**Rough Draft Critique**

*SOC 4881 – Population Studies Research Practicum*

**DUE**

*May 6*

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Complete this assignment on your own.

Please see the 20 questions on the attached pages. Use those pages as a template, and respond to each question below the question itself. Then upload the document with your answers.

Not that there are NO yes/no questions! Every one asks for specific constructive feedback!

**GRADING**

This assignment is worth 10 points.

Assignments turned in up to 48 hours late will receive half credit; those turned in beyond 48 hours late will not be accepted.

**TITLE / ABSTRACT**

1. ***Does the title page have the title, the authors’ names, a version date, and acknowledgements (including of Jonas Helgertz and MPC’s Center Grant)?***

Did they do it right? If not, what is missing?

1. ***Does the abstract page include the title and a 250 word (or less) abstract that describes the topic, research questions, basic methods, and basic findings?***

Is the abstract clear, does it contain all the required elements, and is it well written? How might it be improved?

**FRONT END**

1. ***From the front end, is it clear what the topic and specific research questions are?***

Are both the topic and the questions clear? Do the research questions follow logically from the introduction? How might they be clearer?

1. ***From the front end, is it clear why the topic/questions are practically and/or theoretically important?***

Have they made a compelling case that we NEED to answer their questions because the results will (a) have important real-life practical implications and/or (b) be important for the development or advancement of sociological or other ideas/theory? If not, how might they revise to accomplish this?

1. ***From the front end, is it clear how the research will improve upon prior research?***

Why do we need another study on this topic? Have they critically evaluated the existing research literature, such that the reader has a clear sense of what has been done before, what has not been done, what was good/bad about prior research, and how their new research will build on and/or improve what we already know? If not, how might things be improved?

1. ***From the front end, is it clear what their theoretically-informed expectations/hypotheses are about what they will find?***

Is it clear what they expect to find in terms of results? Have they offered a sound theoretical/logical rationale for WHY you expect those results? How might things be more clear?

1. ***Is the Front End Well Written, from a Style and Technical Point of View?***

Is the front end clear and logically organized? Is it easy to follow? Is it well written, from a technical (i.e., grammar, sentence structure) point of view? How might it be improved?

**METHODS SECTION**

1. ***Did they explain what data they will use (and why?)***

Did they name and describe the data they will use? Did they talk about where the data came from, and explain how records were linked across censuses and mortality records? Did they say how they arrived at their analytic sample … that is, how they selected cases to be included in (or excluded from) the analysis? Did they discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these data versus alternate options? How might this section be iomproved?

1. ***Did they explain how they measure every concept?***

Did they explain exactly and completely how every concept mentioned in their research questions will be measured? Did they discuss the pros and cons of alternate ways of measuring those concepts? How might this section be improved?

1. ***Did they explain what analytic methods they will use to answer each research question?***

Did they ---separately for each of their research questions---explain exactly what analytic method they will use to answer their research questions? Did they discuss the pros and cons of alternate ways of answering those questions? How might this section be more clear and complete?

1. ***Did they explain what problems they anticipate and how they will overcome them?***

Did they describe potential problems that may arise in their analyses, and how they will handle those problems? If not, what might they say?

1. ***Is the Methods Section well written, from a style and technical point of view?***

Is the methods section clear and logically organized? Is it easy to follow? Is it well written, from a technical (i.e., grammar, sentence structure) point of view? How might it be improved?

**RESULTS/DISCUSSION**

1. ***Does the Results section factually describe the findings --- and avoid interpreting them or including background materials?***

How might this section be improved?

1. ***Is the Results section clearly and logically organized? Is it easy to follow?***

How might it be more clear and better organized?

1. ***Do their results speak to their research questions (and only their research question)?***

How might this section be more clear?

1. ***Are their tables (and figures, if they have any) clear? Well organized?***

How might they be more clear? Better organized?

1. ***Does the Discussion section help the reader make sense of the findings? Do they interpret the results in light of the major research questions?***

How might the Discussion section be improved to help the reader better understand the findings?

1. ***From reading the Discussion section, are you clear about how the authors' conclusions add to current knowledge and advance the research literature? If not, what do you suggest the authors do to be clearer?***
2. ***Do the authors describe the limitations of their work --- without throwing the research under the bus? If not, how might the authors revise?***
3. ***Do the authors give the reader ideas about future research others might do in response to the authors' findings? If not, what ideas come to your mind for future research based on the authors' findings?***