



## Russell Sage Foundation Social Science Summer Institute for Journalists

### DAY 1: Wednesday, July 11, 2018

#### **How to Use Social Science in Your Reporting**

How scholarly knowledge is produced; who is and isn't an expert; how to do a literature review; how to have successful interactions with social scientists.

#### Reading:

Van Evera, Chapter 1 of "Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science" (PDF)

Karl Popper, Science as Falsification (PDF)

Anna Maria Barry-Jester, [Media Reports about the Death Toll in Puerto Rico Are Needlessly Confusing](#), 538

Trip Gabriel, [In Iowa, Trump Voters Are Unfazed by Controversies](#), The New York Times

Maggie Koerth-Baker, [A Half-Day Of Diversity Training Won't Change Much For Starbucks](#), 538

1996 Welfare Reform: Point/Counterpoint, JPAM (PDF)

CBPP: Conaway SNAP Proposals Would Increase Food Insecurity and Hardship (PDF)

WSJ Editorial: Working on Food Stamps (PDF)

#### Schedule:

10:00 - 11:00 Introduction, Nick Lemann and Tali Woodward

11:00 - 12:30 Sheldon Danziger, RSF

**\*\*LUNCH WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM 12:30 TO 2:00 PM IN THE DINING ROOM\*\***

2:00 - 3:00 Introduce Lit-Review Exercise

3:00 - 4:30 Lit-Review Exercise to be completed on your own by 4:30:  
Using Google Scholar, do a very quick literature review pertaining to your project. Specifically, you should identify two to four leading experts (and at least one paper by each) pertaining to your area and then summarize the main arguments or schools of thought. Email them to Nick and Tali.

4:30 - 6:00 Wine & Cheese Reception

## DAY 2: Thursday, July 12

### **How to Think Like a Social Scientist**

Forming and testing a hypothesis; study design as it applies to journalism; journalistic applications of concepts like variance, causation, independent and dependent variables, deductive and inductive reasoning, counterfactuals, numerators and denominators; is there a “journalistic method?”

#### Reading:

Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow*: Chapters 35 and 36 (PDF)

David Hackett Fisher, *Historians' Fallacies*: Chapter 6 (PDF)

St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, Jr. *Black Metropolis*: Chapter 8 (PDF)

Nicholas Lemann, [The Journalistic Method](#)

Harry Enten, [Clinton Is Just a Normal Polling Error Behind Clinton](#)

Mairead McArdle, [Democrats and Republicans Neck and Neck on Generic Midterm Ballot](#), National Review

Thomas Edsall, [What Motivates Voters More Than Loyalty? Loathing](#), The New York Times

Harry Enten, [A Blue Wave Could Happen and Still Hit a Wall](#)

[The Pattern Problem](#), Invisibilia, NPR

Andrea Elliott, [Invisible Child, Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) (though please read the entire thing if you can) The New York Times

#### Schedule:

10: 00 – 11:00

Andrea Elliott, The New York Times/RSF

11:00 – 12:30

Matthew Salganik, Professor of Sociology at Princeton University

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2:00 – 3:30

Harry Enten, CNN

3:30 - 5:30

Further Discussion of Study Design

Introduce Hypothesis Exercise

5: 30 – 7:30

Hypothesis Exercise, on your own:

1. *Hypothesis*: Formulate a hypothesis about what you believe your story might end up saying.
2. *Evidence*: What evidence will you seek to prove or disprove your hypothesis? It may also be useful to think about an alternative hypothesis that might emerge, and how that might be proved or disproved as well.
3. *Self-awareness*: Reflect on what preconceptions, misconceptions, and biases you may be bringing to your reporting. Ask yourself if you may have wittingly or unwittingly been primed to accept an ideology or frame of reference, or if you may have confused correlation for

causation, etc.  
Email to Nick and Tali by 7:30 pm.

### **DAY 3: Friday, July 13**

#### **Social Science Techniques That Journalists Can Use**

Ethnographic research

##### Reading:

Matthew Desmond, *Evicted*: Prologue, Chapters 1 and 2 (PDF)

Katherine Boo, *After Welfare*, *The New Yorker* (PDF)

Mario Small, *Rhetoric and Evidence in a Polarized Society*, Speech at Barnard College (PDF)

Richard Fausset, [A Voice of Hate in America's Heartland](#), *The New York Times*

Nancy Jo Sales, [Tinder and the Dating Apocalypse](#), *Vanity Fair*

Michael Grunwald, [Generation Pickleball: Welcome to Florida's Political Tomorrowland](#), *Politico Magazine*

Daniel F. Chambliss, *The Mundanity of Excellence: An Ethnographic Report on Stratification and Olympic Swimmers* (PDF)

##### Schedule:

10:00 – 11:30            Shamus Khan, Professor of Sociology at Columbia University  
11:30 – 12:30            Workshopping of hypothesis exercises

**\*\*LUNCH WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM 12:30 TO 1:30 PM IN THE DINING ROOM\*\***

1:30 – 3:00 pm            Finish Workshopping; Wrap Up