

University of Manitoba
Department of Sociology
SOC 2290 A01
RESEARCH METHODS
Fall/Winter 2008-09 (6 Credit Hours)

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM, or by appointment
Classroom: Room 229, St. Paul's College
Timeslot: M, W, F 10:30 -11:20 AM

Required Textbook:

Bryman, Alan, & Teevan, James J. (2005). *Social Research Methods (Canadian Edition)*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

There is a companion website for the textbook. It contains a number of useful features to help facilitate your learning in the course including summaries of the text materials, useful examples and links to research methods websites. It is located at www.oup.com/ca/he/companion/brymanteevan

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course entails an introduction to the philosophy and practice of social science research, and will cover key topics such as the assumptions of scientific inquiry, the conceptualization of research problems, qualitative and quantitative approaches, basic statistical analysis, and computer-assisted statistical analysis with SPSS. The main objective of the course is to provide students with a general understanding of the principles of social scientific research methods such that they are better prepared to: a) undertake their own research projects, and/or b) be critical consumers of published research.

The first half of the course (Fall term) will cover a number of issues related to the research process such as the nature of scientific knowledge, the place of theory and causality, and some basic methodological approaches to asking and addressing research questions. The second half of the course (Winter term) will focus largely on basic statistical methods and techniques for data analysis, with the basic goal of increasing students' statistical literacy.

While this course does not require a strong mathematics background, students will need to use a calculator to work through some basic problems and statistical techniques. As most students will be new to the statistical techniques relevant to this course, regular lecture and lab attendance is essential. Course material is presented in a logical sequence with new topics and concepts building upon previous ones; therefore, missing lectures and labs is likely to create cumulative difficulties with mastery of this material, especially in the later stages of the course.

Course Reading Requirements:

Test 1: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 8, 14

Test 2: Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 16

Note: The reading requirements for the tests in the *second term* will be provided to you early in the new year. The second half of this course is primarily concerned with basic methods and techniques for data analysis and interpretation, which are not extensively discussed in the course textbook. Consequently, class attendance is crucial.

Lab Component:

There is a lab component to this course, which comprises 25 percent of your final grade in the course. You should all have registered for a lab section. Please note the 2 following critical points:

- 1) ***You must achieve a passing grade (i.e. 60 percent) in the lab component to pass the course.*** In other words, passing the lab is required, independent of how you do in the other course components. Students who fail the lab will also fail the course and therefore be required to retake the entire course (not just the lab component) in order to achieve credit in SOC2290.
- 2) ***Students are not permitted to miss more than two labs per term.*** Students may miss up to two labs per term for undocumented reasons. Where appropriate documentation is provided, the missed lab will not count as an absence. Examples of appropriate documentation include: for an illness, the original signed note from a physician specifying the dates of the illness; or for a bereavement, the death certificate or an obituary. Students missing more than two labs without appropriate documentation during a single term ***will fail the course.*** Students wishing to appeal their removal from the lab must make an appointment with the course coordinator (Dr. Lori Wilkinson, Undergraduate Director) to make your case for reinstatement. To be considered for an appeal, students are required to provide an explanation for the reasons for the third absence within one week of the third missed lab.

COURSE EVALUATION

Unit Tests: There will be 4 unit tests. Please note that the tests will cover the reading, lecture, and application materials. Test questions will be drawn from assigned readings and class lectures, and each test will occupy two class periods and will include both multiple choice and written responses. The tentative test dates and contribution toward your final grade are as follows:

	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Test 1	October 20 & 22	18.75%
Test 2	December 1 & 3	18.75%
Test 3	February 25 & 27	18.75%
Test 4	April 6 & 8	18.75%
Lab Tests	(dates below)	25.00%

Note: During tests, only a basic, non-programmable calculator is permitted; no other electronic devices are allowed.

Missed Unit Tests: Any student who misses a test or exam is required to provide written documentation of a legitimate reason, such as serious illness or bereavement. *This requirement will be strictly enforced.* No student will be allowed to write a make-up test without appropriate written documentation. Any student who does not inform me (by phone/voice mail) of their unavoidable absence *prior* to test time *will not* be allowed to write a make-up test. This rule will also be strictly enforced. There will only be one make-up test scheduled per unit test (date and time TBA). Note: make-up tests will differ from the tests administered in class.

Lab Tests: The dates for the lab tests are as follows:

	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Lab Test # 1:	Week of October 20-24 , 2008*	5.5%
Lab Test # 2:	TBA (during December Exam Period)	6.5%
Lab Test # 3:	Week of February 23-27 , 2009*	6.5%
Lab Test # 4:	TBA (during April Exam Period)	6.5%

* Students will write during their normally scheduled lab time that week. You must write on the day/time for which you are registered. Make-up tests for documented reasons (e.g. illness, bereavement) must be arranged with the Lab Instructor within two days of the missed test. Make-up tests may differ in content and format from the tests given to the rest of the students. Further details will be provided in your Lab Manual. Please review the lab attendance policy (point 2 above), since it has serious consequences.

Grade Key:

Total Percentage	Letter Grade
90+	A+
80-89	A
75-79	B+
70-74	B
65-69	C+
60-64	C
50-59	D
0-49	F

Note: University of Manitoba Senate Policy #1307 requires "a post-examination review of final grades in multi-sectioned 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.

Grades will be posted exclusively on the course's Angel/WebCT companion site at: <https://webct.cc.umanitoba.ca>. Students must consult this website to access their grades. For technical questions regarding logging on to Angel/WebCT or gaining a password, please contact IST at 101 Dafoe Tunnel, 474-8600 or support@cc.umanitoba.ca.

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION

Class will not be held on the following dates:

October 13 – Thanksgiving Day; February 16, 18 & 20 – Mid term break

Voluntary Withdrawal Deadline Date:

March 19, 2009

Academic Integrity:

Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on 'Personation at Examinations' (Section 4.2.8 p. 25) and 'Plagiarism and Cheating' (Section 7.1 p. 26) found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Conduct in Class:

Excessive talking, late arrivals, or early departures are impolite and distracting for both the instructor and classmates. Please be considerate and respectful of the needs and rights of others in the class. Students are required to silence all electronic devices (i.e. cell phones, pagers, PDAs, etc.). Persistent disruption will result in disbarment from the course. Any student who has a legitimate reason for leaving the class early should inform the instructor at the beginning of class.

Accommodations:

Special Needs: Special needs services are provided through Disability Services (474-6213). Students with special needs (who require aids, other supports, or require extra time to write a test) should introduce themselves to the instructor at the beginning of the term in order to arrange suitable testing times.

Holy Days: The university recognizes the right of all students to observe recognized holidays of their faith, which fall within the academic year. With instructor discretion, necessary arrangements can be made to ensure studies are not jeopardized. The instructor should be notified of a student's intended absence in advance. At least three weeks notice of absence should normally be given where special arrangements are sought.

Fall Term Thematic Outline

Below is a list of dates, themes and suggested readings for the fall term. A list for the winter term will be distributed in the new year.

September

4: Introduction and Orientation

8, 10 & 12:

Lecture Theme: Philosophy of Science

Readings: Chapter 1

15, 17 & 19:

Lecture Theme: Place and Importance of Theory

Readings:

22, 24 & 26:

Lecture Theme: Accounting for Observed Differences

Readings: Chapters 8 & 14

Sept. 29 & Oct. 1 & 3

Lecture Theme: Causal Thinking

Readings:

October

6, 8 & 10:

Lecture Theme: Measurement Issues

Readings: Chapter 3

13, 15 & 17:

Lecture Theme: Quantitative Research Designs

Readings: Chapter 2

20 & 22: *Unit Test 1*

27, 29 & 31:

Lecture Theme: Survey Research

Readings: Chapters 4, 5, 10

November

3, 5 & 7:

Lecture Theme: Sampling

Readings: Chapter 11

10, 12 & 14:

Note: No class November 11, Remembrance Day

Lecture Theme: Field Research

Readings: Chapter 6

17, 19 & 21:

Lecture Theme: Unobtrusive Techniques

Readings: Chapters 7, 9, 16

24 & 26:

Lecture Theme: Ethical Issues

Readings:

Nov. 28: Review

Dec. 1 & 2: Unit Test 2