

# *Guide to Alternative Senior Project (SOC 461) Professor Ryan Alaniz*

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## *Choosing a Topic (~Week 1-2 if not earlier)*

Choosing a topic is often difficult. Here are some questions you should answer before choosing a topic:

1. Are you passionate about the topic? When I use passionate, I mean are you excited to get up early to learn about the issue you are studying? If not, you should find another research issue.
2. It must be related to your area of study and concentration.
3. Will writing a paper about this topic move you forward in your career? You may be passionate about dark chocolate or surfing, but these probably are not going to provide you the foundation for obtaining a job in your field. Therefore, ensure that whatever knowledge you choose to investigate in this process will be desired by future employers.

Once you have found a topic, please find at least one more. Then write up both ideas in a short narrative, answering both questions. Each narrative should be one or two paragraphs and no longer than one full page each.

For more information, please check out the USC website below:  
<http://libguides.usc.edu/content.php?pid=83009&sid=1756237>.

## *Proposal (~Week 3)*

Once you have found a topic, please write a 2-3 page research proposal. Please see me if you would like to see an example.

Your proposal should highlight the following:

1. What is the topic?
2. Why is it important to you?
3. Why should it be important to us?
4. How does this connect concretely to your area of study?
5. What is your plan for enacting and completing this project ?

Once you are ready to begin the proposal process, please read over the USC webpages for further details on HOW to write a proposal. <http://libguides.usc.edu/content.php?pid=83009&sid=2319840>

## *Annotated Bibliography and Timeline (~Week 6)*

We build on the foundation of others. Although you are doing an alternative project, you need to still link it to sociology. Your annotated bibliography, then, will give you the background needed to see how others have done the work you will do and avoid the pitfalls they may have experienced. It should also help you answer the question “Who cares?” as you will be able to gather statistics and information about the problem/project. Your sources can be non-academic (e.g. information from an organization or a business) but at least four need to be academic.

### **Finding Sources**

<http://libguides.calpoly.edu/sociology355>

Find eight sources on your topic. Do a brief (one paragraph, 200 words) annotation for each source.

### **Content Guidelines for Each Annotation**

- 1) Major points/conclusions--What does the article or information tell us?
- 2) Source/method the author(s) used to get or analyze the information--Where/how did the author who wrote the article get the information?  
(This is NOT the publication where you got the article, or the author’s name. If no source is evident, then state that the source of the information was not given.)
- 3) Perspective or bias  
--What is the underlying philosophy, ideological perspective, or bias of the information presented?
- 4) Significance  
--Why do you think this source is important to your senior project?  
--What, if any, information is lacking that would make the article or argument stronger?

Each annotation should be approximately 150-200 words. Include the total word length of the write-up in parenthesis at the end of each annotation. Use a variety of sources, including academic journals. You are more likely to find different perspectives. Please follow appropriate return practices so that publications do not get lost.

For more information, please see the Cal Poly library webpage on annotated bibliographies:

<http://lib.calpoly.edu/research/guides/bibliography.html#samples>

Finney, John W., & Annette C. Hahn. 1996. The Effectiveness Of Inpatient And Outpatient Treatment For Alcohol Abuse: The Need To Focus On Mediators and Moderators of Setting Effects." *Addiction* 91(12): 1773-1796.

Previous reviews of studies have shown that inpatient programs have no benefit over outpatient programs for alcohol dependency. This article reviews 14 studies and finds that inpatient treatment was superior to outpatient treatment in five of them, outpatient treatment was superior to inpatient treatment in two of them, and there was no significant difference in the remaining seven. The authors focus on the “treatment setting effects” in these studies and suggest some rationales for inpatient and outpatient treatment selection. This article considers treatment-related factors, patient selection process, and methodological characteristics of the 14 studies to identify possible moderators of significant setting effects. Finally, the authors conclude that the setting of treatment for alcohol abuse is not as important as other treatment variables in relation to a patient’s post-treatment success. I plan to use this article in my discussion of why individuals choose the treatment options that they do, and how we can better “match” individuals to treatment programs for alcohol abuse. (168 words)

## Examples for Bibliographic Reference Format

The form used for bibliographic references should follow the following examples. See the Cal Poly library website on references:

<http://lib.calpoly.edu/research/citations/styles.html>

I personally prefer the American Sociological Association (ASA) format but all are acceptable.

[http://www.asanet.org/students/resources\\_majors.cfm](http://www.asanet.org/students/resources_majors.cfm)

You can also read through the USC website for further details on citations:

<http://libguides.usc.edu/content.php?pid=83009&sid=615874>

### 1. Book

**Author1** (last name inverted), **Author2** (including full surname, last name is not inverted), and **Author3**. **Year of publication**. *Name of Publication (italicized)*. **Location of publisher, state, or province postal code (or name of country if a foreign publisher): Publisher's Name**.

Bursik, Robert J., Jr. and Harold G. Grasmick. 1993. *Neighborhoods and Crime: The Dimensions of Effective Community Control*. New York: Lexington Books.

### 2. Publication by an agency or institution

The United States Bureau of the Census. 1903. *Census of the United States, Twelfth, 1900*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

### 3. Internet source

Articles and books obtained from the Internet follow the same pattern as those cited above, with the exception that page numbers are omitted and the URL and date of access are included. If the URL is very long, please shorten it to a place it makes sense. Finally, do not cite library search engines (such as sociological abstracts).

Schafer, Daniel W. and Fred L. Ramsey. 2003. "Teaching the Craft of Data Analysis." *Journal of Statistics Education* 11(1). Retrieved December 12, 2006 (<http://www.amstat.org/publications/jse/v11n1/schafer.html>).

### 4. Article in an academic journal

**Author1** (Last name inverted), **Author2** (including full surname, last name is not inverted), and **Author3**. **Year of Publication**. "Title of Article." *Name of Publication* **Volume Number (Issue Number): page numbers of article**.

Aseltine, Robert H., Jr. and Ronald C. Kessler. 1993. "Marital Disruption and Depression in a Community Sample." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 34(3):237-51.

### 5. Websites

A general rule may be applied to citing of websites: If the website contains data or evidence essential to a point being addressed in the manuscript, it should be formally cited with the URL and date of access.

*In the text of the paper cite as:* (ASA 2006)

*In the reference list:*

American Sociological Association 2006. "Status Committees." Washington, DC: American Sociological Association. Retrieved December 12, 2006 (<http://www.asanet.org/cs/root/leftnav/committees/committees>).

### 6. DO NOT CITE WIKIPEDIA!

## Example of In-Text Citations and References

### Post-Mitch Honduran State Fragility

Although Honduras is not always indexed as a fragile state, there is considerable evidence the government did not have the capacity to provide the basic functions needed after Hurricane Mitch. Two years before the hurricane, social scientists warned of the nation's vulnerability as it did not have the national apparatuses or the capacity to deal with disaster. Leon and Lavell (1996) publishing from Central America explained, "In Honduras and Costa Rica, community work for disaster evacuations are not usually planned, but rather are spontaneous responses and support at the time of emergency" (Leon and Lavell 1996: 61, translated by author). Indeed, even before Hurricane Mitch had finished roaring through the country, the government was already in disarray and even basic services could not be provided. Jackson (2005: Ch. 10) points out in the initial days following Mitch it was the World Bank, the International Development Bank, and USAID who took control of the logistical issues and decided how to organize the relief effort. In fact when asked about the Honduran emergency commission (COPECO), international financial institutions staff commented the agency "was unprepared and had no funds. It was unable to perform at all" for emergency response and relief, let alone recovery (Jackson 2005: 262, see also Jeffrey 1999). Due in part to the weakness of the Honduran state to deal with the disaster and the amount of human and material capital obtained by the NGOs, the Honduran congress had little choice but to follow the programs and actions decided upon by foreign development actors (Jackson 2005). The fragile (and minimal) social contract between government and citizenry was broken creating a space to be filled by non-governmental organizations.

### References (United Nations University Format)

Jackson, J.T. (2005): *The Globalizers: Development Workers in Action*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

Jeffrey, P. (1999): Rhetoric and reconstruction in post-Mitch Honduras. In: *NACLA Report on the Americas*. vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 28-37.

Leon, P. and Lavell, A. (1996): Comunidades urbanas en Centro America: vulnerabilidad a desastres. In: *Desastres y Sociedad* vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 57-78.

### This paragraph was excerpted from:

Alaniz, R. (2012): Unsupervised Recovery: Post-Disaster NGO Recovery and Adaptation Strategies in Honduras. In: *SOURCE*. No.16, pp. 110-124. [Link](#)

## Timeline

Your project does not fit as a normal research paper. Therefore, you need to begin putting the pieces in place starting from when you would like the event completed by and then working backwards. If you would like to put on a fundraiser, for example, please note the date and work backward week by week explaining what must be done, who will do it, and how it will be done to get you where you need to be.

WITH YOUR ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY, PLEASE ALSO TURN IN A TIMELINE

## *Outline (~Week 8)*

The outline of your project should provide a framework or skeleton from which you build are able to clearly see the steps necessary to accomplishing your goal. You should use headings and subheadings to define the important points you are planning to include in the paper. It is not uncommon to have a section for every paragraph. The outline should also provide a topic sentence for each paragraph or section to give the reader a sense of the direction in which the paper is heading.

Please see the Purdue website for more information about outlining your paper.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/544/01/>

## *Reflection paper (~Week 10)*

I would like a reflection paper on what you have learned so far in the process. Explain to me what you have been doing. This could include information about what you did well and poorly, things you would do differently, and where you are at in the process. Additionally, you should provide a clear plan as to how you are going to accomplish your goal over the next quarter. It should be about two pages.

## *Writing (Always)*

Before you submit anything, please check for these common writing errors.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/2/>

# *Guide to Alternative Senior Project II*

## *(SOC 462)*

### *Professor Ryan Alaniz*

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#### *Check in (~Week 1)*

It is never a bad idea to check in with me. Feel free to come by my office hours or make an appointment to discuss how your project is developing.

#### *Portfolio (~Week 7)*

Since you are doing an alternative project, much of your work may not be as concrete as a paper. Therefore, I request that you put together a portfolio/handbook/guide or something highlighting your work. It should include a list of the people involved either as volunteers or as paid, any sponsors, brochures, feedback from the event, number of participants, photos, etc. It should have a title page, a table of contents, and sections. Please chat with me on the specifics of what this should look like.

#### **Progress Report**

As part of your portfolio, I would like you to write a 4-5 page reflective progress report detailing what you have learned and containing the following points:

An introduction outlining that you are going to describe these points

1. What you have done
2. What you have learned
3. What you did successfully
4. What you would have done differently
5. How you believe this project may have helped you in your future career (your conclusion).

The goal of the report is to provide clear evidence of what you have done and what you have learned.

#### *Final Draft (~Week 9)*

The final copy must follow the standards on the “Guidelines for Senior Projects 461 and 462”

Before turning in your final draft you must proofread your work. In fact, it would be worthwhile to have someone else also proofread your paper. Remember, this is your crowning achievement after four (or more) years at Cal Poly. It should make us all proud.

USC on proofreading

<http://libguides.usc.edu/content.php?pid=83009&sid=1037992>

Purdue OWL on common writing errors

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/2/>