LEGAL STUDIES HONORS SEMINAR

Legal Studies H195C / Spring 2023
Mondays, 10:10am – 12:00pm / Selznick Seminar Room / UC Berkeley

Instructor: Yael Plitmann / yaelplitmann@berkeley.edu

Office hours: In person: Mondays after class 12 – 2 PM sign up here.

Online office hours: Fridays 1:15 – 3:15 PM sign up here.

Course Description

We welcome you to the second semester of the Legal Studies honors program. H195C is a workshop to support your research and augment the advising you receive from your thesis advisor (through H195B). H195C will meet both collectively and individually for two hours on Mondays, and be a mixture of group workshops and individual consultations. The workshops will primarily operate in a seminar environment where exchange among us will be a key feature of the learning process.

Collective workshop days will require that you bring in materials from your research project to share in the context of the class.

At the end of the spring semester, students are expected to present their research at the **2022 Legal Studies Undergraduate Research Conferenc**e on **Friday, April 28, 2023**. Students must attend the entire conference with exceptions made only for other classes that meet that day.

Grading

The grading for LS H195C is P/NP. To pass this course, you must regularly and actively engage in the collective workshops and individual consultations. Active engagement includes: on-time attendance, bringing materials for the collective workshops, providing constructive feedback and help to your classmates, and asking questions whenever you have them.

Disability and Religious Accommodation

If you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know as soon as possible. You will need to be evaluated by the Berkeley Disabled Students Program (https://dsp.berkeley.edu/), which will recommend the appropriate accommodations. If you will need an accommodation based on your religious preferences, please let me know as soon as possible.

Course Policies

- **General:** Please arrive on time for class so as not to disturb your classmates or instructors.
- **Attention:** Please do not participate in social media, messaging, emailing, or other work during class. It is often obvious and is distracting both to fellow students and to the instructors!
- **Respect:** The honors seminar works best when honors students treat one another with respect even when you disagree with what is being said and when you support one another throughout the year.
- **Helping One Another:** In past years, honors students have found it extremely valuable to form a google group for support, exchange of helpful ideas, or feedback on assignments. We will provide emails so that you can organize such a group if you would like. Remember, there is no grading curve in this class so please help one another! You will learn best in an environment where everyone is sharing knowledge.

Student Learning Objectives

Students in LS H195C will learn strategies to support conducting interdisciplinary research at a level that would generally be expected of first-year graduate courses. The specific objectives are:

- To improve one's writing skills
- To collect and analyze empirical data
- To recognize and write about the strengths and weaknesses of data collection and analysis
- To write about research findings
- To integrate qualitative and quantitative research findings (where applicable)
- To offer policy or normative recommendations based on research findings
- To provide engaged feedback to others on their research and writing
- To complete the senior honors thesis
- To present research findings in a professional conference setting.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS TOPICS

Classes 1 and 2: Check-Ins on Research Projects
Monday January 23 and 30

Pre-Class Assignment and Class Discussion

On January 23 and 30, we will meet as a group and devote both sessions to checking in on your projects. Take a look and prepare brief oral responses to the questions below. Each student (one-half of the class on January 23rd and the other half on January 30th) will have up to ten minutes to share their responses with the class and then 5 minutes for people to ask questions and make comments:

- Where are you in your research? Have you begun collecting/content coding/making sense of your empirical evidence? To answer these questions, be as precise as possible (e.g., how many interviews have you completed? or how many cases have you coded? etc.).
- What are the chief challenges you have faced in conducting your research?
- Have you needed to adjust your proposed research design? If so, how and why?
- What have you learned thus far from your research in terms of answering your research questions? Provide an example from your research that illustrates something you have thus far found out. Anything surprising? What you have you learned thus far about the process of conducting research?
- What issues would you most like feedback on from the class?
- Researchers commonly experience multiple emotions about their research, ranging from excitement to anxiety to boredom to everything in between and beyond. How are you feeling about your research?

Class 3: Individual Consultations
Monday, February 6

- I am happy and ready to talk with you about any aspect of your research project. Feel free to prepare some questions or comments to which you would like feedback prior to the individual consultation. If your questions and comments relate to data and evidence, please bring a relevant example or examples from your research to the consultation.
- Sign up for individual consultations at: https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/rbyfw

Classes 4 and 5: Analysis Workshops
Monday, February 13 and 27
Note: NO CLASS on February 20 (President's Day)

Pre-Class Assignment

- Qualitative or quantitative empirical analysis is about systematically transforming (coding) raw data and evidence into meaningful patterns and findings that can answer research questions and sub-questions. Select a representative slice of your data that you believe provides evidence for answering one sub-question.
  - If you conducted in-depth interviews or collected narratives, historical analysis, or are

engaged in analyzing text, select an excerpt from your interview/narrative transcripts, archival materials, or the texts you are analyzing, respectively.

  o If you engaged in content coding legal cases, on-line interactions, or websites, select an example from one of the sources relevant to your research.

- Move beyond the particular example you selected by either creating a preliminary qualitative typology of categories/analytic scheme that represents the preliminary patterns you are seeing in your data or by putting your data in preliminary quantitative tabular or graphic form that can represent your data as findings/patterns to help answer a sub-question.
- The readings for these weeks offer ideas about how to conduct different types of analyses. Draw from these (and any other relevant) readings to begin developing a strategy for analyzing and representing your data as findings. We and your advisor can give you more specific advice on how to proceed with respect to your study.

Class Discussion

- Each student will have up to ten minutes to present their example (make sure to contextualize it) and how it relates to a sub-question, and their preliminary typology or analytic scheme and its relation to sub-questions. There will then be five minutes for feedback for each student. Do the best you can with this assignment; we'll work through the fuzzy parts in class and in office hours. Analysis, like formulating a research design, is iterative and requires tolerance for ambiguity as you work through the process.

Optional Readings

- O'Connor, Hélène and Nancy Gibson. 2003. "A Step-by-Step Guide to Qualitative Data Analysis." *Pimatiziwin: A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health* 1: 64-90. (in-depth interviews, field observations, textual analysis, and in general.)
- Edelman, Lauren B. 2016. "Rhetorically Reframing Legal Ideals." Pp. 138-149 in *Working Law: Courts, Corporations, and Symbolic Civil Rights*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (content analysis)
- Kripendorff, Klaus H. 2004. "Analytical/Representational Techniques." Pp. 191-210 in *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. (content analysis)
- Schutt, Russell K. 2015. "Historical and Comparative Research and Content Analysis." Pp. 952-1004 in *Investigating the Social World*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (historical analysis)

Class 6: Individual Consultations
Monday, March 6

Pre-Class Assignment and Class Discussion

- I am happy and ready to talk with you about any aspect of your research project. Feel free to prepare some questions or comments to which you would like feedback prior to the individual consultation. If your questions and comments relate to data and evidence, please bring a relevant example or examples from your research to the consultation.
- Sign up for individual consultations at: https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/rbyfw

Classes 7 and 8: Writing Workshops
Monday, March 13 and 20
Note: NO CLASS on March 27 (Spring Break)

Pre-Class assignment

- Outline your findings section in your thesis, using your sub-questions as a point of departure.
- If you have conducted in-depth interviews/narratives, historical analysis, or engaged in the analysis of text, select an excerpt from your transcripts, archival materials, or the texts, and *write a paragraph* that illustrates how you will represent the link between your data (evidence) and a sub-question. Use pp. 52-60 in Golden-Biddle and Locke (2007) and/or Storey (2009) for ideas about how to write up your findings section and your paragraph.
- If you engaged in content coding legal cases, on-line interactions, or websites and have begun to represent your data as a table or a graph, *write a paragraph* describing what is in that table or graph and how it helps answer one of your sub-questions. Review Edelman (2016) for ideas about how to write up your findings section and your paragraph.
- Also see previous Legal Studies Honors theses on the Fall 2021 bCourses site.

Class Discussion

- In class, each student will have up to ten minutes to present the outline for their findings section and their paragraph and evidence, and five minutes for feedback. One-half of the class will present on March 13 and the other on March 20.

Optional Readings:

- Golden-Biddle, Karen and Karen Locke. 2007. "Crafting a Theorized Storyline" and "Developing a Theorized Storyline." Pp. 25-60 in *Composing Qualitative Research* (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Storey, William Kelleher. 2009. "Get Writing!," "Build an Argument," and "Narrative Techniques for Historians." Pp. 69-95 in *Writing History: A Guide for Students* (3rd edition). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Review Edelman (2016).
- Sample Theses from Fall 2021 LSH195A bCourses site.

Class 9: Individual Consultations
Monday, April 3

- I am happy and ready to talk with you about any aspect of your research project. Feel free to prepare some questions or comments to which you would like feedback prior to the individual consultation. If your questions and comments relate to data and evidence, please bring a relevant example or examples from your research to the consultation.
- Sign up for individual consultations at: https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/rbyfw

Classes 10 and 11: Practice Presentations
Monday, April 10 and 17

Pre-Class Assignment

- Put together a slide show of our project that contains the following content:
    - Title slide
    - Literature review
    - Context (if needed)
    - Research Methods
    - Findings (organized using your sub-questions and/or primary argument)
    - Conclusion (including summary of findings and implications for future research and policy/law/social change)
- See sample Legal Studies Honors slide presentations.

Class

- Each student will have 10 minutes for their presentation, followed by 5 minutes of feedback. Each of these class sessions may go a bit long to give everyone an equal opportunity to present their project and receive feedback.

Class 12: Individual Consultations
Monday, April 24

- I am happy and ready to talk with you about any aspect of your research project. Feel free to prepare some questions or comments to which you would like feedback prior to the individual consultation. If your questions and comments relate to data and evidence, please bring a relevant example or examples from your research to the consultation.
- Sign up for individual consultations at: https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/rbyfw

LEGAL STUDIES HONORS CONFERENCE – FRIDAY, APRIL 28
Selznick Seminar Room – 9:00am – 4:00pm

Class 13: Final Class
Monday, May 1

- I reserved this class as an opportunity to debrief from the conference and to support you as you prepare your final thesis for submission. Arrange with your advisor for how and when to submit your thesis to them. Also send me a copy of your final thesis on the bCourses site for LS H195C.