Students can satisfy the research methods requirement in two ways.

1. **Option 1:** SOC 100 Research Design and Interpretation *(Fall only)*

   or

2. **Option 2:** SOC 101 Quantitative Research Methods **AND** SOC 102 Qualitative Research Methods

**SOC 100: Research Design and Interpretation**

This class is an introduction to two things: first, the logic that sociologists employ when asking research questions and building research projects; second, the research methods that sociologists then use to carry out those projects to understand and explain social phenomena. Students first learn to craft sociological questions and determine which research methods are best suited to answer them. The course introduces students to the primary methods currently used to gather data in the discipline (e.g., surveys, experiments, observational fieldwork, in-depth interviewing, content analyses, and secondary analysis of existing data). In addition, students will learn techniques for collecting and analyzing data. Students also become skilled consumers of sociological research by applying their knowledge to the interpretation and critical assessment of recent journal articles. The course also examines the ethical issues involved with social research and the limitations of the positivist model of scientific inquiry in sociology.

*Our recommendations:* This course is strongly recommended for sophomores, but it can be taken in junior or senior year if need be. It is also recommended for concentrators who are unsure they are ready to take Sociology 101 and/or 102, or who may not have time to fit both courses into their schedules. This course is typically offered only in the fall semester.

*Fun fact:* Prior students say this course greatly improves their ability to understand, interpret, and think critically about the research assigned in their other courses. The earlier you can take it, the better!

**Soc 101: Quantitative Research Methods**

The goal of Sociology 101 is to provide students with a working knowledge of the research methods and statistical skills needed to collect and analyze quantitative (i.e., numerical) data. The course begins with an overview of social research and the relative strengths and weaknesses of quantitative data. Then, the course explores a range of statistical techniques and methods that are available for quantitative research. Topics in this course include: primary and secondary data analysis, sampling, survey design, and experimental research. Students will
learn these techniques through by creating and conducting their own original survey research and writing up results from their original data. In addition to methodological considerations, this course will examine the social, political and ethical dimensions of designing, executing, and interpreting quantitative research.

Our recommendations: This course is strongly recommended for juniors but can be taken earlier if desired or later if need be. It is typically offered only in the spring semester. It also fulfills the Tufts math distribution requirement, so it is helpful for students wishing to fulfill that.

Fun facts: We know that many students are fearful of taking statistics. While “Quantitative Methods” may not jump off the page as a course of interest, rest assured that prior students say this course improves their ability to understand, interpret, and think critically about quantitative data and research; to embark on independent projects and senior honors theses that necessitate quantitative research skills; and perhaps, most importantly, to be competitive on the job market for positions in which basic statistical skills are a plus. Trust us: many majors fear taking this course, and some find the class itself stressful, but most end up appreciating the skills gained from the course. It is impressive to employers and graduate admissions committees in fields as diverse as marketing, consulting, public health, and nonprofit management.

Soc 102: Qualitative Methods in Action

Sociology 102 offers another way for students to learn how to conduct primary analysis of their own data. In this course, you will first become familiar with the epistemological underpinnings of qualitative (i.e., non-numerical) research. You will then learn to craft qualitative sociological questions, design effective research instruments, gather data that address your questions, and interpret your data’s significance in relation to research done by other sociologists. Finally, you will share your findings with your fellow students. While there are many qualitative methodologies ranging from archival research to focus groups to content analysis, in this course you will work primarily with in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations that you will be able to conduct in a site of your own choosing.

Our recommendations: This course is recommended for juniors and seniors but can be taken sophomore year if desired and with approval by the instructor. It is typically offered only in the fall semester, and because of its intensity, it counts for 5 SHU. With advance approval and guidance from the course instructor, students may elect to prepare applications to the Tufts’ Institutional Review Board in order to obtain approval for their projects to be used toward independent research (e.g., senior honors theses).

Fun facts: Like Sociology 101, we know this course title may not jump off on the page for you. But rest assured that prior students often say this course serves as a capstone-like experience in our major. Not only do students embark on independent projects and research on a topic of their own choosing, but also students develop skills that set them up well for developing senior honors theses and other independent studies. Of course, these skills make them competitive on the job market for positions in which basic logic, analysis, and interviewing skills are a plus.
Trust us here once again: this is a demanding course, but well worth the investment. Sociology 102 provides a meaningful opportunity for intellectual growth and is impressive to employers and graduate admissions committees in the social sciences.

**Which option is right for me?**

A common question sociology majors and minors have is which option to pursue. Below is a summary of course objectives and assessments for Soc 100, 101, and 102.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sociology 100</th>
<th>Sociology 101 &amp; 102</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Objective</strong></td>
<td>Overview of the logics of inquiry, research designs, and various research methods used in sociology</td>
<td>Deeper coverage of quantitative and qualitative methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assignments and Activities</strong></td>
<td>Focus on understanding various research strategies, and how to interpret research using each approach through short assignments</td>
<td>Design and conduct primary original research through longer projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best suited for students who want….</strong></td>
<td>A foundation on how to critically evaluate assigned readings and different kinds of research</td>
<td>In-depth, hands-on research experience; strongly encouraged for students interested in pursuing a senior honors thesis or graduate study in the social sciences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How to Navigate Your Path**

**FAQs**

**Q:** What if I choose Option 1 (Sociology 100) and later decide I would like to take Quantitative and/or Qualitative Methods?

**A:** No problem! You are still more than welcome to take either Sociology 101 or 102 or both. If you have already taken Sociology 100, then taking 101 and 102 will simply count as additional electives toward your Sociology major. In fact, Sociology 100 is a nice foundation for either or both of these two more specialized classes.

**Q:** What if I start Option 2 (by taking either Sociology 101 or 102) and later decide to take Research Design and Interpretation (Sociology 100)?

**A:** That’s fine too! Taking Sociology 100 will fulfill your methods requirement by itself, so that your other course or courses (101 and/or 102) will now count toward the major as electives.
Q: What is the “Data Analysis and Methods” cluster?

A: If you take all three methods courses (Sociology 100, 101, and 102), you can do one more additional independent study (e.g., a directed research in sociology, or a senior honors thesis) to qualify for the “Data Analysis and Interpretation Methods” cluster. Clusters are voluntary. While they won’t go on your official Tufts transcript, you can list them on your resume, and this one is a nice way to showcase your specialty in research methods to potential employers. We advise simply taking the courses first, and declaring the cluster later if you want to specialize.

Q: Can I take any of these methods courses while studying abroad or over the summer? If so, how do I go about obtaining permission to do that?

A: While we prefer you take Sociology 100 or 101 course here on the Medford campus, sometimes students can find a similar class offered elsewhere. If you do, please email a syllabus of the course to your major advisor to find out if it would count for credit. Very few courses equivalent to Sociology 102 (Qualitative Methods) are offered elsewhere, therefore it is unlikely you find an equivalent course for that particular course elsewhere. Overall, we often encourage students to complete these requirements on campus. If you hope to earn credits toward the Sociology major while abroad or over the summer, many non-methods courses transfer in easily as electives.

Q: I have already taken a statistics course. Do I need to take Sociology 101, or can I place out of it while still getting credit for having taken it?

A: We rarely waive your requirement to take Sociology 101. Even if you have taken statistics elsewhere, you will likely still get a lot out of taking Quantitative Methods with us. We teach statistics with sociological questions and data in mind. Plus, reviewing, practicing, and getting more hands-on practice never hurts, especially if you’re thinking about using these skills when you go out on the job market. If you are interested in trying to appeal for a waiver, please reach out to the faculty member currently teaching 101 for guidance.

Q: So I have to get a job after I graduate. What kinds of jobs can I get with my background?

A: Tons! Our students have gone onto jobs in industry such as ABT Consulting, C Space, Instagram, Food for All (nonprofit organization), Google, LinkedIn, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Students also have gone onto graduate programs in public policy and sociology, as well as medical and law school.

Q: I’m still not sure… I still have some questions.

A: Email one of the Sociology faculty or sign up for our office hours anytime! We’re happy to talk through these options in person and find a good personalized fit for you and your schedule. Faculty currently on the research methods subcommittee are: Felipe Dias, Daanika Gordon, Helen Marrow, Sarah Sobieraj, and Jill Weinberg.