



FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**Soci313 L03      Introductory Social Research Methods      Fall 2018**

**Lecture:** MWF 8:00 – 8:50, in SA147

**Lab:** W 15:00 – 16:50, in SS109

**Instructor:** Dr. Annette Tézli

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Office hours: Mondays 13:00 – 15:00,

Thursdays 14:00 – 15:30; and by appointment

**Teaching Assistant:** Hasmik Tovmasyan

### Course Description

Social research is research conducted by sociologists and other social scientists to explore, describe, explain, critique and offer suggestions for improving aspects of the social world. Producing high quality social research, however, is an art that requires specific skills. This course is designed to provide you with the skills and resources necessary to plan and conduct scientifically sound social research. These skills will not only make you a good researcher, they will also transform you into a critical consumer of social research presented to you in the academic and popular realms. Over the course of the semester, we will discuss the research process in its entirety, focusing on philosophical underpinnings of social science research and their implication for research design, ethical considerations, research planning, quantitative and qualitative methods of data generation, and data analysis. Furthermore, we will discuss the intricate choices and challenges researchers face throughout the research process. Finally, we will explore how those intricate choices and challenges shape our knowledge of social phenomena and the broader implications of scientific knowledge production.

By the end of this course, successful students will be able to:

- examine social phenomena in a scientific manner.
- identify and critically assess the social context of social science research.
- retrieve, read, critically evaluate, and discuss a collection of empirical research.
- compare different theoretical, philosophical, and methodological underpinnings of empirical research.
- follow common principles of ethical research.
- explain the difference between qualitative and quantitative approaches.
- critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of key research methods.
- interpret qualitative and quantitative data.
- apply theoretical course material to a new problem.
- independently develop research questions and devise a research program.
- communicate effectively in writing.

### Course Format

Course content will be delivered through a combination of lectures, individual and group exercises, class discussions, and films. I will draw on the textbook as well as illustrative examples from the assigned journal articles in our discussion, so it is imperative that you have completed all readings prior to the class in which they will be discussed. Labs will focus on the practical application of theoretical material covered during lectures as well as on the development and refinement of skills pertinent to the successful completion of assignments.

## Required Texts

(available through the UofC Bookstore or Bound and Copied)

Neuman, W. Laurence, and Karen Robson. 2018. *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian ed. Toronto: Pearson.

**You can rent the ebook here:** <https://www.vitalsource.com/products/basics-of-social-research-fourth-canadian-w-lawrence-neuman-v9780134649108?term=9780134649108>

**Please Note:** The 4<sup>th</sup> edition has been updated extensively. Please do **NOT** purchase earlier editions of the text. It will inadequately prepare you for the assessments.

Additional required readings are listed in the back of the syllabus. All assigned journal articles can be downloaded without charge through the UofC library.

## Methods of Evaluation

### Assignment Schedule and Outline

	Date due	% of final grade
10 Online reading quizzes		15
2 Peer reviews		10
Research proposal		
1. Topic proposal	October 5	10
2. Annotated bibliography (peer review)	October 22	15
3. Research design and sampling (peer review)	November 19	20
4. Research proposal	December 7	30

Please note that I do **NOT** offer extra-credit options for this course beyond what is listed below.

### 10 Online reading quizzes (15% total)

Studies repeatedly show that students will not complete their readings unless there is some form of incentive attached. However, completing the assigned readings prior to class will greatly facilitate your learning of the material. Completing the assigned readings also allows you to process some of the material prior to class and then contribute meaningfully to group and class discussions.

I will make 2 ungraded practice quizzes available during the first 2 weeks of classes. Graded quizzes will commence the second week of class. Each quiz will be made available on D2L 1 week before the corresponding chapter is covered in class and must be completed before the beginning of the respective class. For example, the first graded quiz will cover textbook chapter 3 on research ethics and the article assigned for week 3 (September 17-21). The quiz will be posted on September 10 after class (8:50) and must be completed **before** class starts on September 17 (8:00). Each quiz has 15 questions and you will have 1 30-minute attempt to complete the quiz. Students with academic accommodations will receive extra time for the reading quizzes as indicated in their academic accommodation letters.

There will be 11 graded quizzes, but only 10 will count toward your total quiz grade. D2L will automatically drop your lowest grade. In addition, I am offering 1 bonus quiz at the beginning of the semester, which will count toward your overall reading quiz grade. Note that the total of all reading quizzes cannot exceed 100%. If you do not complete a quiz without due cause (as outlined below), you will receive a grade of 0. More information and a schedule are provided on D2L.

### 2 Peer reviews (10% total)

Peer reviews are an essential part of the academic writing process. Productive collaboration and cooperation in the writing process will develop and refine of your own writing as well as that of your peers. For the annotated bibliography and research design & sampling assignments, I will randomly generate groups of 2. You will submit your paper to your peer and receive feedback on the overall execution of the assignment using the grading rubric. You will have the opportunity to revise your paper based on the peer feedback provided before submitting it for grading. Since submitting a peer review late disadvantages the reviewee, I will deduct 3 percentage points from the reviewers graded assignment if a review is submitted late. If a peer review is not submitted at all, a 5-percentage-point deduction applies.

## Research proposal

In general, a research proposal explains why and how a research study will be conducted. It is useful for planning a study, getting critical feedback before undertaking the study, and obtaining funding for the research. The objective of this assignment is for you to practice writing a well-structured research proposal. This is your opportunity to prepare a proposal and receive feedback on each individual assignment. I will return each assignment before the next one is due, so that you can make necessary revisions. Please refer to the assignment schedule above for the due dates of each assignment. Individual assignments are outlined below. More detailed information will be provided in class and on D2L.

### *1. Topic & research question proposal (10%)*

Before you can write a research proposal, you have to decide on a topic. For this assignment, I expect you to discuss your research topic and a set of research questions that flow out of this topic. You can select any topic that interests you, but keep in mind that you have to examine your topic sociologically. Please explain your topic, telling me why this topic interests you and briefly outlining its sociological relevance. Secondly, what is/are your research question(s)? Research questions should logically flow out of your chosen topic and provide an important first step toward planning and carrying out a research project.

### *2. Annotated bibliography (15%)*

The purpose of an annotated bibliography is to summarize and evaluate sources of information. For this assignment, select 7 peer-reviewed academic journal articles relevant to your research topic and critically evaluate the information provided in each source.

### *3. Research design and sampling (20%)*

This section should include an extensive discussion of your proposed methodology, your sample and your sampling technique. You will also discuss ethical considerations pertaining to your proposed research.

### *4. Research proposal (30%)*

Here is where you put everything together into a final, polished proposal, which is the final product of your work throughout the semester. Your final research proposal will include an introduction, a literature review, and a discussion of your chosen methods of data generation and analysis, including your research instrument.

## Labs

Labs provide you with an opportunity to apply theoretical material covered in lecture and thus deepen your understanding of the subject matter. Furthermore, labs will focus on developing and refining key skills required for the successful completion of all course assignments. Attendance should be considered a requirement, not an option. Please bring a laptop or tablet whenever possible.

## Extra credit

To encourage you to develop and refine key academic skills, you can earn extra-credit for this course by completing *Writing Workshops* offered by the *Student Success Centre (SSC)*. A list of acceptable seminars has been posted on D2L. For each seminar you complete, you will receive **1** percentage point bonus on your final paper grade (so, for example, 79+1=80%; however your final paper grade cannot exceed 100%). You can take as many seminars as you wish; you will receive extra credit for up to **3** of them. In order to receive credit, documentation of completion will be required. It is your responsibility to select, book, attend, and provide proof of completion for those workshops. To receive extra-credit, the seminar must be completed in the fall 2018 semester, seminars must be identified as *Writing Workshops* by the SSC, and you must take 3 distinct seminars. Documentation of attendance must be provided by the last day of class (December 7). Please review the detailed instructions provided on D2L under CONTENT → SUCCESS SEMINARS. A link to the Students Success Centre is provided on D2L under CONTENT → CAMPUS RESOURCES.

## Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned and submitted to the registrar based on the following scale:

Grade	Percent range	Grade Point Value	Description
A+	96 – 100%	4.0	Outstanding performance
A	90 – 95.99%	4.0	Excellent-superior performance
A-	85 – 89.99%	3.7	
B+	80 – 84.99%	3.3	
B	75 – 79.99%	3.0	Good – clearly above average performance
B-	70 – 74.99%	2.7	
C+	67 – 69.99%	2.3	
C	63 – 66.99%	2.0	Satisfactory - basic understanding
C-	59 – 62.99%	1.7	
D+	55 – 58.99%	1.3	
D	50 – 54.99%	1.0	Minimal pass - marginal performance
F	<50%	0	Unsatisfactory performance

The grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and to conform to departmental norms.

### Emergency evacuations

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point by the Social Science - Food Court.

### Course Policies

#### Technology Use

Please use electronic devices is during lectures and labs for class-related purposes only. Laptop users will be asked to use only certain sections of the room to limit possible distraction of other students. The laptop section will be identified on the first day of class. Please make sure to mute your cell phones and refrain from using it during lecture/lab.

#### Recording of Lectures

Note that the audio or video recording of lectures and taking pictures of PowerPoint slides during the lecture are **NOT** permitted without explicit authorization. To do so without the instructor's authorization constitutes academic misconduct, according to the University of Calgary Calendar. For more information, see: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5-1.html>.

#### Sharing of Lecture Notes and Exam Questions

Note that publicly sharing lectures notes and exam questions on 3<sup>rd</sup> party sites such as OneClass, StudyBlue, Quizlet, etc. is **NOT** permitted. Any violations are subject to investigation under the UofC Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy: [http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/non-academic-misconduct-policy\\_1.pdf](http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/non-academic-misconduct-policy_1.pdf).

#### Lecture Slides

PowerPoint slides for each lecture will be posted on D2L in advance of the lecture during which they will be covered. PowerPoint slides posted on D2L will provide a lecture outline, but not complete lecture content. It is your responsibility to complete each slide during lecture. I suggest printing off the slides and bringing them to class to assist your note-taking. Effective note-taking strategies are provided on D2L.

#### E-mail

Please send emails only from your ucalgary account. Please put your course and section number in your email's subject line. It is courteous to include a proper salutation, your full name, student ID, and a proper closing in the body of your email. All emails will be answered within one business day. I tend to not check or answer emails on weekends. Please e-mail me for administrative purposes only, for example to set up an appointment. Questions about the course content, concerns about grades, or personal issues should be discussed in person during my office hours. If you have a specific course-related question, please check the course outline first.

### Attendance, Participation, and Classroom Etiquette

Regular attendance and reading the assigned material, an open mind, as well as your active and meaningful participation is required for this class to reach its fullest potential and to make it a rewarding experience for you and me. Lectures will build on, but not necessarily summarize the assigned reading. I expect you to have critically read the assigned texts, that you are an active participant in class discussions, and that your contributions are informed by the assigned reading material.

I expect you to be on time so that other students in the class are not interrupted by your late arrival. During lectures, please make sure not to distract your fellow students in any way. If you come late or need to leave class early, please sit somewhere you can settle down or leave without disrupting others. If you miss a class, you will miss material relevant to your success in this course and it is your responsibility to obtain notes from one of your class mates.

Please keep in mind that all participants in this class are diverse in terms of their positions in complex social hierarchies organized around social class, race, ethnicity, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientation, age, disabilities, etc. Material discussed in class will at times reflect, at times challenge or even contradict your own life experiences. In an effort to make this course welcoming and safe for all, please interact with all participants (fellow students, instructor, TA, and guest speakers) professionally and respectfully.

### Assignments and Deferrals

It is your responsibility to complete and submit all assignments outlined in this course outline. If at all possible you must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to complete an assessment as scheduled. All requests for a deferral of an exam or assignments due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while you have 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, misreading of the syllabus, and scheduling conflicts with other classes or employment responsibilities 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 an assignment, you must contact the instructor to discuss a new deadline and mode of paper submission. Assignments submitted via email or placed under my office door without prior consultation will **NOT** be accepted.

Assignments submitted late (as of the beginning of class on the dates indicated in the assignment schedule) without due cause are subject to a **5 percentage points deduction** (i.e. 80% instead of 85%) for **each day** past the due date. Assignments not submitted within 7 calendar days of the due date without approval for extension will automatically receive a grade of 0.

#### *Deferred Term Work Form:*

Please note that requests to defer the final assignment are dealt with through the Registrar's Office. Further information about deadlines, and where paperwork should be taken, is available on the form, which can be found at: [https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred\\_termwork15\\_0.pdf](https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred_termwork15_0.pdf)

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

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

1. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
2. Protection of Privacy: The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation does not allow students to retrieve any course material from public places. Anything that requires handing back will be returned directly during class or office hours. If students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are only available online.

### **Ethics Research**

Students are advised that any research involving 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, you must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing your plans with me, to determine if ethics approval is required.

### **Academic Misconduct**

Please refer to the website listed below for information on University of Calgary policies on Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct:

(<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html>).

### **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's main office. I will return written assignments individually during class, or during my office hours. If you are unable to pick up your assignment, you may provide me with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of your assignment.

### **Student Representation**

The 2018-19 Students' Union VP Academic is Jessica Revington ([suypaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto:suypaca@ucalgary.ca)). For more information, and to contact other elected officials with the Student's Union, please visit this link: <https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/>. You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/contact>

### **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. You can also contact Campus Security from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

### **Academic Accommodation**

The student accommodation policy can be found at:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy>.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

### **Reappraisal of Grades and Academic Appeals**

If you chose to contest a grade you received for an assignment, please refer to the UofC Calendar for more information (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>) and follow the procedures outlined therein. Please note that the re-evaluation of course work can lead to the grade being raised, lowered, or it might remain the same.

### **Thrive Priority Support Network**

Your academic success and personal well-being is important to me. Please feel free to contact me at any time you need academic or personal support and I will help you identify the appropriate resources. Please note that I am working closely with the Thrive Priority Support Network, which seeks to identify students who are facing academic challenges and provide appropriate support services early. This tool monitors this course's D2L gradebook for sudden changes in a student's academic performance and alerts academic development specialists, who will then reach out to the student to touch base. Engagement with the academic development specialist is entirely voluntary and all information is confidential. More information is provided here:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/advising/thrive>.

## Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
<b>1. How We Know What We Know</b>			
1	Sept 7	Course welcome	Neuman and Robson, Ch.1
2	Sept 10-14	Foundations of scientific inquiry	Neuman and Robson, Ch.2 Rogers Stanton (2014)
<b>2. Planning Social Research</b>			
3	Sept 17-21	Research ethics	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 3 Taylor (2008)
4	Sept 24-28	Research questions & Literature reviews	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 4 Greil et al. (2010)
5	Oct 1-5	Designing a study	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 1, 5
6	October 8 October 10-12	THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS Research settings and sampling	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 7 Abrams (2010)
7	Oct 15-19	Quantitative and qualitative measurement	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 6 Glasser and Smith III (2008)
<b>3. Methods of Data Generation</b>			
8	Oct 22-26	Nonreactive methods	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 10,14
9	Oct 29-Nov 2	Survey research	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 8 Wechsler et al. (1994)
10	Nov 5-9	Field research	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 13 Marvasti (2002)
11	Nov 12-16	MID-TERM BREAK – NO CLASS	
12	Nov 19-23	Qualitative interviewing	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 12 Sears et al. (2006)
<b>4. Data Analysis &amp; Representation</b>			
13	Nov 26-30	Quantitative data analysis	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 11
14	Dec 3-7	Qualitative data analysis	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 15

### *Assigned Journal Articles*

- Abrams, Laura S. 2010. "Sampling 'Hard to Reach' Populations in Qualitative Research: The Case of Incarcerated Youth ". *Qualitative Social Work* 9(4):536 - 50.
- Glasser, Howard M., and John P. Smith III. 2008. "On the Vague Meaning of 'Gender' in Education Research: The Problem, Its Sources, and Recommendations for Practice." *Educational Researcher* 37: 343-350.
- Greil, Arthur L., Kathleen Slauson-Blevins, and Julia McQuillan. 2010. "The Experience of Infertility: A Review of Recent Literature." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 32(1):140-62.
- Marvasti, Amir B. 2002. "Constructing the Service-Worthy Homeless through Narrative Editing." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 31(5):615-51.
- Rogers Stanton, Christine. 2014. "Crossing Methodological Borders: Decolonizing Community-Based Participatory Research." *Qualitative Inquiry* 20(5):573-83.
- Sears, Heather A., E. Sandra Byers, John J. Whelan and Marcelle Saint-Pierre. 2006. "'If It Hurts You, Then It Is Not a Joke'." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 21(9):1191-207.
- Taylor, Catherine G. 2008. "Counterproductive Effects of Parental Consent in Research Involving LGBTTIQ Youth: International Research Ethics and a Study of a Transgender and Two-Spirit Community in Canada." *Journal of LGBT Youth* 5(3):34-56.
- Wechsler, Henry, Andrea Davenport, George Dowdall, Barbara Moeykens, and Sonia Castillo. 1994. "Health and Behavioral Consequences of Binge Drinking in College: A National Survey of Students at 140 Campuses." *JAMA* 272(21):1672-77.

### Detailed Research Proposal Schedule

Date	Assignment
October 5	Topic proposal due
October 15	Annotated bibliography due for peer review
October 19	Annotated bibliography peer review due
October 24	Annotated bibliography due for grading
November 5	Research design and sampling due for peer review
November 9	Research design and sampling peer review due
November 19	Research design and sampling due for grading
December 7	Research proposal due

### Lab Schedule

Date	Topic
	<b>1. How We Know What We Know</b>
September 12	Welcome & Foundational skill development
September 19	Reading with a critical eye & Writing a peer review
September 26	Research ethics (CORE tutorial)
	<b>2. Planning Social Research</b>
October 3	Developing a research problems & Writing research questions
October 10	Writing annotated bibliographies and literature reviews
October 17	Quantitative and qualitative sampling
October 24	Quantitative and qualitative measurement
	<b>3. Methods of Data Generation</b>
October 31	Nonreactive methods
November 7	Survey research
November 14	MID-TERM BREAK – NO LAB
November 21	Field research & Qualitative interviewing
	<b>4. Data Analysis &amp; Representation</b>
November 28	Data analysis
December 5	Final research paper consultation