

**Sociology 490: Senior Seminar in Sociology**  
**Monday & Wednesday 05:00pm-06:25pm**  
**FOWLER 309**

**Professor:** John T. Lang

**Office Hours:** Monday & Wednesday, 01:45pm-03:15pm and by appointment

**Office:** South Swan D6

**Phone:** (323) 259-1310

**E-mail:** lang@oxy.edu (best way to reach me)

**Course Website:** <http://moodle.oxy.edu>

## **INTRODUCTION**

The entire focus of this class is to help you prepare and write your senior thesis. Your final thesis must be properly formatted using American Sociological Association (ASA) style and will be between 36 and 40 pages (9,000 to 10,000 words), not counting references, appendices or tables.

Much of the time you will be required to make progress on your own, paying absolute attention to strict deadlines. Seminar and individual meetings will be devoted to discussion and critique of work in progress.

In addition to class meeting times, you will be required to attend 2 one-on-one meetings, each 30 minutes long, with Professor Lang. You can book your appointment at: <http://tungle.me/johnlang>. Appointments are first-come, first-served and must be made at least 48 hours in advance.

### **Please Note**

We strongly encourage students to have taken theory and methods before taking the senior seminar (always taught in the Fall).

Only Senior Sociology majors may enroll in this class.

## **HELPFUL MATERIALS**

*The 2010 Senior Theses* are available online: [http://scholar.oxy.edu/sociology\\_student/](http://scholar.oxy.edu/sociology_student/). There are many more copies of earlier theses available in the Sociology Department. Please see Professor Lang about getting them properly signed-out.

*Academic Student Projects Grant.* The College maintains a fund for support of small academic projects performed by full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students during the academic year. These funds may be used for equipment or consumables for an independent study project, comps research, or travel to field research sites or research subjects. Supplies for art, video and performance projects, oral history, and education outreach in the community may also be funded. Projects must be primarily academic in nature, although not-for-credit activities can receive support. Funds will be awarded to students on a competitive basis.

[http://departments.oxy.edu/urc/Research\\_Support/asp\\_fund\\_links/asp-proj-guidelines.htm](http://departments.oxy.edu/urc/Research_Support/asp_fund_links/asp-proj-guidelines.htm)

*The Human Subjects Research Review Committee* reviews all research involving human subjects conducted at Occidental College or by members of the Occidental College community, including faculty, students and staff. It serves as Occidental's Institutional Review Board for purposes of compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations: Title

45, Part 46 - Protection of Human Subjects and the Occidental College Policy on Research involving Human Subjects. *Research may not begin until you have been formally notified that your proposal has been approved by the committee.* For more information about the committee, about the regulation and ethics of research involving human subjects, or about submitting a proposal for the committee to review, please review the information at <http://www.oxy.edu/x8545.xml>.

## GRADES

There will NOT be a curve. Letter grades in this class have the following meaning:

- A *Outstanding performance.* You have demonstrated very thorough knowledge and understanding of all the material, truly superior critical thinking, and expressed insightful and original thoughts clearly.
- B *Good performance.* You have demonstrated solid knowledge and understanding of the material and good critical thinking. You have also shown the ability to express your ideas clearly. You have completed all required assignments and they have been of good quality.
- C *Satisfactory performance.* You have demonstrated adequate knowledge and understanding of the major concepts and some critical thinking. Your work is free of significant problems.
- D *Deficient performance.* You have only demonstrated a limited understanding of the material, have failed to complete all the required work, and/or have routinely had serious problems.
- F *Failure.* You have failed to learn a sufficient proportion of the basic concepts and ideas. You have failed to complete all the required work, and/or have routinely had serious problems.

## COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

I will hold you responsible for the information in this syllabus, so I expect you to read it, understand it, and ask questions about anything you don't understand.

*Office Hours:* In addition to scheduled one-on-one appointments you are welcome to drop in to any of my three official office hours each week.

*Feedback:* I love getting feedback on my teaching and how the class is going. I value your input and I am willing to make changes to the class according to your preferences. Please share with me any comments, suggestions, and ideas you may have, and help me make this a great class. If you would like to do so anonymously, you can print out a note and drop it in my mailbox in the South Swan D mailroom.

*Class Demeanor:* While we may find ourselves disagreeing, we must do so with respect, a commitment to hearing what others have to say, and a willingness to think and rethink our own positions. Personal insults have no place in the college classroom.

*Technology in Class:* Please turn off your cell phones when you come to class. Similarly, text messaging will not be tolerated in class. You are welcome to bring your laptop to class and use it to take notes, access readings we're discussing, and the like. You are not welcome to surf the web, check email, or otherwise perform non-class-related activities during class. Here's my best advice: If you aren't using it to perform a task specifically related to what we are doing in class at that very moment, put it away.

*Special Accommodations/Learning Differences:* Students with documented disabilities who are registered with Disability Services are required to present their accommodation verification card to the instructor at the beginning of each semester or as soon as possible thereafter. Students who experience significant physical or mental impairments

can contact Disability Services at (323) 259-2969 to learn about available services and support.

*Assignments:* A hard copy of all papers/assignments must be handed in at the start of class on the scheduled date. Computer and printing problems are not a good excuse for missing a deadline. Make sure to print your papers early enough to be able to address any problems before class. Keep a paper and electronic copy of everything you hand in until you receive your course grade.

*Academic Integrity:* As is always the case, you are responsible for your own work. If you find yourself questioning whether you have documented or cited your sources properly, it is your responsibility to come see me about these issues prior to submitting an assignment. If you are thinking about submitting work that is not your own due to pressure, frustration, perfectionism, or any other reason, please talk to me. I am here to help you resolve these issues before they become a problem for your academic career. Academic integrity violations, including plagiarism, will be taken very seriously. A description of Occidental's academic ethics policies is available in the Student Handbook and on the following webpage: <http://www.oxy.edu/x8000.xml>

### **IMPORTANT DEADLINES**

September 13: 5-page proposal DUE  
 September 17: ASP Grant Deadline – First Chance  
 September 20: 5-page proposal RETURNED  
 September 29: IRB forms DUE  
 October 15: ASP Grant Deadline – Final Chance  
 December 8: Final Draft of Thesis Due @ 5pm  
 January 10: Final Draft Returned via USPS  
 January 24: Final BOUND Thesis Due @ 5pm  
 April/May: Senior Thesis presentations to the campus community

### **CLASS SCHEDULE**

Although I will do my best to keep us on schedule, it is possible that we will make some adjustments during the semester. I will give as much notice - both in class and on the course website - when changes are necessary.

### **SEPTEMBER**

1 Introduction to the class  
 6 Labor Day  
 8 Zotero training session  
 (both sections meet in Fowler 309)  
 13 student reports  
 15 student reports  
 20 IRB training session  
 (both sections meet in Fowler 309)  
 22 no class - individual appointments  
 27 no class - individual appointments  
 29 IRB forms due

### **OCTOBER**

4 no class - individual appointments  
 6 thesis workshop – peer review  
 11 no class - individual appointments  
 13 no class - individual appointments

- 18 Fall Break
- 20 thesis workshop – peer review
- 25 no class - individual appointments
- 27 no class - individual appointments

**NOVEMBER**

- 1 no class - TBA
- 3 no class - TBA
- 8 no class - TBA
- 10 TBA
- 15 thesis workshop
- 17 no class - individual appointments
- 22 no class - individual appointments
- 24 Thanksgiving Break
- 29 thesis workshop / class evaluations

**DECEMBER**

- 1 no class - individual appointments
- 6 no class - individual appointments
- 8 Final Draft of Thesis Due @ 5pm

**JANUARY**

- 10 Final Draft Returned via USPS
- 24 Final BOUND Thesis Due @ 5pm