



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA

**Sociology SOC 7390 (A01) Survey Research Methods**

Department of Sociology University of Manitoba

Fall 2014 3 Credit Hours CRN: 15766

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Instructor: Dr. Lori Wilkinson

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Office hours: Tuesdays 11:30-1:00 or by appointment (anytime!)

Desire to Learn is the online platform used to store information related to this course. Please familiarize yourself with the content. *The fastest and most guaranteed way to contact me is by email.*

Class time: Tuesdays, 8:30-11:20am

Class location: 503 Tier Building

Computer lab: 336 Isbister Building

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology 7390 is a graduate level course providing in depth training in the major areas of survey research and includes the research question conceptualization, survey design and formatting, sampling strategies, modes of administration, data analysis, data interpretation, and presentation. The purpose is to guide graduate students through all phases of a major survey research project. The course includes lectures, student projects, and student presentations. A secondary data source, provided by the professor, is the basis of the major term assignment. Other surveys will be used as examples as appropriate.

As a result of this course, students will:

- become familiar with the range of quantitative methodologies used in the social sciences
- achieve a reasonable degree of skill in survey research techniques including sampling strategies, modes of administration, and questionnaire design
- gain competence in analysis of quantitative data using the statistical software SPSS
- produce publishable research reports, theses/dissertations & journal articles using statistics
- learn appropriate methods of data analysis
- critically evaluate secondary data and published research reports
- improve presentation skills (orally and in papers)

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## PREREQUISITES

Undergraduate courses in both social science research methods and social statistics are required. For Sociology majors, completion of SOC 4570 (or its equivalent) is also required. Students who are unsure of their prerequisites or those not majoring in sociology are required to consult with the instructor and receive permission to enroll prior to the beginning of the course.

There is an optional lab component to this course. If you are unfamiliar with SPSS, you are required to attend 2-3 two hour labs hosted by the professor. The labs have been designed to assist you in the preparation of your final research paper. Lab date and times will be determined at the beginning of the class (subject to the availability of the students requiring instruction, the professor and the lab).

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## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND RESOURCE MATERIALS

### Required Textbooks

Floyd Fowler (2014) *Survey Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks/London: Sage Publications.

Jeremy Miles and Mark Shevlin (2001) *Applying Regression and Correlation: A Guide for Students and Researchers*. London/Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

There are a number of SPSS guidebooks available. Students who have not used SPSS prior to this course may consider acquiring one although a lab manual has been created by the professor for the students in this course.

Students are strongly advised to review their coursework and texts on statistics prior to beginning this course. Some of my favourite books include:

J. Healey *Statistics: A Tool for Social Research*; B. Hazard Munro *Statistical Methods for Health Care Research*; J. Foster, E. Barkus, C. Yavorsky *Understanding and Using Advanced Statistics*; B. Tabachnick and L. Fidell *Using Multivariate Statistics*.

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## ASSIGNMENTS

There is no final examination in this seminar. All MA and PhD students are graded on three assignments and a formal class presentation. Late assignments will receive a reduced grade (5% deducted per day for each day late, including weekends). All course requirements must be completed before a final grade is assigned.

*NOTE: PhD students are required to prepare an additional written assignment based on their class presentation. Instructions for this and the remaining three assignments are provided at a later date.*

### *Description and Due Dates of Assignments*

#### Questionnaire construction assignment due: October 28

This assignment involves outlining a survey research question and constructing an appropriate questionnaire. Students select their own research topics and are encouraged to engage in subject matter that is relevant to your thesis or dissertation research. Additional information about this assignment will be provided early in the course.

### Class presentation (dates vary by student, presentations begin September 30)

All MA students are expected to present a 15-minute paper on a course topic. Topics for the presentations are distributed at the first lecture and selected during the second lecture. Students will make a short presentation and will lead a short discussion about their topic. They will also prepare a paper outline of their presentation, including useful references, to distribute to other seminar participants. Students will be graded on the content and quality of the presentation and the handouts. A peer review, conducted by all students, will aid the instructor in assessing the appropriate grade. Students are invited to discuss their topics with the instructor in advance of their presentation.

PhD students are expected to prepare a critique paper in addition to their class presentation. The critique paper is due on or before the date of their presentation. The criteria for the presentation will be the same as the MA students (see above) except that the PhD students will have additional requirements for the presentation. PhD students will select their presentation from the list of topics distributed on the first day of class.

*Note: depending on final enrolment, some days will feature two student-led presentations while other days may feature only one.*

### Preparation of Journal Article final paper due: December 3

A dataset from which the term paper will be based is provided at the beginning of the course. For those students not familiar with SPSS, the lab is mandatory. Lab dates and lab instructor will be made available at the beginning of the course. More details on the research project to follow.

Part One: data analysis: **due November 25**

Part Two: completed journal paper **due December 3**

### Optional Assignment: proof of certificate must be submitted by December 3

As of September 2011, all students and faculty conducting research at any Canadian university must complete the Tri-Council Panel on Research Ethics Course on Research Ethics. Ethics is an integral part of research and is central to your training as professional researchers. Students wishing to obtain 2.5% bonus marks must provide a photocopy of the completion certificate. The course takes about 3-5 hours to complete and does not have to be completed during a single sitting. It is located online at <http://umanitoba.ca/research/integrity/integrity%20.html>. Students are encouraged to include this information as an acquired skill on their CVs.

*All assignments are expected to be structurally and grammatically correct. Marks are deducted for these mistakes.*

### Grade Weights

	<u>MA Students</u>	<u>PhD Students</u>
Assignment 1 Questionnaire	25%	25%
Assignment 2 Class Presentation:	20%	15%
Assignment 3 Final Paper		
-data analysis	20%	10%
-journal article	35%	35%
-PhD assignment critical review paper	<u>n/a</u>	<u>15%</u>
Total	100%	100%
Bonus Optional Assignment	2.5%	2.5%

### GRADE DISTRIBUTION

<i>Grade Distribution:</i> A+ 90-100	B+ 75-79	C+ 65-69	D 50-59
A 80-89	B 70-74	C 60-64	F 0-49

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### COURSE RULES AND REGULATIONS

Please read these very carefully. These regulations ensure equity among students and are intended to make the class more productive and enjoyable for everyone.

- The University of Manitoba acknowledges the right of students to observe recognized Holy Days of their faith that fall within the academic year. The instructor should be notified in writing of a student's intended absence at least three weeks in advance.
- Students with special learning needs should identify themselves to the instructor and register with the Office of Student Accessibility at the beginning of the term in order to arrange suitable accommodation.
- *All assignments* must be completed in order to assess a final grade. Students who fail to complete all or parts of the course will fail the course.
- Any student who submits an assignment or test that the professor or lab instructor suspects is plagiarized must submit to an oral examination based on the material in the assignment or paper. Should the professor find that the paper is plagiarized or data fabricated as a result of this examination the student will face immediate disciplinary action. (please see Academic Integrity, page 5)
- *Late term papers and term paper outlines will be penalized 10% per day late (including weekends) to a maximum penalty of 50%.* In the event of a medical emergency or other serious problem, extensions to the term paper may be granted but only if I am contacted prior to the deadline.
- Papers more than ONE WEEK LATE will not be accepted under any circumstances.
- Students are not permitted to reschedule presentations and assignments regardless of the scheduling of examinations and assignments in other courses.
- Any term work that has not been claimed by students will be held for four (4) months from the end of the final examination period for the term in which the work was assigned. At the conclusion of this time, all unclaimed term work will become property of the Faculty of Arts and be destroyed according to FIPPA guidelines and using confidential measures for disposal.

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## WHAT SKILLS CAN STUDENTS EXPECT TO GAIN IN THIS COURSE?

This class is intended to introduce students to the basic principles behind conducting a major survey research project. By the end of the class, students should be able to:

- Prepare a journal article
- Conceptualize a research question
- Prepare a research proposal and budget
- Link theories and previous research to research topics
- Conceptualize and operationalize independent and dependent variables
- Select an appropriate sample using scientific methods
- Identify appropriate modes of administration
- Design a questionnaire
- Select appropriate data analysis procedures
- Produce scientifically-sound statistics
- Learn about research sensitive topics and ethical considerations
- Design and implement a survey research project from start to finish

In addition to the knowledge gained in learning to conduct a research project, this class has applications outside the course. Students will learn various skills including how to:

- Critically evaluate journal articles, books and media reports
- Prepare professional research reports
- Learn rules for conducting interviews
- Training and hiring of interviewers
- Guidance in preparation of budgets and research grants
- Prepare appropriate statistical analyses with survey research data
- Organize and prepare effective professional presentations using Powerpoint

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## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is a cornerstone for any research. The professor has extensive (and unfortunate) experience in dealing with all forms of academic dishonesty. The penalties for graduate students who are dishonest in their studies are severe. Students suspected of submitting dishonest work and/or data will be reported to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. University policy on academic integrity will be enforced. A full description of academic integrity matters, including plagiarism and cheating, can be found in Section 8 of the General Academic Regulations and Requirements of the University of Manitoba.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying all or parts of assignments or tests from Internet web-pages or on-line journals, all or parts of chapters from books, journal articles, newspaper articles or other documents
- Copying all or parts of other students' tests or assignments

- Having someone else write your paper or test
- Writing your paper in a language other than English and having someone or some program translate it
- Working with other students to complete assignments or tests
- Paraphrasing an author's ideas without proper referencing of their ideas
- Submitting falsified data as part of an assignment, test or thesis/dissertation
- Re-submitting all or part of a paper previously written for another course (self-plagiarising)

Academic dishonesty is not tolerated in this course. The instructor uses a variety of methods to check for academic dishonesty and has access to software geared to uncover plagiarism on the Internet. **The penalties are severe may include failing the course and/or expulsion from the university.** If you would like further clarification regarding plagiarism and academic integrity, please arrange an appointment to see me. I would rather you ask me if you are unsure about integrity rather than guessing.

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. I strongly urge students to visit the following websites for more information about academic integrity and how to avoid problems:

[http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate\\_studies/media/academic\\_dishonesty.pdf](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate_studies/media/academic_dishonesty.pdf)  
[http://umanitoba.ca/student/resource/student\\_advocacy/AI-and-Student-Conduct-Tutorials.html](http://umanitoba.ca/student/resource/student_advocacy/AI-and-Student-Conduct-Tutorials.html)

I greatly value the opinions and beliefs expressed by Dr Bill Taylor in the following article "A Letter to My Students". Please read it if you would like to know more about my philosophy on academic integrity as this letter to students is a very good summary of my expectations of you and your expectations of me.

[http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate\\_studies/media/Letter\\_To\\_My\\_Students.pdf](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate_studies/media/Letter_To_My_Students.pdf)

I welcome any questions you may have about academic integrity and I am very happy to help no matter how big or small the problem.

**Note: the VW date for this course is November 12 2014**

Some words for inspiration

There are two kinds of people in this world, those who can extrapolate from data.

The latest survey shows that 3 out of 4 people make up 75% of the world's population.