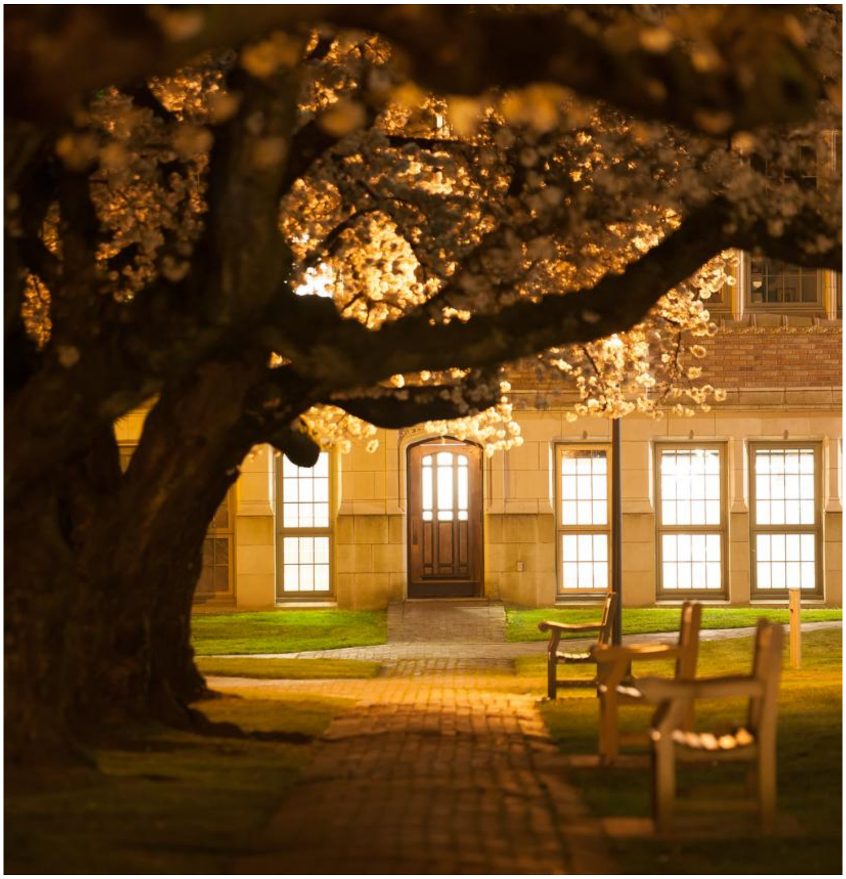

2025-2026 SOCIOLOGY HONORS PROGRAM HANDBOOK

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Introduction

Hello and welcome to the Sociology Departmental Honors Program! You have a very exciting year of personal and academic growth ahead of you. This handbook will serve as a guide through your honors year, with all its moving parts.

The handbook is divided into 4 main sections based on the work you will do as you move through this program: **Getting Started; Conducting Your Research; Presenting Your Research;** and **Writing and Revising the Thesis**. Each section contains general guidelines, tips, and supplemental materials. While using this handbook it is important to remember that research is an iterative process. You will revisit the key components of your thesis (like the research question, literature review, research design) multiple times as you work on your project, so you should not feel limited to only using the section that corresponds to the stage you are in. You should instead think of this as a "Choose Your Own Adventure" novel. If you feel your research is not directly aligning with the section of the handbook you are in, don't stress: simply look for the suggestions with page numbers that will direct you back to the portion of the handbook that will be most useful for you and your research journey. There are many ways to conduct research and sometimes you will need to think creatively and diverge from the guide.

Remember as you go through the program that despite the stress, all of the work you put into this research will culminate with a thesis that you should be very proud to have written. The research process can be intimidating at first, especially when you are just beginning, but part of the excitement of conducting your research is getting to know what research, writing, and working styles work best for you.

During the final part of this program, you will get to share your work with other scholars at the University and you will be contributing to a greater wealth of knowledge for the UW community, and the larger community as well. Trust your instincts and remember that there are many people working to support you throughout this program who want you to succeed and produce a final research project that will be worth all the hard work. At the end of the program you will look back on your initial time when you were just beginning to learn about the world of sociological research and you will not believe how much you were able to accomplish in just a short amount of time. Believe in yourself, remember to take time to enjoy the process, and if you are feeling stuck and alone come back to this and refresh your memory about all the resources and support available to you as a Sociology Honors student.

Honors Program Requirements

Students must complete the following requirements to graduate with honors:

1. **SOC 496-497: Honors Senior Seminar, part 1 and part 2.** This two-quarter sequence is taught by the Honors Director in autumn quarter and the Honors Instructor in winter quarter. The sequence covers study design, helps to refine students' research questions and strategies, and prepares them to undertake original thesis research.
2. **SOC 498: Honors Thesis.** Successful completion of an honors thesis through individual study under direct supervision of a mentor team consisting of a faculty member and a senior graduate student, both with expertise in the student's area of interest.
3. In addition to the above three courses, sometime during their honors year, students are required to complete one additional course. Options are:
    a. a graduate level seminar. Students should discuss this with the Honors Director, their advisors, as well as the Professor teaching the class. We encourage students who are considering graduate school to give this option careful consideration.
    b. students may also propose taking an advanced Statistics course, either in the sociology or the statistics department. The student should discuss this option with their advisors, the Honors Director, as well as the Professor teaching the class. Another great option for students considering graduate school.
    c. a 400-level substantive W seminar with a faculty member in the department (in addition to any such courses students took prior to their honors year). This requirement may not be met with SOC 402/403/404, or SOC 499. Check with Sociology Advising before you sign up to make sure the class qualifies.
4. A GPA of at least 3.50 in all sociology courses completed, as well as any other courses included in the Honors major. A UW GPA of at least 3.30 at graduation.
5. A total of 60 credits (58 credits if a 3-credit course is part of your honors program) of coursework, including all Honors requirements. Honors students must meet all other degree requirements for the BA in Sociology.

I. Getting Started

Your sociology honors year will consist of coursework, individual research, writing and presentations.

Summer	Prepare for honors by reading in your areas of interest
Autumn	Course work: SOC 496. Honors students work as a cohort to design their projects and write a research proposal
Winter	Course work: SOC 497. Honors students work as a cohort to collect data and write the first half of thesis Apply to the Mary Gates Symposium
Spring	Coursework: SOC 498 (individual study with faculty mentor). Honors students work with assistance and support from their mentor team to write up and present findings.

You will also take another course to complete your Honors Credits: a 500-level graduate seminar (with permission from the honors director and course professor); an advanced Statistics course (with permission from the honors director and course professor), or a SOC 400-level writing seminar. You can take these courses at any point, but you are encouraged to take the fourth course in autumn or winter quarter. In Spring quarter you will be extremely busy as you work to complete your thesis.

Course Load for Autumn Quarter

During the first stage of the research process, you are required to complete SOC 496, which will provide structured guidance for you and your cohort as you begin the research process. You may also be enrolled in a seminar (400 or 500 level course). Remember that the information you learn throughout this quarter will be relevant throughout the entire program so keep organized, detailed notes on what you have learned, your ideas for your research, and what you want to achieve during your research program. These will be invaluable to you down the road, especially if you feel unclear about the direction of your project as more elements are added.

Establishing a Working Relationship with Your Advisors

When you enter the program you are assigned to a professor/grad student advisor team. You are not permanently tied to this team, especially if you change research topics or methods. However, having access to advisors immediately will help you expedite the process of narrowing down your topic and developing a research question as soon as possible. The quicker you are able to decide on your research topic, the sooner you will be able to review some literature on your topic and explore possibilities for data and methods. You should not feel rushed, but having your advisor team assigned right away will help you settle into the program faster and have people to turn to with your questions, especially during the first few weeks, when you are just beginning to learn about the research process.

Advisors guide your process and provide feedback on your work, but as an honors student it is your responsibility to make sure that you stay on track, make regular progress, and meet deadlines. In the past, you could count on teachers to tell you what was due and when. For this program, however, it will be your job to keep your advisor team abreast of upcoming due dates and developments.

Contacting Your Advisors

The first thing you will do as an honors student is send an email of introduction to your advisor team. This email should be professional, formal, and concise. (Over time, you can follow their lead and become more casual as they do.) You can find tips for contacting advisors via email here, here, and here.)

Developing Clear Communication

Working with a faculty advisor and a graduate student advisor can be incredibly valuable, but it is essential to remember that most of them teach courses and conduct their own research, so they face many competing priorities. Advisors also have very different advising styles. One person may want to meet with you every week. Another may expect you to work independently for longer stretches of time. Some may be available for hour-long meetings. Others will end meetings after 15 minutes. While it is okay to ask for help and guidance, keep in mind that you will need to adjust to your advisors' mentoring style. This is why it is important for you and your advisors to meet in person as soon as possible in the autumn quarter to set up a working relationship. Topics to discuss include (but are not limited to):

- how often they want to meet
- how they would like to communicate with you outside of office hours
- how they prefer to review your work (do they want to review smaller sections, or just a complete draft?)
- what they will expect of you
- any areas you anticipate needing assistance with
- what assignments you will need to complete for class
- their expectations for an honors thesis: if they prefer a specific length or have examples they want you to consult.

Developing a Timeline

Establish a timeline and provide it to your advisors as soon as possible. A timeline will allow you to avoid confusion and will ensure that your advisors will be able to appropriately support you at the pace you need. During the first two quarters of this timeline, many of the milestones you complete will be dictated by requirements for SOC496 and SOC497. During the spring quarter, it will be up to you to set your own timeline and communicate it to your advisors. You and your advisors should agree on dates for all important milestones in the program, which include the following:

A Sample and Simple Timeline	
Milestone	**Suggested Timing**
Research proposal	December
Human Subjects Approval	January
Mary Gates abstract approval	Late January / Early February
Data collection/preparation completed	Late March
Revised front end of the paper, data and methods draft	Late March
Initial analysis completed	Early April
First draft due	Mid-late April
Final draft due	No later than finals period in June

Other materials and milestones your advisors may want to see are:

- Additional human subjects research materials (includes statement of risk, consent forms, interview schedules, survey questionnaires, recruitment materials)
- Early findings/descriptive data
- Analytical memos about results
- Drafts of the various components of the paper: abstract, introduction, literature review, data and methods section, findings, discussion, conclusion, end matter
- Drafts of posters for presentations.

Guaranteeing Productive Meetings with Advisors

In order to get the most out of your advising sessions with your advisors you should prepare in advance. This can mean preparing a memo or questions that does any of the following:

- Outline the updates you have on your research progress
- List questions you have for moving forward
- Explain your research plans for the next week or two

Coming to meetings prepared with these questions (and others like them) and knowing what you want to accomplish will help you stay on track and get the most out of your time with your advisors. This will be especially useful as their schedules get busy at year end, and it may become more difficult to meet regularly with your advisor team at that time.

No matter what, you should maintain regular communication with your advisors, even if you are not meeting in-person regularly. This can take the form of a brief email update or outline of what you have been working on or what you plan to take on next; a short memo of updates emailed to your advisor; or even sharing your work and outlines over google drive. Never assume that your advisors are available at the last minute, or can give you comments on short notice. Above all, never miss a scheduled meeting unless it is a true emergency — skipping out on meetings communicates that you are not taking honors seriously, or worse, that you do not respect your advisors' time.

Getting Organized & Staying Organized

By the time you have finished this academic year, you will have collected so many ideas, resources, citations, and data for this project that it will be hard to keep track of everything. If you do not come up with a system for tracking what you have done, you may soon find yourself overwhelmed. Citation organizers, research notebooks, a special folder in your google drive or on your computer can all help keep things manageable. Get started early to make your life easier later on.

Citation organizers such as Zotero are useful because once you download them to your computer they allow you to instantly save your source to a compiled list where you can add notes, sort materials into different subsections, and have access to the citation all in one place (and sync your data/notes across devices). As time passes, having a short summary or a few notes to remind you of why you grabbed a particular citation can be incredibly helpful and timesaving. Another way to keep your citations organized is to take reading notes. This might include notes about the research question, data and methods, results, and what you found interesting from it during your initial read. Reading notes will allow you to quickly glance over a memo and jog your memory as to what you were thinking when you first read the source.

One thing that sets honors apart from other classes is how often you will be expected to revise your work. In SOC496 and SOC497 you will draft parts of the thesis (like the abstract, introduction, literature review, and data and methods sections) multiple times, so that you can workshop them with peers and then revise your work.

> ***Always use Google Drive.*** *Google Drive automatically backs-up your work and allows you to easily share the most current version of any document with a peer, your advisor team, or another faculty member.*

You will need to keep these drafts organized so as not to lose any relevant information. Develop a straightforward system for managing your drafts at the beginning of autumn quarter. You might keep a Google Drive folder that holds all of your documents in one place, or a folder on your computer. Either way, remember to give each of your folders and documents specific labels with unique names so you don't confuse them along the way.

Another tool to consider is a research notebook. By keeping an organized and semi-formal research notebook you will very easily be able to track your ideas and insights throughout the program, and you will be able to keep all your research plans in one place. This can be online or on paper, and it can help you keep track of even the smallest details that can otherwise get lost in all the documents you will be using.

Finding a Research Topic

As you enter the Honors program, remember that you are not tied to a research topic simply because you wrote about it in your application. You can change your topic during this exploratory phase based on your personal preference, access to resources, and suggestions from your advisors and cohort. This stage is the basis for the rest of your research process. The work you do now will pay off in the later stages because you will gain a clearer idea of which direction you are going in and how you want to structure your data collection and analysis. Be sure to take advantage of all the resources available. This includes your cohort, advisors, and any guest speakers who visit SOC496 or SOC497 to explain aspects of the research process. The guidelines in this section will help you prepare to use these to the best of your ability and will help to eliminate any confusion as to the benefit of these in developing the foundations of your research.

There are a few strategies for finding a great research topic.

- **Ask the experts.** Faculty members have spent years (if not decades) researching their areas of expertise. Many have ideas for topics that are understudied, or research projects that can be done as an honors project. When you meet with faculty, ask them if they have ideas for topics or projects that would be appropriate for an honors thesis.

- **Find a role model.** Scientific understanding grows through a process of accumulated knowledge, and all research builds on the work that came before. As an honors student, following the lead of an existing study is a fantastic way to learn how to do research while making a substantial contribution. This can take the form of a replication study that determines whether an existing result is reproducible. Another option is to adapt an existing study: you can use a new dataset to test an existing model; reproduce an ethnography in a new time and place; take an interview study and investigate the same topics with a new set of people. If this interests you, talk to your advisors, and other faculty members, about studies worth revisiting or extending.

> ***Pro tip: Use the proxy server.*** *If you conduct research off-campus, the UW library proxy server will allow you to quickly access online resources. Visit the Off-Campus Access website for detailed directions on how to download the proxy bookmark onto your personal computer.*

- **Reflect on your interests**. If you are feeling unsure about what topic you want to focus on, that is completely normal. In that case, try to identify a topic that interests you, and review sociological research on the topic. Look for cues about how other scholars approached this matter. Once you have this starting point, talk with your advisors and peers about how to narrow your interests. If this is still too broad for you, don't worry, narrowing your topic and developing a research question will come more easily as you go through the honors program.

- **Keep up with Local News**. Important events in your community create "data outcroppings" (to borrow a phrase from Kristin Luker) that you can easily access. Seattle is a place of constant change and a microcosm of the developments shaping broader society. Here and elsewhere, patterns of economic stratification are rapidly evolving, poverty and housing insecurity continue to be major problems, the factors affecting environmental conditions are shifting, and traditional social relationships – including those within families and intimate partnerships – are being reshaped. Consider how studying any of these or other dynamics in Seattle could provide an opportunity to advance broader sociological understanding.

Narrowing Your Research Question

After you select a research topic, you will have to devise a specific research question. As you do this, you will decide on how to "frame" your project, which is to say, how to explain in a quick way why this research matters to sociologists. Developing a research question and developing a "frame" for your study often happens concurrently. If you are feeling stuck on how to narrow down your research topic it may be useful for you to focus on framing first and then try to nail down a specific question.

Jump In

In order to frame your topic and find the right research question you will need to do some initial research. The best place to start this is on the UW library page. To maintain a focused approach to your research you should make sure to use the Research s section on the library's Sociology page. This is a carefully created by the Sociology librarian to help you either begin your research or to help you refocus when you get stuck. The Oxford Bibliographies and Sociological Abstracts are other helpful resources that can give you a general view of how sociologists have approached your topic in the past. This can provide some early inspiration.

Make an appointment with the Sociology research librarian at UW libraries. Librarians are one of your BFRs (best friends in research) because once they get to know your topic, they'll be in touch throughout the year with suggestions. The librarian can help you identify search terms and point you toward the best resources for your topic. You should remember this resource! You will need to visit the literature multiple times: first you need to have a basic sense of work in the field when you write up your proposal; next you will need to write a more extensive literature review as part of your thesis; finally, you may also need revisit the literature after you have collected and analyzed your data, to help you make sense of any surprising findings.

> ***Pro tip: Keep your research design in perspective.*** *You must be careful to design a project that is doable in the time you have, and with the resources available to you as a student. Check with experts, like the honors director and your advisors, to make sure your plans are realistic.*

Minding the Gap

As a researcher, you want to create new knowledge. To do this, you need to understand what we already know—and don't know—about your topic. Sometimes this is discussed as "identifying a gap in the literature," which just means identifying something scholars have not yet figured out. For example, say you are interested in studying sororities and sexuality, but are not sure where to begin. As you look at existing studies, you realize that the existing research shows that sororities control the sexual expression and behaviors of their members, but no one has yet researched whether or how sexual control could vary among sororities. This is a problem because we know that social and organizational differences could potentially play a major role in magnifying or diffusing these social processes.

You can work with your advisors to find the current research on your desired topic. Your advisors may even be aware of a gap that needs to be filled, which will help you craft a clear and concise research question. This question should be concise, yet also address the variables you hope to investigate in your research. Your research question is bound to evolve throughout the year, but the sooner you can narrow down your topic and frame and build your research question, the easier it will be for you to settle on a research plan.

Creating a Research Plan

Once you have a research question and understand its potential contribution to an existing conversation in sociology, you will decide how you actually want to collect and analyze your data. This sounds relatively straightforward; however, there can be a lot of moving parts, especially in this first stage as you will constantly workshop your research question and framing. As a frame of reference for how reflexive this research process is, you should refer to *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences: Research in an Age of Info-Glut* by Kristen Luker (available as an ebook through the UW Library). This book takes the reader through the research process and explains the complex nature of completing a social science research project from start to finish.

You will start by figuring out what data you need. For quantitative data this could mean what dataset you will need to analyze in order to answer your question. For qualitative research, it could mean deciding what population you want to interview, or what group you want to observe. You should work with your advisors, cohort, and honors professor to establish what data will work best for your question and your framing.

An additional source of inspiration for your research design can come from the literature. Search for examples of other sociological studies of the topic. What data did they use? How was it collected and analyzed? Your advisors are a good starting point for this as well, because they have all conducted their own research before (and are probably in the middle of a project right now). If you are stuck on how to find inspiration or an article that is similar to your own refer back to the section on **Developing a Research Question** and review the resources listed there.

After you have decided on what data you want, you will have to decide how to collect it. Ask yourself a few questions:

- Will I use human subjects?
- How will I recruit people to participate?
- What resources will I need to get access to my data?
- Will I need permission from an outside data source to access my dataset?
- Will the data cost money?
- How much data will I be able to gather in the time I have?

For quantitative data you will need to know who owns the dataset you want to use, and what form it will be in once you get access to it. For qualitative data you need to find out if you need approval from the human subjects review board. For that, you will have to know exactly what population you will study, how you will access and recruit participants, and how you will structure the data collection. Some students may conduct mixed methods research, and use a mix of quantitative and qualitative research; however, this is generally advised against for the purposes of this program due to the limited time you have to complete the thesis.

You may be asked to write up a "Research Plan" for SOC 496 or your advisors. If you do, you will find that you can later use some of this material again when you write your research proposal and your thesis, or when you complete an Institutional Review Board application (if you are using human subjects).

Pro tip: Online Data Sets
The SDA: Survey Documentation and Analysis website gives you access to a variety of online data sets, including the General Social Survey (GSS), the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and public use microdata (PUMS) from the 2000 U.S. Census (and there are many others). It also includes an interactive statistical package for analyzing the data sets.

II. Conducting Your Research

As you begin this phase of your research keep in mind a few key ideas from the first section of this book. Your schedule and needs will change during this new stage of the research process, so you will need to take some time to re-establish your working relationship with your advisor team. This is another good time to check in about meeting times and frequency, goals, and any support you might need. Doing this will help ensure you and your advisors are all on the same page and can work together cohesively.

Course Load for Winter Quarter

During the winter quarter you will be completing any final preparations necessary before you collect your data. In SOC 497 you will also write the first half of what will become your final thesis. Because collecting and working with data takes time, you may write some sections out of order. Review the section on writing up your findings for more information on each component of the thesis

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

Although intimidating, applying for IRB approval and receiving it does not need to be a scary task. In recent years, applying for IRB has become much more straightforward and there are many resources available to you through the honors program and through UW at large that will make it as painless as possible. This will help walk you through the process.

- The first step is to decide whether or not you need to apply through IRB. If you are unsure check out the tools on UW's IRB webpage "Do I Need IRB Review?"
- The second step is beginning to draft your IRB Review application. Visit UW's webpage "Apply for Review" to find links to all of the application materials you will need as well as more detailed information on the entire application process.
- The application materials you will need to fill out will include the IRB Protocol form, documents specific to your research project (i.e. consent forms, recruitment materials, and survey or interview questions etc.) and the Zipline SmartForm.
- Once you apply, it can take anywhere from 2-6 weeks (sometimes even longer) depending on whether your application qualifies as Exempt, Expedited, or Full Board Review. This all depends on the level of risk to your human subjects as perceived by the Review Board.
- You may need to modify your application after you have received approval if your plan for collecting data changes significantly. For a detailed on completing a modification, check UW's "Modify the Approved Study" webpage.

> ***Pro Tip: Start Early with IRB****. Begin your IRB application as soon as possible so if you run into any issues with approval you have plenty of time before you need to begin collecting your data.*

Finding Data

Here it is, the moment you've been waiting for: you finally get to find the right data for your research! Sometimes someone, or an organization, has already collected the data you need to answer your question. Nowadays there are many data sources already available and just waiting for creative analysis. To find out if that is true, ask your advisors, check with the UW Sociology Librarian, or with the data archivist at the Center for Social Science Computing and Resources (CSSCR). If the data already exist for your project, find out:

- Are the data publicly available? Or will I need special permission to access them?
- How big are the data files? How do I access the data files and then analyze them?
- What are the characteristics of the data and which parts of the data do I need for my study?
- Will the data cost money to purchase and do I need financial reimbursement from the Sociology Department for materials?
- Did you discuss these data sources with your advisors to make sure they will be the right data for answering your research questions?

Sometimes you need to collect your own data. A couple of things to ask yourself before you begin collecting data:

- Did you receive IRB approval (if necessary)?
- Did you consult with your advisors about your final plans for collecting the data?
- Do you need financial reimbursement from the Sociology Department for materials used during the recruitment or data collection processes?

Once you have received approval from your advisors (and IRB, if applicable) you should begin the data collection process. If you feel you should be reimbursed for any costs associated with your research process you should fill out the request sooner rather than later so you will get reimbursed as soon as possible. See pages 15-16.

While you are collecting the data, keep detailed records of any data transformations or cleaning you are doing for quantitative data and of any information regarding participants, consent forms, survey or interview responses for qualitative data. If you are doing interviews, remember that transcription is very time consuming and can delay your analysis. You should begin your transcriptions as soon as possible so you do not get stuck transcribing everything at the end.

Data Collection for Quantitative Data

Here are some tips for collecting, cleaning, and transforming your quantitative data:

- Rstudio is good software to use if you are new to statistical programming because it is relatively quick to learn the basics and there are many online resources for you to access. You can download Rstudio for free on your personal computer through the Rstudio website.

- The webpages for DataCamp and Rstudio will lead you to tutorials that can help you start out.
- You can also use the remote desktop available to you through the department's terminal server to access data. Just follow the instructions within the "Terminal Server Information" webpage to get access to the remote desktop and the statistical software available to you as a student.

Data Analysis for Quantitative Data

After you have cleaned your data you will begin your analysis. Once again, it is recommended that you use Rstudio to complete your data analysis because it is relatively easy to learn in a short amount of time and it will allow you to do a variety of statistical analyses and customize it to the needs of your specific research question.

You can also get extra support from the following places and books:

- Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology (CSDE). Conveniently located in Raitt Hall, directly across from Savery, CSDE can establish accounts for honors students allowing them free access to quantitative and qualitative software. Students can make the request HERE.
- Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences, Statistical Consulting (CSSS). Statistical services, including research design and the application of specific methods. Consulting RA is available by appointment or on a "walk in basis" during office hours. Email: csss-consult@stat.washington.edu.
- Center for Social Science Computation and Research (CSSCR) CSSCR has a drop-in lab to support students using statistical software such as R, Stata, SPSS, and QGIS, and qualitative data tools like NVivo. CSSCR also holds workshops on various software programs and analytical methods.
- Statistical Consulting Services (SCS). Biostatistics and Statistics offer consultation and advice to researchers through scheduled appointments.
- Steve Karceski, who taught SOC 497 for several years, recommends the book "*Thinking Clearly with Data*" by de Mesquita and Fowler (Princeton University Press, 2021). He says "It's excellent for teaching the basics of causal inference with accessible stories and only very basic math".
- If you want causal diagrams, Steve recommends another free resource "*The Effect*" by Nick Huntington-Klein (web page built 2023).

Data Collection for Qualitative Data

Here are some tips and reminders to keep in mind as you begin collecting your qualitative data:

- Recruitment will often be the longest and most tenuous part of the data collection process.
- Always maintain good organization of contact information and participant responses.
- Google Forms allows you to create a free survey of any length online.
- Having your materials available online can help expedite the data collection process.

- Always record your interviews if possible (remember to ask permission to record the participant before beginning).
- Transcribe as you get the interviews done.
- If you get stuck and are not able to find enough participants, remember to consult with your advisors to help you workshop solutions.

Data Analysis for Qualitative Data

As you begin your data analysis for qualitative data don't forget to check the Canvas page for a list of readings and resources that will provide an overview on coding and analysis. By this point you should have collected all of your data, and you should be transitioning into cleaning and organizing your data. Once your data is transcribed, cleaned and organized, you can conduct your analysis.

Remember while you are transcribing or uploading any survey data, you have to maintain excellent organization and any confidentiality required by the terms of your IRB approval. If you need some tips on organization, revisit the section on getting organized (page 7).

Qualitative data analysis is different from quantitative analysis because it involves developing your own codes based on your research question, framing, and what *you* feel is important. While it might feel more subjective, it does require analytical reasoning behind why you chose the codes you did and how you determined their significance in your data (i.e. through frequency, or ...). To keep track of any codes you've developed and what they mean specifically you will need to create a codebook. The most straightforward way to do this (especially for a relatively small dataset) is to use Excel or Google Sheets. Within your spreadsheet you should include the following general information but you can customize your sheet as you see fit for your thesis:

- The code name
- A specific and succinct description of what qualifies under this code
- Examples of what would fall under this code (to help someone else understand your coding process)
- A notes section for each code

If you find that your data is actually categorical data, such as data collected from a multiple-choice response survey, see the "Data Analysis for Quantitative Data" section for data analysis tips. Additionally, don't forget to use the data analysis resources compiled for you on the Canvas page.

Departmental Research Funds for Honors Students

The department has a limited set of funds to support undergraduate research. In the past this has been used by students to:

- cover printing costs for surveys
- print flyers used to recruit interview subjects
- compensate interview subjects

- gain access to privately held datasets
- ad buys on social media to recruit survey participants

Meet with your mentor team and discuss your project and why it will require funding from the department. Make sure they agree with your plan and incorporate any suggestions they may have into your project description (see below) and your budget proposal. Ask your mentor team for a letter/email in which they approve/support your request.

- Write up a 1-page proposal for the funding and include:
    - a description of your research project with a paragraph about your research methods, and a paragraph justifying the expenses in your budget request. Also list your advisors' names.
- If your project involves human subjects (interviews), you need to include your IRB training certification and confirmation that your project has IRB approval
- Add your budget proposal in table format and create categories for each type of expense for which you request funding

The sample budget below includes many categories that all represent items most frequently requested by Honors students (we do NOT expect all these categories/items to be included in your particular budget request). If your approved request includes something not listed in the sample, please speak with Susanna Hansson who will assist you with the categorization. Your justification for the items will be part of your 1-page narrative (see above).

NOTE: Your total budget request should not exceed $500.00

SAMPLE BUDGET ITEMS				
Budget Category	**Description**	**Cost**	**Quatity**	**TOTAL**
SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS	Advertising Flyers	$5.00	20	$100.00
SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS	Social Media Ads	$50.00/week	4 weeks	$200.00
SERVICES	Incentives (Tango cards) for Survey Participants	$25.00	15	$375.00
SERVICES	Transcription Services	$40.00/hour	15	$600.00
SERVICES	Conference Registration	$250.00	1	$250.00
SERVICES	Data Set	$300.00	1	$300.00
TRAVEL	Mileage - Observation Site	$0.665/mile	200 miles	$131.00
TRAVEL	UCAR Rental	$34.45/day	3 x 24 hours	$300.00
TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST				**$00.00**

The following links may be helpful as you prepare your budget:
Information about Tango cards
Information about UW Travel: mileage, UCAR Rental

Send an email with the required information and attachments to the Honors Director (Sara Curran, the Honors instructor (Desiree Salais), and the Program Advisor (Susanna Hansson). If the expense is approved, you will pay for the expense out of pocket, and then submit the expense report to the department's administrator. You can do this by leaving a copy of the receipt(s) in her mailbox or sending a scanned copy of the receipt(s). When you do submit your expenses, you must include a note explaining that the department has agreed to cover the expense as part of the Honors program.

Register for Spring Quarter SOC 498 Credits

Honors students register for SOC 498 in the Spring Quarter. You should start the process around week 5 of the winter quarter, which usually means mid-February. Please be sure to inform your faculty advisor that you will be doing this.

SOC 498 will provide you with individual study credits, formally under the oversight of your faculty advisor (though you should continue to check in with both your advisors as you work on your thesis). SOC 498 is graded CR/NC and thus will have no impact on your sociology GPA. To register for SOC 498, send an email to the sociology advising office with the following information:

- The name of your Honors thesis faculty advisor
- Your student number
- The number of credits (1-5) you would like

The Department allows some leeway when it comes to credit hours for SOC498. Most of you will want to be registered for 5 credits, but if you are juggling multiple majors/required courses, for example, you can register for anywhere between 1 and 5 credits. Keep in mind that you must earn at least 60 Sociology credits by the time you graduate (58 credits if a 3-credit course is part of your honors program). Carrying fewer than 5 credits of SOC 498 doesn't mean you spend any less time doing research or write a shorter honors thesis; the varying credit load is simply a mechanism that allows us to offer flexibility in terms of your schedule.

In spring quarter, you will not be meeting with your cohort regularly (although students often arrange regular meetings amongst themselves). It is ultimately up to you to decide how you want to structure your workload to complete your data analysis and written thesis by the end of the quarter. Here are some things to keep in mind as you get started with this final stage of your thesis research process:

- Set up regular meeting times with your advisors
- Establish goals and a semi-formal timeline for the quarter according to your specific needs
- Get feedback from both your advisors on the first half of your thesis that you submitted last quarter as soon as possible to help with revisions
- Arrange times to meet as a cohort—peer accountability is very helpful!

III. Presenting Your Research

Symposium Presentations

As an honors student you will be required to participate in the Mary Gates Undergraduate Research Symposium, and the Sociology Department Research Symposium, aka Honors Showcase. Both events are opportunities for you to gain practice presenting your work and will give you a broad range of feedback on your findings, which is helpful to have before you finalize your thesis. Since these are formal events, you should wear business casual attire at each. At both, you should be prepared to discuss your posters to a broad audience that includes sociologists, non-sociologists, and members of the general public.

Mary Gates Research Symposium

During winter quarter, you will apply online to participate in the symposium; the application will require you to submit an abstract. The Mary Gates application will automatically send this abstract to your faculty advisor for approval, so let them know to expect it (please make sure and share your abstract with your graduate student advisor as well before you submit it). When you apply, you will also need to decide whether you want to do an oral or a poster presentation. Mary Gates gives an option to attend a practice session before the symposium. You can register online for this. Prepare your presentation to the specifications dictated by the Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS) guidelines and review your presentation with your advisors. Arrive at the event early to ensure everything runs smoothly.

- A date for the URS will be announced in winter quarter 2026. Likely dates are May 15th or May 22nd

Sociology Research Symposium

The sociology symposium, “Honors Showcase” is held on a Wednesday one or two weeks after the URS symposium (which is always held on a Friday), and we welcome you to invite friends and family. All Sociology honors students are required to present posters at this event (including students who chose to make oral presentations at the Undergraduate Research Symposium). Those of you who made poster presentations at the URS should make sure you revise your poster based on feedback and experience from that event. In addition to the Sociology poster session, some honors students may be asked to make oral presentations as well at the Sociology Research Symposium.

- Please plan on setting aside the entire afternoon for this event. You can store your poster in the Soc Advising office before the event, so you don’t risk forgetting to bring it.
- In 2026, the Sociology Honors Showcase will be held on Wednesday afternoon May 26th.
- The official Sociology Honors cohort picture is taken at this event, so you really don’t want to miss it!

Poster Presentations

UW has many resources for both oral and poster presentations (see "Poster design workshops," and "PowerPoint workshops").

For posters there is free printing available through CSSCR, and you can apply for research support funds to print out a glossy poster through UW Creative Communications.

There are many online resources available to you through creating a poster. We recommend: How to Create a Poster Using PowerPoint.

IV. Writing & Revising the Thesis

One way to think about an Honors Thesis is in terms of its major sections:

Section	Description	Suggested pages
Cover page	Title, Abstract, Advisor Name, Your Name	1
Introduction	Research question, hypotheses, justification for the work (answers the “so what?” question), brief discussion of data, methods, and findings	1-3
Lit Review	Situates the research in a broader sociological conversation; tells us what we do not yet know	4-7
Data and Methods	Clear and detailed description of how all data was collected and analyzed; acknowledges limitations	2-3
Findings	Presents Results	4-10
Discussion	Interprets findings	4-10
Conclusion	Summarizes paper, discusses policy implications and/or areas for future research	1-3
End Matter	References, Appendices, Charts/Graphs	2-4

What if You Feel Stuck?

Do not panic if you feel stuck at any point during this process. When you feel lost, confused or frustrated, reach out for help. As long as you keep working with your advisor team, cohort, and the honors director, you will eventually find a path forward. It is often the case that the most innovative and profound analysis comes out of working through a roadblock.

> ***Pro tip: Stay organized.*** *If you maintain a structured schedule to help you stay on top of your analysis and writing, you will not feel so pressed for time at the end of the quarter.*

The Introduction

Writing the introduction to your thesis is a task that is at once both easy to overthink and easy to underestimate. You want to entice the reader with your topic and framing, yet you do not want to overwhelm them with irrelevant information. When you are writing the introduction keep a few things in mind:

- You should keep it concise. Only include essential information such as the research question and an overview of your methods, data, and analysis.
- You want the reader to finish the introduction knowing exactly what you intend to discuss in the sections that follow.

You will most likely work on your first draft in SOC496 or SOC497, before you have completed your actual research. At that point, because your research is underway, you will not be able to include any specific information on your data or analysis; this will come later in the process. You should still use the opportunity to find a concise way to explain how and why you have set up your research in the way you have.

The Literature Review

Conducting and writing a literature review is a task that sounds daunting but becomes more manageable once you know and use all of the resources at your disposal. To begin, think back to the work you did framing your research during autumn quarter. This framing was the beginning of your literature review. To have a well-crafted literature review that is relevant to your topic and strategically helps you set up your research question and design, you should focus your review around articles and books that highlight some gap that you intend on filling with your research.

Remember to use the resources listed earlier in this document to help you find articles and books relevant to your topic. If you are stuck, set up an appointment with the Sociology Librarian, with your Honors professor, and/or with your advisors to help put you back on track.

While you are doing a deep dive into the literature and writing the first draft of your review you may find that your original framing and/or research question may not be exactly how you want them or may not be as relevant as you once thought. If you realize that there is a different gap you want to fill that requires you to tweak the wording of your question and framing—don't panic! Revisit the section of this guide on writing your question and developing your framing, and work with your advisor to shape it into what you feel would be best, or most complementary, with the literature that exists. Don't feel stuck with a certain wording or exact framing. It is normal for research projects to evolve.

Data & Methods Section

In this section, you will explain in detail how you collected and analyzed your data. This discussion should be clear enough that a reader could repeat your study. For inspiration, try looking at a few sociology articles that use your method, and see how they presented their research. This section will also address the strengths and limitations of the research design. As needed, this section may also discuss how key variables are operationalized; present models; explain the logic of case selection and/or comparison.

For our program, this may be the first section you write in autumn quarter, as you prepare to begin your research and/or apply for IRB approval. If so, that will just be a first draft you will revise later in the year. Take the opportunity early on to receive constructive feedback on your writing.

Results

When writing your results or findings section, remember that this is not your analysis section. Your results should be as straightforward and concise as possible. The intent is just to relay the data you collected and present it to the reader without any analysis as to its meaning in the larger picture. You do not have to walk the reader through every piece of data you collected, but you do need to go through what is essential for your written thesis and the analysis to come. This section should provide enough detail for the reader to follow your train of thought from the original methodology section you wrote to the analysis section that will follow this. It allows the reader to get a picture of the data in detail without actually looking at the raw numbers.

Discussion

The discussion section is where you take the information on the data you collected and translate it into something meaningful for the reader. That is, you will take the specifics of your findings and relate them back into your research question, framing, and literature review. Here you should explain your contribution, or how you addressed the gap identified in the literature review. Typically, the discussion section will come after the Results section. Sometimes with qualitative studies, however, the results and discussion sections are combined.

Remember when writing this section that you are the expert on the data you have collected. Present your analysis in a confident way and make sure to focus on the most important take-away points. Also: don’t forget that a negative finding is also a finding. If you come to the end of your data collection and analysis and you discover that you didn’t find anything you expected, that also tells us something about the world. Be true to the data, but also be creative and bold in your thinking!

The Conclusion

Much like the introduction, writing the conclusion is relatively simple, although it does require some creativity to put all of the necessary information together (i.e. research question, literature gap, methodology, data, and analysis) in a concise and engaging way. This will be a section that sums up all of the work you did in the previous sections. One way to make sure you have done this is to check all of your topic sentences.

Revision

After you have presented at both symposiums, it will be time to focus all of your energy on revising your writing and putting together your final thesis. The feedback you received at the symposiums will be crucial to you in your revision process, and to ensure that your framing accurately represents the gap in the research you are filling.

Here are some tips for revising effectively:

- While you are revising your latest written sections, remember to review the sections you wrote in previous stages to ensure they have a cohesive flow and make consistent claims.
- Read your writing out loud (to yourself or someone else).
- Ask someone from your cohort to peer review your work.
- Complete a “reverse outline" of your work to make sure your points flow logically.

> ***Pro tip: Triple check your topic sentences.*** *Topic sentences are essential for good writing: They help maintain a cohesive flow, and make it easy for your readers to skim your writing and still understand the important details. As you revise, read through all of your topic sentences, revise them to only have the most important information summing up the paragraph that follows.*

Finishing and Submitting your Thesis

To complete honors, you will need to send an electronic copy (word and pdf versions) of your thesis directly to Susanna Hansson in the Sociology Advising Office. When you submit your thesis, you should email your mentor team at the same time with a request for them to confirm for Susanna that the thesis is finished.

Make sure that you have received and incorporated feedback from both your advisors and check carefully for typos and format errors before you submit it.

Final Thoughts

Take some time during this final stage to enjoy your completed thesis and the results of all of your hard work. It is really easy to let yourself be overcome with stress, but if you take a minute to breathe and enjoy this last part of the process you may find that conducting research is very exciting once you’re over the hump. You are now winding down in your undergraduate research journey and you deserve to enjoy the opportunities you get to show off your research. Congratulations and good luck putting the final touches on your thesis!

Example of Rubric Used to Grade an Honors Thesis

NOTE: our Honors thesis "class" SOC496 is graded CR/NC. The chart below can still be a helpful checklist before you submit the final version of their thesis for approval by your mentor team.

Area	Detail	Points
Front Matter (10 points)	TITLE PAGE. Contains the title, date, your name, and the name of your thesis advisor.	5
	ABSTRACT. Summarizes the project in 250-500 words. This should tie together: the research question, a gap in the literature, the significance of the project, and data and methods. I	5
Introduction (20 points)	RESEARCH QUESTION. The question is clear and concise, and can be answered by your research design.	5
	SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE: Answers the "so what" question; explains how this project will make a meaningful contribution to knowledge, public policy, or general wellbeing.	10
	SETS UP RESEARCH: Briefly introduces the gap in the literature, and explains what data and methods will be used to answer the research question. If you have preliminary findings, you may mention them here	5
Literature Review (25 points)	STATE OF KNOWLEDGE: Provides a succinct and accurate summary of what we know in the relevant subfield(s). Avoids digressions or tangents. Relies on more than one reading to support arguments (include at least 10 references). Connects points to hypotheses or expected findings.	15
	IDENTIFIES GAP: Explains what we do not yet know, and makes a convincing case for why that gap is important.	10
Data & Methods (20 points)	DATA: Provides a detailed and straightforward discussion of how the data was gathered, and why that data was selected.	10
	METHODS: Provides a clear and detailed discussion of the method of analysis, why that method was selected. As needed, it may: discuss how key variables are operationalized; present models; explain the logic of case selection and/or comparison.	10
	STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS: Addresses the strengths and limitations of the research design.	5
Writing (20 points)	ORGANIZATION. Points logically flow from one to the next. Quotes are properly introduced. Topic sentences and transition sentences used throughout. Pages are numbered.	5
	CLARITY: Direct, concise, varied sentences. Precise word choice. Technical terms are defined. Minimal jargon throughout.	5
	PROOFREADING: There are few errors in grammar or spelling.	5
	CITATIONS: Proper and consistent use of ASA-style citations. All citations are listed in a References page.	5
Excellence (5 points)	Exceeds expectations: either in the research design, writing style, logical rigor, insightfulness, or creativity of the project.	5

Originally conceptualized by Professor Sarah Quinn and prepared by Snow Christensen, member of the 2018/2019 Honors cohort

In 2020, 2022, and 2024 the handbook was edited, several sections were significantly expanded, and new content was added by Professor Sara Curran, Steve Karceski, Ph.D. Candidate, and Susanna Hansson, Program Advisor. The handbook was updated again in 2025.