

Sociology 313.01
Introductory Social Research Methods
FALL 2011

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Bruce Arnold*
OFFICE: SS 912
OFFICE HOURS: TBA
PHONE: 220-6508 (no voice mail).
CLASS: MS 319 Monday, Wednesday, Friday 2:00PM- 2:50PM
LABS: Wed. 4:00-5:50 EDT 723/ST057

* **Instructor does not use e-mail for course related correspondence.**

* For student study resources see <http://soci.ucalgary.ca/18/jfstud.htm>

* Some changes may be made to course deadlines, timing, format, and content by the instructor.

* Concerns about evaluations and grades must be first put in writing, including the grounds and rationale for said concerns, and submitted to the instructor in advance of a meeting being scheduled.

Course Goals and Organization: The purpose of this course is to provide an understanding of the logic of sociological research and the relationship between concepts, theory and empirical study. Both “qualitative” and “quantitative” as independent and interdependent (mixed-methods) methodologies are introduced. Topics include research ethics, research design, sampling, reliability, validity, survey research, participant observation, and other selected methodologies. Each method is examined for its strengths, limitations and reasons why it may be best suited for specific research questions.

Research methodology is one of the core subjects of the sociological discipline. This is a busy and demanding course that allows students some methodological understanding and experience that they can bring as a resource to their other sociological classes and assignments. Students will need to exercise responsible planning and time management skills in this course, as they would in any research undertaking. Students are expected to actively participate in class and lab discussion.

This course makes full use of students learning by doing (participating), focusing on thinking skills, and student’s existing knowledge and experiential basis. This is also known as “**inquiry-based learning**” (See Blackboard for more details) and a teaching priority at the U of C. Methodological techniques and analytical skills are introduced and practices so they may be applied to other university courses and work and volunteer activities outside the classroom. Students are also expected to develop academic and civil responsibilities as members of this class and their lab and research teams.

Methodological **THINKING** is introduced in this course and is often one of the more transferable skills underlying methodologies. Also called “critical” thinking, it is a mode of thinking - about any subject, content, or problem - in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing it. This type of thinking will include: (1) raising vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely; (2) gathering and assessing relevant information and using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively, or visa versa; (3) coming to well reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards; (4) thinking with an open mind within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; (5) and, communicating effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems.

Required Readings:

1. **Making Sense of the Social World & Participant Observation.** Chamblish/Jorgensen. Please note this is a custom “bundle” by Sage Publications specifically for this course.
2. **How to Study & Learn.** (2001). Richard Paul and Linda Elder. The Foundation for Critical Thinking.
3. Other required readings & videos will be assigned: (1) from the Reserve Reading Room will be assigned for team qualitative research methods textbook presentations; (2) see Blackboard regularly.

EVALUATION: Course evaluation will be based upon:

- **Team in-class exercise:** (10 %)
- **Team Participant Observation (PO) research project:** TBA (20%)
- **Team assigned qualitative text reading presentations:** 15% Last two weeks of classes.
- **In Class Assignments** (5%)
- **Participation** (10%)
- **Mid-term Exam:** Friday, October 28th (30%)
- **Final Quiz** Wednesday, Dec. 7th (10%)

Students will be assigned to research teams and will undertake the course work as team members except for the short-notice and final exams. Any and all team membership changes must have the approval of Dr. Arnold. It is the student’s responsibility to organize and equally contribute to all team projects. All members of a team are assigned a team grade except in situations where individual team members have not contributed equally to the research efforts in which case the instructor will assign and evaluate the individual student’s work. The individual assignment will be at the discretion of the instructor. It will be at the instructor’s discretion to attend to situations (and possible penalties) where some team members are not fully attending to their team responsibilities. All components of this course must be completed to receive a passing grade in the course. All assignments are due in class only.

Exams (30% + 10%): The *two examinations* (not cumulative) will include multiple choice questions drawn from all materials presented in class, readings, and class discussion and presentations. The final quiz will include questions drawn from the team assigned reading presentation materials and course materials covered since the short-notice examination.

Team in-class exercise: (10%)

Each team will be responsible for a 15-20 minute presentation of a part of the text book. The Power Point presentation will use additional library resources, to describe, analyze, and provide examples of research methodological issues & “thinking” to the class. More information will be given in class.

Team Participant Observation (PO) Research Proposal: (20%)

This team exercise is designed to give you some experience and insight into applying research methodology by observing, coding and analyzing the behaviour of people in a social setting. It will also give you practical experience designing, implementing, and problem solving as inherent parts of the research process. More information will be given in class

Team presentation (15%): For the professional *research presentation* of 20 minutes, students are expected, in consultation with the instructor, to work in a team environment to **describe** and **analyze** an assigned methodological reading (see MacKinnine Reserve Reading) and **link** it to course materials. A 2 page point-form outline of the presentation will be submitted to the instructor and all students at the beginning of class. Arrangements can be made for teaching aids to assist in presentations when necessary (e.g. Powerpoint). A team grade will be assigned to each team member. *All team members must provide an **equal** part of the in-class presentation to receive a grade. All team members must be present and participate in the presentations.* More details and a handout will be given in-class and the instructor and teaching assistants will assist you with this assignment. Team members who are unable to keep up-to-date with other team members may be given an alternative assignment. More information will be given in class

Participation (10%): Students are expected to be fully prepared to contribute to all classes. Students will be asked throughout the course to: (1) thoughtfully comment on specific readings and issues discussed in class; (2) complete and present small team assignments. Again, this is for students to learn how to apply course material and issues and so all students are on “the same page”. More information will be given in class

In-Class assignments (5%): Students will be given about 15 (short) assignments to assist learning course materials and issues. The assignments are announced in-class (only) throughout the term. Students are encouraged to complete all these assignments but only the first 10 submitted assignments will be graded (see below). You must Pass the first 10 assignments you submit to receive the full 5%. These assignments will be used for teaching purposes to illustrate course issues and materials (no student names will be used without their permission)

1. Each assignment will be evaluated on a Pass or Fail basis based on: (1) submitted no later than the specific & firm due date and time - time is an important issue in social psychology; (2) minimum length; (3) content. Your first 10 submitted assignments will be the only ones graded - no replacements - so please be sure you are clear on minimum criteria for each one you submit. When in doubt, ask Dr. Arnold before the end of class.

2. All students will have the same assignments and due dates and therefore equal opportunity for completing them. For each Fail, 1% will be deducted from the total of 5%. Late submissions may be considered with proper formal documentation (e.g. medical note). Please make sure you submit at least 10 completed assignments that meet the due date and minimum requirements to receive the full 5% for the course component.

3. Each assignment must: (1) use regular sized paper (8.5 x 11) and word processing software (single spaced, default margins, 12 font print) for easily and readable responses; (2) your name, assignment date and name. Instructions for drawings or photos will be given in class. Assignment responses will be used in class for teaching purposes but student names will be kept confidential unless the student decides otherwise.

I look forward to your participation in this course and will be available throughout the term, during class and office hours, to assist you. Please note the instructor often does not use a microphone so please sit near the front of the class if you have difficulty hearing the lectures.

Best wishes for a rewarding experience in this course!

Labs: Students are often unclear about what the purpose of labs are and what is to be expected. Labs are optional but part of the learning opportunity and process in this course. Labs are not lectures. The labs are designed to complement materials and discussion in the lectures. They provide students, and research teams, the opportunity to ask questions and generate discussion as a part of their preparation for assignments and examinations. Dr Arnold will be responsible for the labs as there is no TA for this course. More information will be given in class

Students' Responsibilities: This course syllabus provides details of all course assignments, requirements, rules and regulations. Each student is responsible for knowing all of its contents and complying with all details herein. Any and all questions regarding this course should be brought to the attention of the instructor as soon as possible to avoid any delay or inconvenience to students.

A deadline is a deadline. Late work may be considered but with a 20% per day (including weekends) late penalty starting immediately after the due deadline. Any and all delays regarding completing course assignments and examinations must be accompanied by official documentation. Such documentation must clearly specify causes (i.e., severe hardship or serious illness) regarding a student's inability to complete course requirements on dates outlined in this syllabus. Assignments are due in class only. Students must keep a duplicate copy of assignments for their records. Date and type of make-up examination will be at the discretion of the instructor. All exams and lab assignments **MUST** be completed to pass this course. Students are required to check Blackboard regularly (at least weekly) for course announcements and information. More information will be given in class

Grading for this course is designed to provide both merit and equal opportunity for all students. Students who wish to have their assignments and or examinations re-evaluated must put their concerns and specific criteria or rationale for re-evaluation in writing to Dr. Arnold. If a general principle regarding evaluation is involved all students in the class may have equal opportunity for re-evaluation. This class is intended to offer an encouraging educational environment so students can have the opportunity to rise to a variety of manageable challenges.

Continued Registration in this course indicates full acceptance of the terms and conditions stated in this syllabus and which have also been presented in class.

Grading Scheme

A+	91-100
A	85-90
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	74-76
B-	70-73
C+	67-69
C	64-66
C-	60-63
D+	55-59
D	50-54
F	49-0

I look forward to your participation in this course and will be available throughout the term, during class and office hours, to assist you. Students wanting to make any type of recording in class must first receive written permission of the instructor. All recordings must be destroyed by the last day of this term.

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Emergency evacuations:

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point by [check link to find assembly point for your building:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/node/75>]

Deferrals:

If at all possible you must provide *advance* notice to the instructor if you are unable to take a test or pass in an assignment or essay on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a “make up” test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a “make up” test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department.

Please note that requests to defer a final examination or to defer term work past the end of a term go through the Undergraduate Programs Office (UPO) and must be processed by the deadlines that are established in the U of C Calendar. You can find the forms you need online:

Deferred Final Exam Application:

http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/APP%20FOR%20DF%20EXAM_0.pdf

Deferred Term Work Form:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf>

You must submit these deferral forms to the Faculty of Arts Associate Dean (Students) through the UPO office: Undergraduate Programs Office, 4th Floor, MacEwan Student Centre. Only the Associate Dean approves requests for deferrals which extend beyond the end of a term. Instructors are not involved in such decisions. To make an appointment with the Associate Dean, phone (403) 220-8155.

Ethics Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct are regarded as serious academic offences. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department main office. Written assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

Safewalk: The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

Academic Accommodation: Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, phone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**

Handing in papers outside of class, return of final papers, and release of final grades:

1. When students are unable to submit papers in class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant. Papers will not be accepted in the main Sociology Department office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the main Sociology Department office. The Freedom of Information and Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place (i.e. outside an instructor's office, the department office etc.) Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will be available for pick-up only during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or at the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are available only online.