This course provides an introduction to the social sciences through close readings of classics in the different disciplines and the application of different social science methodologies to important issues facing the contemporary world. It will be divided into three sections: The first section (February 5-March 5) provides an introduction to the distinctive methodologies of economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science, and history, supplemented by excerpts from influential articles in these fields and exercises designed to introduce students to the state of the art in subfields from each discipline. The second section (March 12-April 9) introduces students to practicing social scientists at Lehman, by assigning samples of their written work with in-person discussions about their approach to the field; all these will focus on the issue of immigration in different ways. In the final section (April 23-May 14), we will discuss articles that students have selected to focus on in their final papers (see assignments 2 and 3 below).

**Assignment 1** (25% of grade): Pick two social science subfields from the list provided in class, and compare and contrast the way these fields are discussed by scholars trained in two different social sciences. Your evidence for this paper can include journal articles, conference presentations, and/or any other information provided by the organization websites. For this to work, you should pick subfields that either focus on the same topic (e.g., urban sociology and urban politics) or that borrow from the same discipline (e.g., psychological anthropology and behavioral economics). As I allocate subfields over the course of the first month of the class, I'll make sure that you’ve picked at least two topics that will work for this assignment. Due on March 22.

**Assignment 2** (20% of grade): Compile an annotated bibliography of twelve secondary sources that bring at least three different social-science perspectives to a research topic of your choice. You should write at least one paragraph about each source. Your list of sources is due March 19, the first draft of your annotated bibliography is due March 29, and the final draft is due April 5.

**Assignment 3** (30% of grade): using the sources you selected in assignment two, write a literature review and prospectus for a research project using these sources. In addition to covering the secondary sources, you should design a research plan, including a set of primary sources (interview subjects, documents, or datasets) that you would examine in order to write a paper on this topic. Due via email on May 20.

**Class participation** (including discussion posts): 25% of grade.
Note on readings

All of articles assigned in the first five weeks of this course (February 5 to March 12) are among the most frequently cited journal articles published in their respective disciplines during the last ten years, as determined by the Social Sciences Citation Index. The selection has been made to ensure a diversity of methodologies and subjects within each discipline. Each of these weeks, students will also be assigned to provide a short (5-10 minute) report on a professional organization within the social science(s) discussed that week, together with a review of the type of articles published during the last several years in that organization's journal. Students are encouraged to draw from these reports in writing their first paper (see above).

Articles assigned in the second section of the course (March 22 to April 12) are designed to provide context for a discussion with the guest presenter. These will include published scholarship by the presenter, so students should be prepared to ask questions about research questions and methodology.

The readings for the final section of the course (April 19-May 6) will be selected from the annotated bibliographies that students hand in on April 7 (Assignment 2). The idea in this part of the course is to generate class discussions about these sources that will be helpful in writing Assignment 3.

Alyshia Gálvez's Patient Citizens, Immigrant Mothers can be purchased from Amazon.com and other online booksellers. On Amazon, used copies are available from $18 and new copies from $20.

Discussion board posts: Click the “discussions” link on Blackboard and post reports on different professional organizations and journals in the social sciences. I will discuss the mechanics of this in the first class and post a sign-up sheet for organizations/journals. See instructions in the content folder on Blackboard.

Course Learning Objectives: The primary objective of this course is to provide students with a basic familiarity with the range of topics and approaches associated with six major social science disciplines (Economics, Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Political Science, and History). Assignment 1, and oral presentations in the first section of the course, will contribute to this outcome. This course will also enable students to acquire research and reading skills in at least three of these disciplines, and to learn how to apply different social science methodologies to a research problem (assignments 2 and 3).

My office is Carmen 297 and my phone number is 960-2267. My office hours are Tuesdays from 5pm-6pm (but I will usually be in my office from 2pm until 6pm on Tuesdays). If necessary I can schedule a meeting at a different time by appointment. I am also happy to respond to questions via email at timothy.alborn@lehman.cuny.edu.
Course schedule

February 2   Introduction

February 9   No class

February 16   Sociology

Student reports on Sociology journals and organizations (on Discussions page, due February 14)


February 23   Economics

Student reports on Economics journals and organizations (on Discussions page, due February 21)


March 1  Anthropology and Psychology

Student reports on Anthropology and Psychology journals and organizations (on Discussions page, due February 28)

Read “Psychology,” and “Anthropology” in Adam and Jessica Kuper (eds.), *The Social Science Encyclopedia* (Routledge, 2004).


March 8  Political Science

Student reports on Political Science journals and organizations (on Discussions page, due March 6)

Read “Political Science,” in Adam and Jessica Kuper (eds.), *The Social Science Encyclopedia* (Routledge, 2004).


March 15  History

Student reports on History journals and organizations (on Discussions page, due March 13)

Read: Mark Gilderhus, *History and Historians* (Prentice Hall, 2010), ch. 6 and Postscript


**March 22**  
**Immigration (I): Cultural Anthropology**

Guest presentation by Alyshia Gálvez


**March 29**  
**No class (work on annotated bibliography; first draft due via email March 29, second draft due on April 5 following feedback from instructor)**

**April 5**  
**Immigration (II): Political Science/Economics**

Guest presentation by Andrés Torres

Readings TBA

**April 12**  
**Immigration (III): History**

Guest presentation by Cindy Lobel


“Latino History: An Interchange on Present Realities and Future Prospects,” *Journal of American History* 97 (2010). Available at:
http://www.journalofamericanhistory.org/issues/972/latino-interchange.html (link on Blackboard)

April 19  Discussion of student-selected research articles I (online)
April 26  No class (spring break)
May 3    Discussion of student-selected research articles II (online)
May 10   Discussion of student-selected research articles III (online)
May 17   Course wrap-up (in class)

Additional information

Official course description: The aim is to help students learn to evaluate critically the claims of social scientists by helping the to appreciate more deeply the evidence and reasoning used to justify them. Study of both classical and contemporary studies demonstrating a wide range of theoretical approaches and methodologies of the social sciences. Also critical comparison and evaluation of the social sciences’ general claims of scientific validity.

Lehman College is committed to providing access to all programs and curricula to all students. Students with disabilities who may need classroom accommodations are encouraged to register with the Office of Student Disability Services. For more information, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services, Shuster Hall, Room 238, phone number, 718-960-8441.

The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) and the Science Learning Center (SLC) are two of the tutoring centers on campus. The ACE provides appointment based and drop-in tutoring in the humanities, social sciences, and writing, as well as general writing and academic skills workshops. The SLC provides drop-in tutoring for natural and computer science courses. To obtain more information about the ACE and the SLC, please visit their website at http://www.lehman.edu/issp, or please call the ACE at 718-960-8175, and the SLC at 718-960-7707.

For Lehman's policies on plagiarism and academic integrity please visit this website: http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/student-affairs/documents/student-handbook-02.pdf

The telephone number for the campus police is 718-960-8228.