



SOCI 680 MA Major Research Project Seminar			
Pre/Co-Requisites	SOCI611, SOCI631, and SOCI613 or SOCI615		
Instructor:	Matt Patterson	Lecture Location:	SS921
Phone:	403-220-5037	Lecture Days/Time:	Wed. 1:00 – 3:45 PM
Email:	Matt.patterson@ucalgary.ca		
Office:	SS916	Office Hours:	Wed. 9:00 – 11:00 AM

Course Description

This major research project seminar is the final requirement for the course-based MA degree. In this course, students will engage in independent research projects that they propose themselves and, over the course of 16 weeks, complete a research paper that makes an original contribution to some area of sociological inquiry. The main goal of this seminar is to give students an opportunity to put all their sociological training into action. As well, students will be required to read and provide constructive feedback on their peers’ papers.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

- Learn to develop a central research question that has the potential to advance scholarly understandings of a particular issue, but which can also be realistically answered through a short research project.
- Design and carryout a research project that can answer a central research question, selecting appropriate background literature, method of empirical inquiry and analysis, and sources of data.
- Develop the ability to shift easily between abstract theoretical analysis and concrete empirical observation at every step of the research process, including in the development of proposal, the collection and analysis of data, and in the writing of the final paper.
- Develop a deeper understanding of how to read and produce scholarly writing.
- Demonstrate an ability to read the work of peers and offer constructive feedback which identifies the cores strengths of the work while also providing helpful suggestions for further development.
- Design and give a conference style oral presentation of original research findings.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Date	Topic	Notes
May 3	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review course syllabus Share proposed research 	Assignments due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research proposal
May 10	Refining research questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the assigned reading Discuss research questions 	Reading Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Luker, Kristen. 2008. "What is this a case of, anyway?" Pp. 51-75 in <i>Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences</i>. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
May 17	The logic of social inquiry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A discussion about matching your methods and data to your research question 	Reading Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single reading TBD
May 24	The craft of writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissecting the academic journal article 	Reading Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-2 example articles TBD
May 31	No Class	
June 7	No Class	Assignments due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preliminary research report
June 14	Workshopping	Discussion of student reports (Group A)
June 21	Workshopping	Discussion of student reports (Group B)
June 28	No Class	
July 5	No Class	Assignments due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research paper (first draft)
July 12	Workshopping	Discussion of student papers (Group B)
July 19	Workshopping	Discussion of student papers (Group A)
July 26	No Class	
Aug 2	No Class	
Aug 9	No Class	
Aug 16	Final Seminar	Assignments due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research paper (final draft)
Aug 23	MA Mini Conference	<i>Students will give 10-15 minute presentations of their research papers.</i>

Methods of Assessment and Grading Weights

The assignment structure for this course is designed to keep you on track to complete your major research paper by August 16th. At the beginning of each month, you are required to submit a writing assignment that builds toward your final paper. This process begins with a research proposal due on the first day of class, followed by a preliminary research report, and then a first draft of your final paper in July. The preliminary research report and first draft will then be the subject of in-class workshops (discussed below).

Due Date	Assignment Name	Grade Value
May 3	Research Proposal	5%
	Prior to the first seminar of the term, you should submit an initial research proposal that contains a general outline of your proposed research paper. This outline should identify the following: a paper template, a research question, a brief literature review (~5 sources) that provides context for the question, the data used to answer this question, and the methodology used to attain and analyze the data. (Length 1000-1500 words)	
June 7	Preliminary Research Report	15%
	By the sixth week of the seminar, you should submit a preliminary research report. The report should contain a relatively complete “front-end” of your final research paper, including an abstract, introduction, an extended literature review, and a methodology. In addition to the front-end sections, you should also include a brief research memo documenting the status of your data collection and any initial insights derived from this data. This may include initial statistical findings or early descriptions, typologies, and other observations made from qualitative data. (Length 2500-5000 words)	
July 5	Research Paper (First draft)	15%
	This is the first draft of the completed research paper with all the relevant sections, although it is considered a “rough” draft. Holes in the argument may still need to be filled in. Some data may still need to be analyzed. However, readers should have a clear understanding of the paper’s central argument and significance. (Length 5000-8000 words)	
August 16	Research Paper (Final draft)	35%
	The final draft of the research paper, as described in the previous section. (Length 7000-8000 words).	
August 23	Conference Presentation	20%
	The final week of the course will feature a mini-conference organized for students to present their final papers to the department. This conference is open to all. For this conference, you need to prepare a 15 minute presentation discussing your paper, which may include slides.	
N/A	Participation	10%
	As mentioned, a core component of this seminar are the series of workshops designed to help students develop and strengthen their research papers. For these workshops to be effective, all students are expected to read each other’s assignments and come to class prepared with feedback.	

Workshops

Workshops are designed to help students develop and strengthen their research papers throughout the Spring and Summer terms. They are also an opportunity for the rest of the class to develop skills in critical reading and constructive feedback.

To minimize the reading load of students, the class will be separated into two groups (A and B). Following the due dates for the preliminary research report and the first draft of the research paper, two seminar sessions will be devoted to workshopping. In one of these sessions the students in Group A will discuss papers by students in Group B. In the second session, these roles will be reversed.

In reading each other's papers, you should consider the following six guidelines based on those in *Guidelines for Gender & Society Reviewers* (2011)¹:

- First, read the paper;
- Begin by identifying the paper's aims, as you see them (this may differ from the author's statement), clearly stating what the paper argues, and what its contribution is meant to be... In addition, note the strengths of the paper (even if you do not think the paper as a whole is strong);
- Next, present the comments you see as most central to an effective revision of the paper. As Ferree (2004) notes, the core of the review should identify whether the research question contributes to larger theory, whether the analysis actually answers the research question, and whether the conclusions flow from the analyses. Identifying weaknesses can help the author craft a stronger paper, which sometimes means reframing the piece theoretically, refocusing the question, or reinterpreting the analysis;
- Here, you want to provide clear advice about how the author might address the problems you have identified or the questions you have raised. For example, if you feel the author is missing crucial references that would help them build a better argument, provide those references; if you think the author needs to provide more information about methods, explain what is missing; if you have problems with the analyses or feel that they are not persuasive enough, explain how the analyses could become more persuasive. Do not be overly specific and nitpicky, rewrite the paper for the author, or flood the author with many pages of comments;
- End with the small points that will not dramatically change the paper's form or argument, such as formatting of tables or figures, excessive use of jargon, writing errors, or other minor changes. Reviewers need not provide line-by-line editing. The journal will help with copy-editing the manuscript – the reviewer's time and attention is better spent on ensuring that the argument is sound;
- After writing the review, go back through it and edit out any language that seems emotionally laden. For example, rather than saying "This paper is terrible," you might note, "This paper has weaknesses in both its theoretical framework and its empirical analyses," or even "While focused around a very interesting case, this paper currently has weaknesses in both its theoretical framework and its empirical analyses." Using neutral or supportive language will make the author much more likely to heed your comments. You may indeed feel that the paper

¹ As republished in *Sociological Inquiry Reviewer Guidelines*, pages 2-3, accessed at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/pb-assets/assets/1475682x/Sociological%20Inquiry%20Reviewer%20Guidelines-1546527243137.pdf>

is terrible, and that the author has wasted your time and energy. But that frustration shouldn't spill into your review. The goal is to improve the paper. Very occasionally, the reviewer may be so at odds with a paper that it is difficult to write a fair review. In this case, be honest with the editor and author about the intellectual disagreement that affects your reading of the paper;

This last point cannot be emphasized enough! While we will be critiquing the papers, these critiques are intended to help the author improve the paper. It is not helpful if the author feels personally attacked or that their paper is hopelessly flawed. Being supportive does not necessarily mean watering down criticisms with potentially patronizing compliments. Instead, it means pairing criticisms with realistic suggestions for improvements. Authors should leave a workshop feeling that, while they have some work ahead of them, they have a solid idea of how to proceed.

External Readers

In order to pass the course, the final paper must be read and approved both by (1) the instructor (Matt Patterson) and (2) an external reader who is a faculty member from within the sociology department. During the term, it is encouraged (but not required) that you seek out the advice of a faculty member within the department who has expertise on the subject matter of your research paper. This faculty member can potentially serve as an external reader and you can suggest them to the course instructor. If you do not have an external reader in mind, the course instructor will find one for you.

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 showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter
A-	85 – 89.99%	3.7	Very good performance
B+	80 – 84.99%	3.3	Good performance
B	75 – 79.99%	3.0	Satisfactory performance
B-	70 – 74.99%	2.7	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies
C+	67 – 69.99%	2.3	All grades of "C+" or lower are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.

Passing Grades

To pass this course, the final research paper must be completed and approved by both the course instructor and the external reader. Failure to complete the final paper will result in a course grade of F no matter what grades you received on other assignments.

Missed or Late Coursework

Given the strict timeframe of the course, extensions cannot and will not be granted for assignments. You will need to submit whatever you have accomplished by the deadline.

Libraries & Cultural Resources

To contact your librarian or find out about the resources and services available to sociology students go to the Sociology Library guide: <https://library.ucalgary.ca/guides/sociology>
To access the main Library website, go to: <https://library.ucalgary.ca>

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Absence From a Mid-term Examination

Students who are absent from a scheduled term test or quiz for legitimate reasons are responsible for contacting the instructor via email within 48 hours of the missed test to discuss alternative arrangements. A copy of that email may be requested as proof of the attempt to contact the instructor.

Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term requires a form to be filled out by the student and submitted, along with any supporting documentation, to the instructor. The form is available at: https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/14/P22_deferral-of-term-work_lapseGrade.pdf

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the instructor will email the form to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (ascarts@ucalgary.ca) for approval by the Associate Dean.

Deferral of a Final Examination

Deferral of a final examination can be granted for reasons of illness, domestic affliction, and unforeseen circumstances, as well as to those with three (3) final exams scheduled within a 24-hour period. Deferred final exams will not be granted to those who sit the exam, who have made travel arrangements that conflict with their exam, or who have misread the examination timetable. The decision to allow a deferred final exam rests not with the instructor but with Enrolment Services. Instructors should, however, be notified if you will be absent during the examination. The Application for Deferred Final Exam, deadlines, requirements and submission instructions can be found on the Enrolment Services website at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>.

Reappraisal of Grades:

For Reappraisal of Graded Term Work, see Calendar I.2
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html>

For Reappraisal of Final Grade, see Calendar I.3
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-3.html>

Academic Misconduct:

Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior that compromises proper assessment of students' academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance;

failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

For information on the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, Procedure and Academic Integrity, please visit: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-3.html>

Plagiarism And Other Forms Of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct in any form (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) is a serious academic offence that can lead to disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the University. Students are expected to be familiar with the standards surrounding academic honesty; these can be found in the University of Calgary calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>. Such offences will be taken seriously and reported immediately, as required by Faculty of Arts policy.

Recording of Lectures:

Recording of lectures is prohibited, except for audio recordings authorized as an accommodation by SAS or an audio recording for individual private study and only with the written permission of the instructor. Any unauthorized electronic or mechanical recording of lectures, their transcription, copying, or distribution, constitutes academic misconduct. See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>.

Academic Accommodations:

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. 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 <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

Research Ethics

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 Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subject research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Instructor Intellectual Property

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act:

Personal information is collected in accordance with FOIP. Assignments can only be returned to the student and will be accessible only to authorized faculty and staff. For more information, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/access-information-privacy>

Copyright Legislation:

See the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

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Evacuation Assembly Points

In the event of an emergency evacuation from class, students are required to gather in designated assembly points. Please check the list found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/risk/emergency-management/evac-drills-assembly-points/assembly-points> and note the assembly point nearest to your classroom.

Important Dates:

Please check: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html>.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The Arts Students' Centre is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS102, call them at 403-220-3580, or email them at artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>, which has detailed information on common academic concerns, including program planning and advice.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 403-210-ROCK [7625] or visit them in the MacKimmie Tower.

Important Contact Information

Campus Security and Safewalk (24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year)
Phone: 403-220-5333

Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Students' Union Representatives
Phone: 403-220-6551
Email: arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca,
arts4@su.ucalgary.ca
Students' Union URL: www.su.ucalgary.ca

Graduate Students' Association
Phone: 403-220-5997
Email: askgsa@ucalgary.ca
URL: www.ucalgary.ca/gsa

Student Ombudsman
Phone: 403-220-6420
Email: ombuds@ucalgary.ca

Campus Mental Health Resources

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that student mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through the following resources:

SU Wellness Centre: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>

Student Wellness Services:
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services>

Campus Mental Health Strategy website: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>.