SOSC 1200
Quantitative Social Analysis
Fall 2018

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Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9am-10:20am, 4503 (Lifts 25-26)

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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 faculty 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.

All written work will be graded on a scale of 1-5:

1. Substantially incomplete. This roughly corresponds to an F.
2. Partially incomplete. The content suggests substantial misunderstanding of material in class. This roughly corresponds to a D.
3. Adequate. The written work reflects a reasonable attempt to respond to the prompt. This roughly corresponds to a C.
4. Good. The content clearly reflects understanding of key material in class, and there is some effort at independent, creative thinking. This roughly corresponds to a B.
5. Excellent. The content reflects substantial evidence of independent, creative thinking. This roughly corresponds to an A. This will be given out only rarely.

For every day late that a reflection is turned in, one point will be deducted. Reflections that are 5 or more days late will not receive credit.

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%   Suggestions for class discussion

Students will be asked to post a topic, question or idea in advance of each class that they would like to propose for discussion during class. I will select some of these questions to be the focus of class discussion. If I select your suggested topic, question, or idea, I will call on you and ask you to introduce it, so please be prepared to say something. The prompts will be posted at via the Discussion Board at the Canvas website, so please check that site frequently.

These will be graded 0 to 5 according to whether they were posted on time, and whether it represented a serious effort. After the first week of class, no credit will be given if the suggestion is posted late.

The lowest score will be dropped when calculating the final grade.

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.

Online Viewing

For certain classes, I will ask you to view lectures online. The link will be posted at Canvas. The Canvas site will also provide information about registering to view the lectures using your HKUST ID.

Reading/Viewing in Preparation for Guest Lecturers

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

Guest Speakers

Many of the class sessions will include talks by Quantitative Social Analysis faculty who will introduce themselves, their sub-discipline, and their work. Their names are listed in the schedule below. You will be given reading or viewing to complete before each visit. You will also be given a link to their web page so you can learn more about them before they arrive.

Classroom Conduct

Talking during class is not acceptable. This is especially the case when we have a guest speaker. If I see or hear you talking in the midst of a presentation by a guest speaker, I may ask you to leave the room, and/or give you a zero for attendance/participation that day.

More generally, please be attentive, especially during presentations by guest speakers. I would prefer that you take notes on pen and paper or on a tablet. If you feel that you must have a laptop open during class, you should be using it for note-taking. If I see anyone during class using their laptop for other activities, I may give you a zero for attendance/participation that day.

Academic Integrity

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.

The Office of Teaching and Learning offers resources to help you avoid plagiarism and copying. Please read the materials here: http://tl.ust.hk/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/Guest	Preparation/Major Assignments*
		Note: Prompts for topics, questions, and ideas proposed for class discussion will be posted directly to the Canvas site and not listed here.
September		
4	Introductions Course overview	
6	What is social science?	Video 1.1
11	The big questions	Video 1.2 and 1.3
13	The social science disciplines	Video 1.4 Question 1 due September 19
18	Cameron Campbell	
20	Franziska Keller	
25	NO CLASS – Public holiday	
27	TBD	
October		
2	Wu Xiaogang	
4	TBD	
9	Kevin Tam	
11	NO CLASS	
16	Jane Zhang	
18	Kira Matus	
23	Stuart Gietel-Basten	
25	Jean Hong	
30	TBD	
November		
1	Guojun He	
6	Wang Jin	
8	NO CLASS	
13	Miao Jia	
15	NO CLASS – Congregation	
20	Eva Chen	
22	Xu Duoduo	
27	Wang Hongbo	
29	Han Li	
December		
TBD	Final exam	The date and time of the final exam is set by ARRO, and usually announced sometime in the middle of the semester.