

Class notes for Soc 1435 Social Changes in the United States  
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Recorded for January 5, 2006 by Rachel Kohan

*Italicized information is clarification, questions, or statements made by Dr. Brush*  
Plain text is statements are made by students  
**Bolded Information describes a specific action**

*What is Research Practicum and what are your expectations?*

- A chance to perform research
- Collect, analyze, and criticize previous research (review)

*What drives Research Questions?*

- Questions come from problems in society.
  - Why would we want to know about social change?*
  - To make predictions and understand patterns
  - Predict and effect change
  - Understand who is making change and why
    - The Who in making change is the agency that makes change and those who are subject to that change. Both of these cases these are considered actors of change.*
- Rooted in the research question is the Hypothesis → “Projected Theory”
  - Empirically testable proposition to guide research.*

*What can we pull out of a review of research?*

- Methods, how they did it (models)
- Sources and analytical plans*
- Avoid what has been done thoroughly
  - Not all research has to be innovative; sometimes, replications or updates are very useful. However, if we want to make a contribution, or just avoid reinventing the wheel, we need to know what the “state of the art” is.*
- Theory

Are we only doing empirical studies?

- What is Data?*
  - Not all empirical data are quantitative. Empiricism is a data-based approach to social science practice, but all sorts of data may be useful.*

*Empirical questions come from somewhere → theory is one source for empirical questions.*

- If you are going to empirically test something you have to understand measure and if it fits the question you are trying to answer.*
- Unit of Analysis (measure)
  - Group/ Individual*
  - Structure/ Institution*

*What else would you expect to do and to what end in a Practicum Class?*

- Form conclusions, Predictions, and recommendations

*What form does this take?*

- Final product → report*

**Attention is directed towards Research Presentations handout**

- The day-to-day culture in this class is presentation oriented
- Handout tells different kinds of presentations (page 2)
- Hints of how to do a good presentation (page 3)
- Rubric for Feedback for peers (back page/page 4)

(Switch Gears) *What are the Qualities of a good class? Specifically a good discussion.*

- Respectful of others Opinions
  - Listening and commenting without attacking
- Interesting topic
  - Stimulating
  - Satisfying
- Good Questions/questioning
- Connected to life/ is relevant
- Have diverse opinions and approaches
  - People are open-minded about these opinions and approaches
- Willingness from all to participate
  - Being brave (courageous about your answer or response)
  - Having a knowledge base/ not having a first exposure to the material
- Flexibility for commenting (even if it doesn't perfectly coincide with Another's point.)
- Comfort
  - Environment and People
- What is the Material Basis for Comfort?
  - Over time people become more comfortable because they know one another better.
  - Humor (Not taking everything completely seriously; also power and agency come with making people laugh)
- Small Groups

**Class counts off by 8 at this point leaving off at the number 4**

- Preparation

**Attention is directed towards the Syllabus**

*Unlike most other classes what is going to be key is working with your group on a specific task. Preparation is different because it is a practicum class.*

- (Back to what makes a good class)
  - Desire to Learn
    - Involves creating interest where it might not exist naturally.
  - Patience
  - Energy
  - There are no dumb questions (don't assume everyone understands just because no one asks for clarification.

**Directed to Learning Goals on pages 1-2 on the Syllabus**

*Keep Track so it is properly documented later.*

**Exercise:** *What a good class looks like? What a disaster of a class looks like*

*Good classes feel different*

- You are focus on the subject at hand and those who are immediately engaged.

**Last Remarks:** *Drop immediately if you are not going to stay in the class so that others can add the class who need it.*

**Before Next Class (Tuesday January 10, 2006):** (1) *Get Required Books (Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*, and McCall's *Complex Inequality*)* (2) *Go to the IRB website and get certified to do work with human subjects. Don't leave it to the last possible moment it will take more than an hour. Print out and bring to class on Tuesday your certificate of completion. It doesn't matter if you do the quizzes or tests. But it is important that you complete it and print out your certificate by next class.*