

COURSE OUTLINE

Soci313.01: Introductory Social Research Methods

University of Calgary – Department of Sociology

Winter 2016

Lecture: TR 9:30 – 10:45 AM, in SA 247 (Science A)

Labs: Lab B01 – T 3:30 – 5:20 PM, in EDC 276 (Kate)

Lab B02 – R 3:30 – 5:20 PM, in CHE 202 (Wyatt)

Instructor: Dr. Annette Tézli

Office: SS950

Phone: 403-220-6513 (during office hours only)

Email: atezli@ucalgary.ca

Office hours: T 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM,

W 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM,

R 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM; and by appointment

Teaching Assistants: Kate Hickey & Wyatt Anton

Course Description

Generally speaking, social research is research conducted by sociologists and other social investigators 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 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 often intricate choices and challenges researchers face throughout the research process.

This course will provide you the opportunity to:

- examine social phenomena in a scientific manner;
- critically assess the use of scientific methods as a means to understand the social world;
- critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of various research methods;
- develop your written skills through informal and formal writing assignments;
- develop a research proposal;
- be part of a class in which participation in discussions and group exercises is encouraged.

Course Format

I will begin each class with a short lecture to cover key concepts and other pertinent information that will complement but not summarize the assigned readings. The remainder of the class will be interactive. We will engage in group and class discussions, hands-on exercises and watch pertinent films. After each activity, we will reflect on insights gained through discussions and various formal and informal writing assignments.

Required Readings

Textbooks

(available through the UofC bookstore)

Edwards, Mark. 2015. *Writing in Sociology*. Thousand Oaks: Sage

Neuman, W.L. & K. Robson (2015). *Basics of social research: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (3rd Canadian ed.). Toronto: Pearson.

Please Note: The 3rd edition has been updated extensively. Please do not purchase earlier editions!

*You can rent an e-copy of the textbook here:

<http://www.coursesmart.com/basics-of-social-research-qualitative-and/w-lawrence-neuman-karen-robson/dp/9780205998081>

*A study guide and a variety of free, course-related resources and quizzes are available through MySearchLab, which you can access with the code provided in your book.

*One copy of the textbooks is available on reserve at the Taylor Family Digital Library.

Supplementary Texts

For some classes, I selected short supplementary readings. Please refer to the course schedule for which days supplementary readings have been assigned. Electronic copies of the readings listed below are available through Desire2Learn (D2L).

Book chapters

Bouma, G. D., Ling, R., & Wilkinson, L. (2012). *The research process* (2nd Canadian ed.). Don Mills, ON: Oxford.

Flick, U. (2011). *Introducing research methodology: A beginner's guide to doing a research project*. London: Sage.

Journal articles

Head, E. (2009). The ethics and implications of paying participants in qualitative research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(4), 335-344.

Lindsey, E.W. (1998). Service providers' perception of factors that help or hinder homeless families. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 79(2), 160-172.

Mason, R. (2003). Listening to lone mothers: Paid work, family life, and childcare in Canada. *Journal of Children and Poverty*, 9(1), 41-54.

McChesney, K.Y. (1995). A review of the empirical literature on contemporary urban homeless families. *Social Service Review*, 69(3), 429-460.

Phelan, J., Link, B. G., Moore, R. E., & Stueve, A. (1997). The stigma of homelessness: The impact of the label "Homeless" On attitudes toward poor persons. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 60(4), 323-337.

Schneider, B., Chamberlain, K., & Hodgetts, D. (2010). Representations of homelessness in four Canadian newspapers: Regulation, control, and social order. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 37(4), 147-172.

Taylor-Powell, E. (1998). *Questionnaire design: Asking questions with a purpose*. Madison: University of Wisconsin.

Methods of Evaluation

Assignment Schedule and Outline

Please note: All assignments are due at the **beginning** of class (9:30am sharp).

	Date due	% of final grade
10 Online reading quizzes	weekly	15
5 Tutorial assignments	see tutorial outline	15
Topic proposal	February 2	5
Annotated bibliography	February 23	10
Research design and sampling	March 22	25
Research Proposal	April 12	30

* Please note that there will be **NO** extra-credit or makeup options for this course.

10 Online reading quizzes (15%, 1.5% each)

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. The purpose of the reading quizzes is to encourage you to do your weekly assigned readings and thereby aid you with your class and exam preparation. Quizzes will focus on assigned textbook chapters and commence after the course drop deadline on January 23. Each quiz will be made available on D2L one week before the corresponding textbook chapters are covered in class. For example, the first quiz will be posted on January 19 at 10:45 AM, will cover the reading for the following week (January 26/28 - textbook chapters 3&4), and must be completed before class on January 26 at 9:30 AM. Which readings will be covered in each quiz will be clearly indicated on D2L. Some quizzes will cover 2 textbook chapters, in which case you will have 1 30-minute attempt to complete a 20-question quiz. Other quizzes will cover only 1 textbook chapter in which case you will have 1 15-minute attempt to complete the 10-question quiz. If you do not complete a quiz, you will receive an automatic grade of 0 for that week. More detailed information will be provided in class.

5 tutorial assignments (15%, 3% each)

Tutorials provide you with an opportunity to apply theoretical material covered in lecture in a practical manner and thus deepen your understanding of the subject matter. Attendance should be considered a requirement, not an option. Your grade for this component will be based on your participation in various exercises and assignments, which will be administered and graded by your Teaching Assistants. More information will be provided during your tutorials and on D2L.

Written Assignments – Preparing a Research Proposal (70%)

The remainder of your grade will be based on sequenced, written assignments which constitute different sections of your research proposal. In general, a research proposal explains why and how a research study will be conducted. It is useful for planning a study and for getting critical feedback before undertaking the study. 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 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 – 2 pages (5%)

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 – length will vary (10%)*

The purpose of an annotated bibliography is to summarize and evaluate sources of information. For this assignment, select 10 scientifically sound sources relevant to your research topic and critically evaluate the information provided in each source.

3. *Research Design and Sampling – no more than 6 pages (25%)*

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 – no more than 15 pages (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. Most of your final research proposal you will have already written in previous assignments, so do not feel intimidated by the length of the assignment. As long as you stay on top of your revisions throughout the semester, putting together the research proposal should be fairly straightforward.

Grading Scale

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

A+	96 – 100%	B+	80 – 84%	C+	67 – 69%	D+	55 – 58%
A	90 – 95%	B	75 – 79%	C	63 – 66%	D	50 – 54%
A-	85 – 89%	B-	70 – 74%	C-	59 – 62%	F	<50%

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

You are welcome to use your laptop/tablet in class. If you are using a laptop/tablet in class, I would kindly ask you to sit in the back of the class so that other students are not distracted. Please use your laptop/tablet for course-related purposes only (i.e. to access course presentations, take notes). Bear in mind that using your computer/tablet/phone to surf the net, shop, email, check Facebook, update your tweets, etc. is distracting to your classmates. It is also a waste of your tuition fees. Permission to use laptops/tablets may be withdrawn if they are not used appropriately. Please make sure to mute your cell phone and refrain from using it during class.

Attendance and Participation

Reading the assigned material, an open mind, and your active participation is required for this class to reach its fullest potential and to make it a rewarding experience for you and me. Furthermore, attendance is important in any class. If you miss a class, you will miss material relevant to your success in this course. To attend classes regularly is your responsibility. If you have to miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain the covered material from one of your class mates. If you need to leave class early, it is courteous to sit somewhere that will allow you to leave without disrupting others.

E-mails

Feel free to contact me over email at any time. Please put your course number and section in your email's subject line. Also, 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 violating customary email conventions will be ignored. All other emails will be answered within one business day. I do not answer emails over the weekend. Please take that into account when emailing me questions pertaining assignments or exams. If you have a course-related question, please check the course outline first. Questions that can be answered by consulting the course outline will not be answered. Also, please e-mail me for administrative purposes only, for example to set up an appointment. Please do not use e-mail as a replacement for an office visit, if there is something you want to discuss. Questions about the course content and readings, concerns about grades, or any other personal issues should be dealt with in person during my office hours.

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 take a test or pass in an assignment on time. All requests for a deferral of an exam or assignment 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. There are absolutely NO EXCEPTIONS.

If you have missed an exam for a legitimate reason, I 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 I schedule a "make up" test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department.

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 a final paper 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:

http://wcm.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred_termwork.pdf

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. Electronic submissions via email or D2L, papers placed under the instructor's door, or those submitted to the administrative assistants in the department's main office will **NOT** be accepted.
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.

Ethics Research

Please be 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 Faculty 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

Plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct are regarded as serious academic offences. Please be 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'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 2015-16 Students' Union VP Academic is Stephan Guscott; email: suypaca@ucalgary.ca. The Faculty of Arts has four SU representatives who may be contacted at any of the following email addresses: arts1@ucalgary.ca, arts2@ucalgary.ca, arts3@ucalgary.ca, and arts4@ucalgary.ca. You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds/role>

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

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf

Reappraisal of Grades and Academic Appeals

If you chose to challenge a grade you received for an assignment, please refer to the UofC Calendar (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>) for more information and follow the procedures outlined therein.

Course Schedule

Subject to change. Changes will be announced and discussed in class.

Date	Topic	Readings
1. How We Know What We Know		
January 12	Course welcome	
January 14	Foundations of scientific inquiry	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch.1
January 19	Theory and social research	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch.2 ✓ Edwards, Ch.3
2. Planning Social Research		
January 21	Selecting a research problem and formulating research questions	✓ Edwards, Ch. 2 ✓ Bouma, Ling & Wilkinson, Ch.3
January 26	Reviewing the existing literature	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch.4 ✓ Edwards, Ch.4&5
January 28	Ethical considerations	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch.3 ✓ Head (2009)
February 2	Selecting a research design Research proposal due	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch.5
February 4	Quantitative research design	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch.6 ✓ Edwards, Ch.6&7
February 9	Quantitative research design, cont.	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch.6
February 11	Qualitative research design	✓ Flick (2011), Ch.4
February 15-19	Reading Break, NO CLASS	
February 23	Selecting a sample Annotated bibliography due	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch.7
3. Methods of Data Generation		
February 25	Selecting a research method	✓ Flick (2011), Ch.6 ✓ Edwards, Ch.8
March 1	Nonreactive quantitative research	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch.10 ✓ Schneider, Chamberlain & Hodgetts (2010)
March 3	Nonreactive qualitative research	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch.14
March 8	Quantitative research: Experiments	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch.9 ✓ Phelan et al. (1997)
March 10	Quantitative research: Surveys	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch.8
March 15	Quantitative research: Survey design	✓ Taylor-Powell (1998)
March 17	Qualitative research: Fieldwork	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch.13 ✓ Edwards, Ch.11
March 22	Qualitative methods: Observations Research design and sampling due	
March 24	Qualitative methods: Interviews	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch.12
4. Data Analysis & Representation		
March 29	Quantitative data analysis	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch. 11 ✓ Edwards, Ch.9
March 31	Quantitative data analysis, cont.	✓ Lindsey (1998) ✓ Edwards, Ch.10
April 5	Qualitative data analysis	✓ Neuman & Robson, Ch.15
April 7	Qualitative data analysis, cont.	✓ Mason (2003)

April 12	Final class discussion Research Proposals due	
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Lab Requirements

Assignment Schedule

Please note: All assignments are due at the **beginning** of tutorial (3:30pm sharp).

Lab Assignments	Exercise date		Assignment due date	
	Tuesday	Thursday	Tuesday	Thursday
Assignment 1 – Literature reviews	Feb 2	Feb 4	Feb 9	Feb 11
Assignment 2 – Ethical considerations	Feb 9	Feb 11	Feb 23	Feb 25
Assignment 3 – Sample selection	March 1	March 3	March 8	March 10
Assignment 4 – Survey Design	March 15	March 17	March 22	March 24
Assignment 5 – Interviewing	March 29	March 31	April 5	April 7

Lab Schedule

Subject to change. Changes will be announced and discussed in class.

Date	Topic
	1. How We Know What We Know
January 12/14	Introduction
January 19/21	Principles of scientific inquiry
	2. Planning Social Research
January 26/28	Developing a topic proposal & research questions
February 2/4	Writing a literature review
February 9/11	Ethical Considerations
February 15-19	READING BREAK - NO TUTORIALS THIS WEEK
	3. Methods of Data Generation
February 23/25	Developing quantitative and qualitative research designs
March 1/3	Sample selection and sampling strategies
March 8/10	Conducting a content analysis
March 15/17	Developing and carrying out surveys
March 22/24	The intricacies of fieldwork
March 29/31	Planning qualitative interviews
	4. Data Analysis & Representation
April 5/7	Principles of quantitative data analysis