

SOCIOLOGY 77.229 RESEARCH METHODS SECTION L01 213 TIER

> TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE 2001-2002

> INSTRUCTOR K.W. TAYLOR

>

>

> Office: 369 University College Phone 474-8877

> Office Hours: by appointment Email: wtaylor@cc.umanitoba.ca

>

> This document along with course policies and details on grade

> calculations and assignments can be found on UM webpage: > Go

> to Information for current students > WebCT > Course list >

> Arts > Page 6 > 077.229 Sociology Research Methods.

>

>

> REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

> Taylor, K.W. Social Science Research: Theory and Practice.

> Toronto: Nelson

> Taylor, K.W. Required Readings for 77.229 L01: Social science

> research reports

>

> Optional Textbook

- > Sall and Lehman. JMP Start Statistics. Boston: Duxbury Press.
- > NOTE: This volume comes with a disk version of the JMP software
- > that will be used in this class for data analysis. Students who
- > want to do their data analysis at home should consider purchasing
- > the book/software package. The book will be helpful but not
- > essential for the course. Only a small subset of the routines in
- > the software will be used in the course, and instruction and
- > demonstration will be provided in the classroom.

>

> COURSEWORK

- > In the fall term, we study research design by looking at a
- > variety of example projects and research reports and doing design
- > exercises. The class will design and complete a simple survey
- > study and a trend study.

- > In the winter term, students will design and complete
- > individual projects using existing public use data sets.

>

> First term

- > Exams (Oct 2, Nov 1) 20%
- > JMP computer assignments #5, #12 10%
- > Class survey assignments (dates to be announced) 10%

> **Second term**

> Project design (Jan 31) and completion (Feb 28) 30%

> Follow-up assignments (March 28) 12%

> Poster presentation (April 2, 4) 8%

> Both Terms: class participation (Every meeting) 10%

>

> Final grades: Senate policy #1307 requires "a post-examination

> review of final grades in multisectioned courses that will ensure

> an equitable correspondence between grades and level of

> performance in all sections." Accordingly, the final grade

> distribution in this course may be raised or lowered to achieve

> this equity and, therefore, your final grade may be changed.

>

>

> **COURSE OVERVIEW**

>

> This course is designed to teach problem solving, research,

> and communication skills in social science methods. The course

> intends to communicate the excitement of social investigation,

> the satisfactions of demonstrating the accuracy/inaccuracy of

> hypotheses and the fascination of contributing to the solution of

- > social problems through the application of research findings.
- > Sociology and social science are viewed as means of
- > protecting, promoting and expanding human rights through the
- > critical examination and reform of existing social organization
- > and innovation of institutions and other organizational forms.
- > The instructor believes that effective learning occurs in a
- > context where teachers and learners respect each other, where
- > individual students control the way they learn and demonstrate
- > mastery of skills, and where both teachers and learners are
- > committed to doing their best.
- > It is assumed that students who enroll in this course are
- > committed to becoming the best social investigators and social
- > critics they can become. Student's active involvement in the
- > form of questions, a willingness to debate issues, humour,
- > creativity, and suggestions for improvement is welcome and
- > necessary for the course to be an effective learning experience.
- > Both students and teachers in classrooms are involved in a
- > process of increasing their ability to exercise good judgment
- > through a process of trial and error--making mistakes, debating
- > facts and judgments, using constructive criticism and correcting
- > errors.

- > To accomplish the above, **SKILL MASTERY GRADING** will be
- > followed for most assignments and exams. This means that
- > assignments can be redone and regraded until the grade satisfies
- > the student. Second and third assignments will be accepted for
- > regrading only when (a) the original assignment is turned in by
- > the due date and (b) all earlier attempts are also turned in.
- > For the JMPIN and some other assignments there may be a further
- > requirement that new data sets and/or new problems be
- > undertaken: demonstrating skills mastery means more than the
- > ability to correct mistakes and may mean demonstrating the
- > ability to solve different versions of a similar problem.
- > However where re-dos involve only corrections, students are
- > expected not only to correct the errors and shortcomings of the
- > first attempts, but to make all changes and integrate them into
- > the entire assignment. i.e. each attempt is a try at completing
- > the assignment in a thoroughgoing way, not merely correcting the
- > most glaring errors, and ignoring the relationships of the error
- > to remainder of the assignment.
- > Note that **SKILLS MASTERY GRADING** may consume a considerable
- > amount of instructor's and TA's time so some patience may be
- > required.

>

> **COURSE CALENDAR**

>

> Each of the lettered topics below should take about 1 week

> to complete. Where more or less time is required, it will be

> announced in class.

>

> **FALL TERM**

> **A. Social research overview: interests, information, applications**

> Reading social science textbooks and research reports

> RR: 1, 10, 12. SSR: Chapter 1, Chapter 2 Sections 2.1-2.5

> **B. Social research design overview: patterns and recognition**

> RR: 3, 6, 13, 18

> Errors and minimizing them: replication and triangulation

> SSR: Ch 5.1-5.6

> **C. Communicating About Research: Goals (testing theory and**

> hypotheses) and results (findings)

> RR: Articles already assigned; SSR Ch. 1, 2.6-7, 3, 4,

> **D. Risks to participants and researchers: What risks? How avoid**

> them? RR 4, Research Services Ethical materials on UM

> webpage. Exam: October 2

- >
- > E. Practical applications of research: of what, for what, by
- > whom? RR: 2, 8, 14 SSR: Ch 2.1-2.5 (again)
- > F. Research design again: pattern recognition in design phases
- > Sample, measurements, variation, data analysis in use.
- > RR: Articles already assigned + 15
- > SSR: Ch 5.7-5.10, 6
- > G. Minimizing error: replication and triangulation; sample bias
- > and measurement error
- > RR: Articles already assigned SSR: Chapter 7, 8
- > H. Practical project design: select problem, choose hypotheses,
- > visualize evidence, then work backwards. SSR 5.7-5.10 again
- > Exam: November 1
- >
- > I. Designing surveys: sampling and sample assessment, measurement
- > (questionnaire) and error assessment, variation, data analysis.
- > RR: 15, 16.
- > The class will design and carry out a simple survey,
- > replicating and/or triangulating an existing survey.
- >
- > J. Designing trend studies: sample design, measurement design,

- > variation design, data analysis design
- > RR: 9, 11. The class will design and carry out a simple
- > trend study.
- >
- > K. Doing data analysis and describing research findings
- > SSR Chapter 9. See the course JMP manual for assignment
- > instructions.
- > This will be continued in the winter term
- >
- > WINTER TERM
- > January: Individual research projects: students will select a
- > topic, and design a study. Due date: Jan 31. A list of
- > possible projects for which data exists will be provided by
- > the instructor.
- >
- > February: Complete the project and write a research report. Due
- > date Feb 28. See the course webpage > course outline >
- > Report Assignment for complete instructions
- >
- > March: Complete project follow-up assignments (Due date Mar 28)
- > and do a poster presentation of the findings (April 2, 4).

- > See the course webpage > course outline > Follow-up
- > Assignments for complete instructions. Separate short
- > follow-up assignments are required for dealing with
- > applications of the project findings, statistical
- > significance of the results and research funding and
- > costing.
- >
- > Class meetings in the winter term will be concerned with the
- > details of the design and execution of the project. Students are
- > expected to share their problems and solutions with the class for
- > each step in the design and execution process.
- >
- >
- > Student Responsibility and Academic Dishonesty
- > If a test is missed for a legitimate medical reason the
- > student must get in touch with the professor, present their
- > medical certificate, and arrange for a make-up test. Under
- > normal circumstances, the student is required to inform the
- > professor of their request for a make-up test within one week of
- > the original test date. Failure to request a make-up test within
- > the expected time frame may result in ineligibility for a make-up

- > test and a mark of zero for that test.
- >
- > Cheating is a serious offense with grave consequences.
- > Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy
- > on 'plagiarism and cheating' and 'examination impersonation'
- > found in the University of Manitoba General Calendar.
- >
- > Disruption due to excessive talking or early departures from
- > the classroom are especially distracting to large classes.
- > Please be considerate and respectful of the needs and rights of
- > others in the class. Students should be aware that persistent
- > disruption may result in disbarment from the course. Any student
- > who has a legitimate reasons for leaving class early should
- > inform the instructor at the beginning of the class.
- >
- > The following numerical scores are used for averaging letter
- > grades: A+=87, A=82, B+=77, B=72, C+=67, C=62, D=55. Grades are
- > averaged upward if the score is less than .5 away from the next
- > category. For example, a score of 79.50 would be graded as B+; a
- > score of 79.51 would be graded as A.
- > An A+ grade in the context of SKILLS MASTERY GRADING means

- > an assignment completed without any conceptual, technical,
- > computational, writing or presentation errors. Improvements will
- > result in improved grades, but A+s will be assigned when you 'get
- > everything right'.