

**SOSC 1200**  
**Quantitative Social Analysis**  
**Fall 2017**

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Office: 3387 (Lifts 13-15), x7776

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30pm-3pm, 4504 (Lifts 25-26)

Office hours: Noon-1pm on Tuesdays, and by appointment

1 September 2017 version – Subject to revision

**Overview**

This survey course introduces students to quantitative social analysis by showing how such techniques are used to examine a range of important topics and questions. For these and other topics, faculty from the Division of Social Science will join as guests to introduce their own research topics and where relevant discuss classic as well recent studies that make exemplary use of data and methods, and which have advanced our understanding of the relevant social phenomena. The class will also introduce the major sources of data for quantitative social analysis, with an emphasis on ones that are publicly available. Along the way, students will learn about the differences between the concerns, paradigms, and methodologies of the major social science disciplines. Strengths and limitations of quantitative techniques for the study of social phenomenon will be discussed, as will the relationship of quantitative approaches to other methodologies.

**Intended Learning Outcomes**

- 1 Understand what sorts of social phenomena are amenable to research by the application of quantitative techniques.
- 2 Understand the differences between the foci and key paradigms and methodologies of the major social science disciplines.
- 3 Appreciate the relationship of quantitative and qualitative approaches in conducting social science research.
- 4 Develop awareness of exemplary classic and recent studies in different areas of the social sciences which have advanced our understanding of important social phenomena.
- 5 Develop familiarity with the basic expectations regarding the details about literature, background, data, methods, results and conclusions that are typically included in reports of the results of presented in articles describing the results of social science research studies that employ quantitative techniques.
- 6 Develop awareness of the major sources of data available for use in quantitative studies of social science.

**Grading**

30% Written reflections

- Students will submit three written reflections, each about 500 words or so (one typed page), one at the end of each month. For each reflection, they will select *one* of the guests who joined class that month, briefly introduce that guest's research focus, discuss what they found most interesting in the presentation, and then discuss what more they would like to learn in this area.
- 20% Proposed questions for the final exam
- 5 times during the semester (roughly every two weeks) each student will be responsible for proposing one multiple choice question based on the guest presentations and discussion in the last two weeks. The question should be designed to assess knowledge of a key point that emerged in class.
- 20% Multiple-choice final exam
- From the questions proposed by students, I will select a subset to be on a final exam, possibly with some modification.
- 10% Topics for class discussion
- Students occasionally will be asked to post a question in advance of class that they would like to propose for discussion. I will select some of these questions to be the focus of class discussion.
- 10% Class attendance
- Attendance is required. You may miss two class sessions without penalty. Any additional absences will be excused only if there is a valid reason that can be documented.
- 10% Class participation
- I will keep a record of contributions to class discussion, including questions asked of guests.

## Reading

Faculty guests will be invited to supply readings related to their research, and these will be available on Canvas before their class meets.

For certain classes, students will be expected to watch videos before coming to class, so that class can focus on discussion. Links to the videos will be posted ahead of class.

The work you submit must be your own. Unattributed use of the work of others is plagiarism, and is not acceptable. If you do feel the need to include text from another source, set it off in quotes and include a proper citation. If you have any questions about how to attribute sources, how to use quotations, etc., ASK! Do not put yourself in jeopardy by submitting an essay that includes material that appears to be plagiarized. Keep in mind that I have complete files of every essay submitted in this class since I began teaching it and electronically compare essays with those submitted in previous years.

## Academic Integrity

The Office of the Provost offers resources to help you avoid plagiarism and copying. Please read all of the materials here: <http://www.ust.hk/provost/integrity/student-1.html>

If you discuss the assignments with classmates, or otherwise work together, be mindful of the boundary between collaboration and academic dishonesty. I certainly encourage you to discuss the homework with each other, but the work you turn in must be your own, and reflect that you completed the assignment on your own. Paraphrase instead of quoting. By successfully paraphrasing, you demonstrate your understanding of the material. By providing quotations, you just demonstrate that you can type. If your assignment has too many quotations, it will be penalized.

If you make a claim or assertion that is not clearly based on material from lecture or the reading, and the validity of it is not self-evident, you must provide evidence to back it up, in the form of a citation or a brief argument. If you can't do that, you at least must clarify that what you are saying represents a personal opinion by prefacing the claim with "I believe that..." or something equivalent.

## Schedule

Date	Topic	Preparation/Assignments
September		
5	Introductions Course overview	
7	What is social science?	Video
12	The big questions	Video
14	Guest: Raymond Wong (SOSC) on stratification and social mobility	
19	The social science disciplines	Video Question 1 due September 19
21	Guest: Wing Chan (University College London)	
26	Cameron Campbell (SOSC) on quantitative population and social history	
28	Guest: Stuart Basten (SOSC) on population and demography	
October		
3	Wrap-up discussion: Sociology	Question 2 due October 3 Reflection 1 due on October 1
10		
12	Guest: Kira Matus (PPOL) on public policy	
17	Guest: Wang Jin (SOSC) on public economics and the Chinese economy	Question 3 due October 17
19	Guest: He Guojun (SOSC) on environmental economics	
24		
26	Guest: Albert Park (SOSC/ECON) on development economics	

31	Guest: Han Li (SOSC) on labor economics and political economy	Question 4 due October 31
November		
2	TBA	
7	Wrap-up discussion: Economics	Reflection 2 due on November 5
9	Guest: Jean Hong (SOSC) on political economy	
14	Guest: Kellee Tsai (SOSC) on comparative politics	Question 4 due November 14
16	Guest: David Zweig (SOSC) on international relations, international migration	
21	Wrap-up discussion: Political science	
23	Guest: James Kung (SOSC) on economic history	
28	New directions in quantitative analysis of social data	Question 5 due November 28 Reflection 3 due on November 26
30	New directions in quantitative analysis of social	
December		
TBD	Final exam	The date and time of the final exam is set by ARRO, and is normally announced sometime in the middle of the semester.