Why should I engage in independent research?
There are many benefits to engaging in your own, independent research experience. First, this allows you to delve more deeply into a topic that is of significant interest to you, specifically. Additionally, through engaging in independent research via this course, you are able to draw on the many skillsets you’ve already learned through your previous courses and life experience in a structured setting. In other words, you will have the guidance of the professor as you move step-by-step through the research experience and apply your skills to real-life, everyday situations through the research process. Thirdly, at the end of the course, you will have a scholarly work that you have formulated, developed, implemented, analyzed, and written up. This process is totally and completely yours and so it the end product. You can then use this writing product for graduate school writing samples, job application sample materials, to apply for conference presentations, and so forth.

Can any student enroll in SOCI 485: Research Applications?
Research Applications does have a maximum enrollment of 25 students. This means that not every student may be able to enroll. There are both a set of requirements students must meet to enroll as well as a set enrollment process to follow.

To be eligible for Research Applications, students must have completed at least 60 units, including Introduction to Sociology (SOCI 101) and Research Methods (SOCI 302) prior to the semester in which they are enrolled in SOCI 485. (You must complete both SOCI 101 and SOCI 302 with at least a “C.”) Additionally, it is strongly preferred that students have either completed or be enrolled in Writing for Sociology Students (SOCI 308). Lastly, you must have a Sociology GPA of at least 3.0. (Note: Exceptions can be made to the GPA regulation. Individuals close to this requirement who are interested in the course should contact the instructor.)

If you meet the above requirements, you will need to Contact the Department of Sociology at sociology@fullerton.edu with the required information. Following review of your materials, you will be notified of your status in the course. In your email to the department, include:

- Name
- Campus-Wide Identification Number (CWID)
- Phone Number
- Current Cumulative GPA (Found toward the bottom of your Titan Degree Audit)
- Total completed units
- Completed units of sociology courses
- Semesters during which you completed SOCI 101 and SOCI 302
- Semester during which you took/are taking SOCI 308
- General description of your proposed topic of interest (or, if you’ve thought about it/them already, specific research question(s))
  - NOTE: This must apply the methodological approach and be related, at least broadly, to the subtopic designated for the semester in which you plan to enroll.

If I am enrolled in this course, can I do a research project on any topic of my choice?
Each semester this course is offered, there will be a particular methodological orientation (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods) and broad topic applied (for example, crime and deviance; race and ethnicity; education; economy; immigration, and so forth). This varies based on the professor leading the course. This means that while you, as the student, have a great deal of freedom in your research topic, it
will be molded by the methods and topic employed during the semester you’re enrolled in the course. With this said, the Department of Sociology wants individual students to make their research personal and take this opportunity to really shape their own project. So, we’ve ensured the topics applied are quite broad. For example, in Spring 2018, the topic is crime and deviance and the methods applied will be qualitative methods. This leaves a great deal of room in terms of tying your personal interests into the broader topic. If you’re interested in the education system, perhaps you want to examine the school-to-prison pipeline. Or, maybe you’re interested in the opportunities, or lack thereof, that youth or adults who are incarcerated have for continuing their educations. Alternatively, if you’re interested in social work, perhaps you want to explore the experiences of social workers engaging in victim-offender mediation. Or, maybe your focus is on the media. You might choose to examine the representation of particular groups within the criminal justice system via a particular television show or set of films. The options are truly countless and are very exciting!

What do I do if I just cannot think of a research topic, but I would like to engage in the research experience?
While students have the freedom to construct their own research projects, the professor for the course will also offer a project that students may choose to participate in more collaboratively. In other words, the professor will construct the topic and the individual students will then gather data, analyze it, determine the pieces that are most interesting to them, and then write up those particular findings. While this does not allow for the same level of flexibility of fully-independent research, it does give students the opportunity to experience the research process from start until finish.

How is this course similar to and different from other courses I’ve taken in the Department of Sociology?
This course is similar to your other courses in many ways. You have a professor assigned to the course just like for your other courses. This person is your guide as you work through the research experience. Likewise, you do have peers in the course. So, you and your peers will work through the steps of research together, too. The course has set days and times of the week to meet. There will be structured lectures, readings, and assignments to help you move through the research process.

Perhaps unlike some of your other courses, there will be days when you will be “out in the field” engaging in your research. Upon your return the following class meeting, you may be expected to discuss what you accomplished, questions you have, and so forth. Additionally, there will be meeting days during which students work together to engage in activities that will move their projects forward. These will be, in part, dependent on the methodological orientation applied for the particular semester, but may include: peer review, interview question construction, data set cleaning, or the like. Throughout each activity, you will have your professor present as a guide and resource.

How much of a time and work commitment does this course require?
This course is designed to challenge students as they bring together multiple facets of their academic experience by completing a culminating, single representation of work. As such, the course does require active participation in all class meetings, assignments, and expects enrolled students to be motivated toward project completion. It has been stated that a 3-unit course includes 3 hours in class per week and requires 6-9 hours of study or work time per week. This formula is expected to be an accurate representation of this particular course. With that said, some weeks may be less or some weeks may be more. In part, this depends on the reading and assignments in the course on a particular week, but also depends on the individual students in terms of research progress throughout the semester.