectivity and community. This group has helped me reach my goals by giving me specific feedback on my research and ideas at multiple stages of development and training me in how to give constructive feedback, even if it is about a subject that I am not very familiar with.”

–María Vignau Loría (Grad Student)

UW GENDER AND SEXUALITY GRADUATE RESEARCH CLUSTER

Funded by the Simpson Center for the Humanities, the Gender and Sexuality working group began in Sociology and now includes students from five departments across campus. The cluster has five overarching goals: to provide space for workshopping members’ work; to foster collaboration; to promote project and deadline accountability; to grow as an intellectual community; and to network with graduate students at other universities. A diverse group of graduate students work to offer a supportive intellectual community
that encourages a variety of rigorous work on topics relating to gender and sexuality. If you are a graduate student interested in the Gender Research Cluster, please email Daiki Hiramori, and find us on Twitter at @UWGender Group.

“I love that this is a student-run group that runs by community rules. We decide what we want from the group as a collective, and our schedule tends to be responsive to what members need during any given quarter. Generally, the group serves multiple functions. Not only does it bring together scholars with similar substantive interests for feedback and collaboration, but it also encourages a feminist praxis that has been indispensable during my time here in the department. Being in community is important for my mental health, and this group helps to build that base of support that generally boosts my morale. It has also fostered some collaborative work as well as opened me up to broader theoretical conversations”. —Christina Hughes (Grad Student)