

The University of Manitoba

Department of Sociology

SOC 2290 Introduction to Research Methods, Summer 2012

7:00-9:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays

Section A01, CRN 30120

Room 202 Isbister

Instructor: Karen Kampen

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Credit hours: 6

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Office Hours: Before and after class

\* Please consider my door open any time. I am normally in the office every day.

### Required Materials

Babbie, Earl and Lucia Benaquisto (2010). *Fundamentals of Social Research* (2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian edition). Scarborough: Thomson/Nelson.

### Course Objectives and Description

"Supposing is good, but finding out is better." - Mark Twain

Has the number of children gunned down doubled every year since 1950? Is Canada's child poverty rate only 10%, or is it closer to 17%? Who decides what sorts of people meet the definition of "mentally ill"? How can we know the truth about anything? This course takes an approach that not only provides you with the fundamentals of social research and statistics, but also aims to help you critically sort through the masses of information that all of us are bombarded with daily.

The above quotation has two implications. First, sociology is often assumed to be based upon "common sense". However, this is far from the truth, and social research has often dispelled commonly held myths about our world. Second, studying research methods is ideally a process of "learning by doing", versus passively absorbing information. With these ideas in mind, the central aim of this course is to help students learn what social research methods are and how to apply them, both as consumers of research as well as potential producers of research.

While the prospect of taking Research Methods tends to be daunting to many students, if approached in a systematic and lively manner, it can be enjoyable. I had a lot of fun putting this course together, and I hope that you will enjoy it.

## Class Format (tentative)

- A thematic lecture based upon on the relevant material, or occasional films
- Statistical exercises are normally done during class in the second term
- Some class time will be set aside for assistance with lab assignments
- We will spend the first term focusing on research design and general modes of observation, while in the second term we will delve into statistics.

## Evaluation

1) Unit tests (18.75% per test x 4 tests = 75%). Each test will be based upon textbook readings as well as in-class material. Tests are not strictly cumulative, but you will need to remember earlier concepts in order to comprehend later ones. Test format may include multiple choice and short-answer questions. Please note that during tests, only a basic, non-programmable calculator is permitted. I have split the first two tests into two dates, due to the relatively larger volume of readings involved.

Test #1 (Chapters 1-6): **May 15th (on readings) & 17th (on lectures)**

Test #2 (Chapters 8,9,10,11,12,14): **June 12th (readings) & 14th (lectures)**

Test #3 (Chapter 15, pp. 411-445): **July 10th (readings and lectures)**

Test #4 (Chapter 16 pp. 445-463, & Ch. 7): **6-9 p.m., August 9th (readings and lectures)\***

\* Test # 4 is held during the Exam Period but it is only a term test (and not a cumulative "final exam" per se)

2) Lab Component (25%). This course has a mandatory lab component. Evaluation will be based upon two assignments. Each assignment is worth 12.5% of your final grade. The policy for all sections of SOC 2290 dictates that **students must receive a passing grade of 50% or higher in the lab component in order to pass this course**. Your grade in the lab is independent of your grade in the remaining course component. Students who fail the lab will fail this course and will be required to retake the entire course (not just the lab component) in order to obtain credit for SOC 2290.

Lab Assignment #1 (12.5% of your course grade): Due **June 19, 2012**

- This assignment will involve data collection and applying associated methodological techniques and principles from the classroom/textbook.

Lab Assignment #2 (12.5% of your course grade): Due **August 7, 2012**

- This assignment will involve secondary data analysis using appropriate statistical techniques learned in class, via the SPSS statistical package.

## Policy on Missed Tests or Late Assignments

Students who miss a test for documented medical or compassionate reasons will have the option of answering a series of essay questions in lieu thereof. To be eligible, students must contact me in writing within 24 hours of the missed test. Please note that things like automobile problems and particularly **vacations will not be considered reasonable justifications for absences of any sort**, so please do not bother asking. With the exception of religious reasons (see below), all other missed tests will result in a mark of zero.

Late assignments are accepted, but in fairness to fellow classmates, they are subject to a 10% (i.e. 2.5% of course mark) per day penalty. Students who request extensions for documented medical or compassionate reasons must submit to me their current assignment draft to me along with a written request for an extension, and may be required to apply to the Faculty of Arts for an Incomplete in the course.

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 and at least three weeks' notice of absence should normally be given where special arrangements are sought.

### Grade Distribution

90-100%	A+
80-89%	A
75-79%	B+
70-74%	B
65-69%	C+
60-64%	C
50-59%	D
<50%	F

Please note that the *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.

## Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on "**Personation at Examinations**" (Section 5.2.9) and "**Plagiarism and Cheating**" (Section 8.1) found online under UManitoba Catalog 2011-2012>General Academic Regulations>Section 8. Academic Integrity. The Faculty of Arts also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism. While consulting one another about your assignments is acceptable, please bear in mind that you must submit original work. On the other hand, students are strongly encouraged to study together for tests.

Disruptions due to excessive talking or early departures from the classroom are especially distracting to large classes, including ringing/talking on cell phones. 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 reason for leaving class early should inform the instructor at the start of class.

## Companion Website

I will try to make practice quiz questions and skeleton lecture notes available on Angel (<http://angel.cc.umanitoba.ca>). All marks/final grades will be posted there.

## Additional Considerations

- Class attendance is considered mandatory in order to receive credit
- Students are expected to read the relevant chapter before class, and to participate in any in-class exercises. Because of the nature of this material, attending every class and reading the textbook is crucial.
- If using email, please use the address provided on page 1 of this course outline. **Please refrain from using Angel for course email, as I have experienced problems sending and receiving messages through it.**
- Students with special learning needs (who for legitimate reasons require extra time to write a test, or who require aids or other supports) should identify themselves to the instructor at the beginning of the term in order to arrange suitable accommodation.

## TENATIVE SCHEDULE

Note: The standard themes used in all sections of SOC 2290 are listed on the following calendar, and are accompanied by the relevant chapter reading(s).

<b>May 2012</b>				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1 Science as a Way of Knowing (Ch. 1)	2	3 Doing Social Research (Ch. 2)	4
7	8 Research Design and Causation (Ch. 4)	9	10 Principles in Social Science Research (Ch. 5)	11
14	15 <b>Test #1 (on readings)</b> ; Indexes, Scales, and Typologies (Ch. 6); Ethics (Ch. 3)	16	17 <b>Test #1 (on Lectures)</b>	18
21	22 Unobtrusive Research (Ch. 10) and Begin Assignment #1	23	24 Assignment #1: Data Collection Day	25
28	29 Assignment #1: SPSS Lab Day (held in 202 Isbister)	30	31 Experimental Research (Ch. 8)	
<b>June 2012</b>				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
4	5 Survey Research (Ch. 9)	6	7 Continued, Survey Research (Ch. 9)	8
11	12 <b>Test #2 (on readings)</b> ; Qualitative Research (Ch. 11, 12, 14)	13	14 <b>Test #2 (on lectures)</b>	15
18	19 Introduction to Statistics (Ch. 15, pp. 415-425) <b>Assignment #1 DUE</b>	20	21 Measures of Central Tendency and Dispersion (Ch. 15, pp. 415-425)	22
25	26 Begin Assignment #2 in SPSS Lab (202 Isbister)	27	28 The Normal Curve and z-scores (no readings)	29

July 2012				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	3 Bivariate relationships; Lambda and Gamma (Ch. 16, pp. 447-452)		5 Correlation and Regression (Ch. 16, pp. 452-457)	
	10 <b>Test #3 (on readings and lectures)</b>		12 Work on Assignment #2 in SPSS Lab (202 Isbister)	13 <b>Voluntary Withdrawal Deadline</b>
	17 Multivariate relationships: The Elaboration Model (Ch. 16, pp. 434-447)		19 Introduction to Inference: Sampling and probability (Ch. 7)	
	24 Sampling and probability (continued)		26 No Classes	
July/August 2012				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	31 Work on Assignment #2 in SPSS Lab (202 Isbister)		2 Inferential statistics: Chi-square, t-test (Ch. 16, pp. 458-470)	
	7 Course Review; <b>Assignment #2 DUE</b>		9 <b>Test #4 (on readings and lectures); 6-9 p.m., location TBA</b>	

*\* Please bring something on which to save your work, as well as a valid INS userid and password. If you do not have these yet, you can get them at [www.umanitoba.ca/claimid](http://www.umanitoba.ca/claimid). Please test them out before the lab to ensure that they are in working order. You will not be able to access SPSS without them.*

**\*\*\* Voluntary Withdrawal Deadline: July 13, 2012 \*\*\***