

# SOSC 4100: Research Pro-seminar

## Fall 2023

Monday, 11:00-11:50am  
Lecture Theater G

**Instructor:** Dr. ZHOU, Titi  
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**Office Hours:** Monday, 9:30-10:30am (or by appointment)  
**Course Website:** Canvas

### 1 Course Description

This course aims to prepare students for their QSA Capstone Project. Students will have opportunities to share and discuss their intended research topics, possible data sources, and analytical strategies. These discussions will enable students to refine their research plans, identify additional relevant sources, and develop analytical approaches to make persuasive arguments based on empirical evidence. Upon completing this course, students will have a well-developed research plan for their Capstone Project, which they will carry out in SOSC 4110.

### 2 Prerequisite

SOSC 3700. For QSA students in their fourth year of study only.

### 3 Grading: P/F

To receive a "Pass" grade, students must complete all the following components for this course.

#### 3.1 Class Participation

Attendance at all scheduled meetings (see "Schedule" for specific dates) is required. You are also expected to actively participate in the discussion and provide comments and feedback to other students in class.

#### 3.2 Work Plan (presentation)

In class on Monday of Week 2, students will give a concise, 2-3 minute oral presentation on the topic they plan to study. The presentation should briefly describe what questions motivate you, explain why you are interested in this topic, and specify what kinds of data you plan to use.

Presentation slides need to be submitted via Canvas to help the class follow your oral summary.

#### 3.3 Progress Reports (×2)

Throughout this course, each student is required to submit **two** progress reports via Canvas (see "Schedule" for the due dates). The purpose is to help students make steady progress on their research design and assist the instructor in monitoring their progress.

Each report should generally consist of 1-2 pages of informal writing (1.5 spaced). The report should encompass the various efforts undertaken, such as the specified goals to be achieved, the challenges encountered and addressed, the significant findings, and the intended next steps to be taken.

### **Progress Presentation**

To ensure sufficient time for each student to share and discuss their research projects, students only need to choose one of the two progress reports to present in class. *Presentation slides* need to be submitted via Canvas by the day prior to the scheduled presentation date. Details regarding the arrangement will be provided at a later time.

### **3.4 Capstone Project Plan**

By the end of the semester, each student will be required to submit a *Capstone Project Plan* that is both realistic and achievable. The plan should encompass all essential elements of a research proposal, including a clear specification of the research aims and significance, a concise discussion of pertinent literature, and a detailed description of the data and methods to be employed.

The data used for a project can typically be sourced from a publicly accessible repository like the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at <http://bit.ly/441ql4S>. However, it could also be data collected by the student or provided by a faculty member. For public data and faculty-provided data, it is crucial to ensure that the data's contents are suitable for the intended task.

The plan should consist of approximately 1750 words. But you have the flexibility to exceed this recommended word length if you want to get a head start on your Capstone Project by writing more comprehensive literature review, presenting descriptive results from your dataset, or writing some other material that can be reused in your final project.

Remember to number the pages and include references, which will not be included in the word count. Make sure that all the work is your own. If you need to use text from other sources when describing a method or dataset, clearly indicate it as a quotation and provide proper attribution.

While the general structure of the plan may resemble a proposal you have written for SOSC 2140 or a similar class, it is crucial that the plan is realistic and something you're confident you can complete within the given time frame of SOSC 4110. The project should involve quantitative analysis using the methods you have learned in SOSC 1100, SOSC 2400, and other relevant methods courses. Ideally, the dataset being used should be large and rich enough to effectively demonstrate your skills to potential employers or postgraduate programs.

The plan must include the following elements:

- **Aims** (250 words): Provide a concise overview of the goal of the Capstone Project that gives readers a basic understanding of your plan.
- **Significance** (250 words): Explain why the analysis is important and convince the reader that the project is worth doing.
- **Background** (500 words): Provide essential information about the topic or setting that is crucial for the reader's understanding, and critically discuss relevant studies to justify the necessity of your project in providing a thorough answer to the question at hand.
- **Hypotheses** (250 words): Specify testable hypotheses about the relationship between (at least) two variables, and briefly explain why you expect that relationship.

- **Data** (250 words): Describe the data you will use, including key details about the target population, sample size, and the time frame of data collection. Also, list the names of the variables that you will employ in your study.
- **Methods** (250 words): Describe the methods you will use to analyze the data. In addition to basic bivariate analysis, such as tabulations or scatterplots to examine the relationships between two variables, you should incorporate more advanced methods that demonstrate your acquired skills to potential employers or postgraduate programs.
- **References**: Every work cited in the text, notes, tables, and figures must appear in the References; conversely, every work listed in the References should be cited in the text or elsewhere in the article. You should use the same referencing style throughout your plan. You can refer to the styles of your favorite academic journals.

## 4 Tentative Schedule

Week	Presentation Topic	Meeting	Submission
1 (Sep 4)	Course Introduction*	Yes	
2			
3 (Sep 18)	Work plan	Yes	Slides due on <b>Sep 17</b>
4			
5			
6 (Oct 9)	1st Progress Report	Yes	Report and/or Slides due on <b>Oct 8</b>
7			
8			
9 (Oct 30)	2nd Progress Report	Yes	Report and/or Slides due on <b>Oct 29</b>
10			
11			
12 (Nov 20)	Capstone Project Plan	Yes	Slides due on <b>Nov 19</b>
13 (Nov 27)	Capstone Project Plan	Yes	Project Plan due on <b>Nov 30</b>

\* Lecture given by instructor.