



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Introduction to Research Methods

SOC 2290 Section A01 CRN: 11190

Department of Sociology

University of Manitoba

2010/2011 Regular Session

6 credit hours

CONTACT INFORMATION

Course Instructor: Md. Mahmudur Rahman Bhuiyan

Office: 301A Isbister Building

Email: umbhuiya@cc.umanitoba.ca

Phone : 474-8875

ANGEL is available for this course

Office hours: Wednesdays 11: 30 AM – 12:30 PM, or by appointment

Class meeting: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 9:30 AM-10:20 AM

Class location: 229 St. Paul's College

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to introductory research methods in sociology. This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamentals of social science research. During the course, students will learn about the links between theory and research, designing good research questions, distinguishing between the major types of qualitative and quantitative methods, measuring subjective and objective variables, an introduction to tabulation of various univariate and bivariate statistics, tests of significance, and various other techniques utilized in social research.

This course fulfills the methods requirement for sociology and criminology majors and the math requirement. The course provides students with important skills that are central to conducting qualitative and quantitative research and introduces participants to skills that are in demand by potential employers. Some of these skills include:

- Basic understanding of various qualitative & quantitative methods of collecting data
- Asking questions in unstructured and structured formats
- Introduction to probability and non-probability sampling techniques
- Introduction to SPSS
- Preparation of statistical tables and professional reports
- Calculation of simple univariate and bivariate statistics

The first term will cover issues related to the nature of scientific knowledge, the links between theory and research, theory construction and causality, Ethical considerations in social research, and some basic methodological approaches to social research. The second term will focus largely on statistical methods and techniques for data analysis.

***The course is demanding and may require more study, practice and effort than other courses. If you are having difficulty with course materials, please make arrangements to see me as soon as possible. I look forward to working with you throughout the year.**

REQUIRED TEXT AND INTERACTIVE MATERIALS

Earl Babbie and Lucia Benaquisto (2010) *Fundamentals of Social Research*. Second Canadian Edition. Toronto: Nelson. ISBN: 13-978-0-17-641454-2. This text is available at the bookstore in new and used formats.

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, practice quizzes, useful examples, practice datasets, and links to research methods websites. It is located at www.fundamentalssocialresearch2.nelson.com/students/

i-Clicker response unit, available at the Bookstore

Please note: i-Clicker response unit is bundled with the course text and available at the Bookstore. Students must purchase an i-Clicker response unit (students with used texts can buy the i-clicker separately) and register with the system (either on-line or in class) in order to be awarded the participation grade. This system will be used consistently throughout both terms to assist in evaluating your progress in solving various methods problems and as a tool for the professor to get live feedback from students during the lectures. The participation mark is worth 5% of your total grade for the course based on a combination of participation and the number of correct answers provided by the student during the term. This formula will be explained on the first day of class.

The mandatory laboratory of the component introduces students to various qualitative and quantitative techniques and computer programs. Some students have found that the Student Version of SPSS is a useful investment allowing them to complete assignments and practice questions at home. The professional version of this software is available in the computer lab. A laboratory manual is also provided as part of this class so additional instructional media on the SPSS program is not required.

There is a ANGEL site for this course and can be reached at: <https://angel.cc.umanitoba.ca>. It contains all paper materials distributed during class (including this syllabus). This site is regularly updated so please use it. For technical questions regarding logging on to ANGEL or gaining a password, please contact IST at 101 Dafoe Tunnel, 474-8600 or support@cc.umanitoba.ca.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING SCHEME

Unit Tests (17.5% per test X 4 tests=70%). **Four tests**, scheduled at approximately 6 week intervals, form the basis of the majority of your course grade. Tests are based on lectures and text/readings. While the tests are not cumulative, students need to master the materials and concepts introduced early in the course to succeed in later tests. The test format consists of multiple choice and open-ended questions. Please note that only a basic, non-programmable calculator is permitted. Other electronic devices, *including cell phones*, are prohibited. Each test is scheduled in two parts, part 1 is written on Wednesdays and part two is written on Fridays. The schedule for unit tests is located on page 5 of this syllabus.

Lab Component (25%). Consistent attendance in the lab is mandatory. **Labs are held weekly. Students are evaluated through a series of four unit tests.** Each test worth 25% of your lab mark, i.e. 6.25% of your final grade. All lab tests will take place in the lab (202 Isbister). Further details regarding the lab tests and assignments will be distributed by Instructor Jen Dengate (the lab instructor). *Students must complete the lab tests during their regularly scheduled lab for which you are registered.* For lab test dates please see the lab outline.

Details and requirements regarding the lab component of this course will be provided by Instructor Dengate during the first regularly scheduled meeting (during the week of September 13 - 17). Since the lab instructor is

responsible for delivering the lab and grading the lab examinations, please direct any questions regarding the lab component of the course to Instructor Dengate. I do spend time during the class lecture (usually Fridays) to help prepare you for the following week's lab.

Please note the following **critical points**:

1. ***Students must receive a passing grade of 60% 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.
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: illness (original signed note from a physician specifying the dates of the illness) or bereavement (death certificate or obituary that includes your name). Students missing more than two labs without appropriate documentation during a single term will fail the course. (See lab outline for more detail).

Grade Distribution:

A+	91-100%	4.5	Exceptional
A	80-90%	4.0	Excellent
B+	75-79%	3.5	Very good
B	70-74%	3.0	Good
C+	65-69%	2.5	Satisfactory
C	60-64%	2.0	Adequate
D	50-59%	1.0	Marginal
F*	49% or less	0	Failure

*Note: *students failing the lab component automatically fail the course regardless of the grades they receive on unit tests or participation (see above critical point 1).*

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 of this course may be raised or lowered to achieve this equity and, therefore, your final grade may differ from your raw score.

COURSE REGULATIONS AND POLICY

- 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 (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.
- All class and lab tests must be completed. 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 as a result of this examination the student will face immediate disciplinary action. (please see *Academic Integrity*, below)
- All lab and class tests must be made up within one week of the test. Responsibility for initiating a make-up test lies with the student. Note: make-up tests will vary from the tests assigned to the class.

- Students are not permitted to re-schedule midterms, lab tests or term exams regardless of scheduling conflicts with examinations and assignments in other courses.
 - Class attendance is mandatory. Students who consistently miss class will not be permitted to write the term April exam (see University of Manitoba, *Undergraduate Calendar 2010-11*, page 28). *Because class attendance is mandatory, the professor will not provide students with lecture notes under any circumstance.* Students who miss class are expected to obtain course notes from another classmate.
-

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION

Thanksgiving Day- October 11 (University Closed)

Remembrance Day – November 11 (University Closed)

Voluntary Withdrawal Deadline: March 18, 2011

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence. Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on *Plagiarism and Cheating (Section 7.1)* and *Examinations: Personations (Section 4.2.8)* located in the *University of Manitoba Undergraduate Calendar*.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying all or parts of assignments or tests from Internet web-pages or on-line journals
- Copying all or parts of chapters from books, journal articles, newspaper articles, etc. to complete lab reports
- Copying all or parts of other students' tests or assignments
- Having someone else write your paper or test
- Working with other students to complete assignments or tests
- Paraphrasing an author's ideas without proper referencing of their ideas

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 and range from failing the course to expulsion from the university.** If you would like further clarification regarding plagiarism and academic integrity, please arrange an appointment to see me.

Important Notice: 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.

COURSE READINGS AND SCHEDULED COURSE ACTIVITIES

The required course readings are heavy for the first semester and much lighter for the second semester. This is because second semester topics focus mainly on mastering statistical methods and students are expected to spend significant time completing practice questions in anticipation of class and lab tests.

September 10: Introduction and Orientation

September 13, 15 & 17:
Lecture Theme *Science as a Way of Knowing*
Readings: Chapter 1

September 20, 22 & 24

Lecture Theme *Theory Construction*
Readings: Chapter 2

September 27, 29 & October 01

Lecture Theme *Ethics*
Readings: Chapters 3

October 04, 06 & 08

Lecture Theme *Measurement Part 1*
Readings: Chapter 5 & 6

October 13 & 15

(Note: No class on October 11, Thanksgiving Day)

Lecture Theme *Measurement Part 2*
Readings: Chapter 5 & 6

October 18 & 20 Unit Test 1 (Monday AND Wednesday)

October 25, 27 & 29

Lecture Theme *Causation*
Readings: Chapter 4

November 01, 03 & 05

Lecture Theme *Quantitative Research Designs*
Readings: Chapter 8

November 08, 10 & 12

Lecture Theme *Qualitative Research Designs*
Readings: Chapter 11, 12 & supplied materials

November 15, 17 & 19

Lecture Theme *Sampling*
Readings: Chapters 7 (pp176-189; 198-217)

November 22, 24 & 26

Lecture Theme *Survey Research*
Readings: Chapter 9

November 29, December 01 & 03

Lecture Theme *Content Analysis*
Readings: Chapter 10

December 06 and 08 Unit Test 2 (Monday AND Wednesday)

The second half of the course focuses on data analysis and interpretation. The course text does not cover this material as extensively and the readings may not be harmonized with the lecture topics. Remaining topic outline and readings for the second semester will be distributed during the first class in January 2011.

TIPS

Students occasionally struggle with this course. The following are some suggestions that you may wish to consider to maximize their performance in this course. Many of these tips apply to a successful experience at university.

- *Do not skip class.* Information presented in class augments the text. Class attendance is mandatory (see page 28, *University of Manitoba Undergraduate Calendar*, 2010/11).
- *Do not miss your lab.* The labs are intended to provide exercises and tests that reinforce the lectures and textbook information. There are penalties for missing labs, including failing the course.
- *Keep up to date with course readings.* Students who read the text book have higher grades. Those who try to cram the readings into a single week (or evening) rarely retain enough material to pass the examination.
- *Do the extra exercises, visit the website for the textbook, complete the practice tests and utilize the ANGEL web material* for the course. Students who master the extra exercises tend to have higher scores in the examinations and laboratory component. The exercises reinforce class lectures and lab assignments.
- *Ask questions.* This is one of the most important pathways to success in this course. When you don't understand a concept, equation or idea, ask. Your professor and lab instructor are available to help you and an appointment may be arranged to discuss issues as they arise.
- *Find a study-buddy.* Introduce yourself to someone in this section of the course. Since the professor does not provide class notes to students, it is a good idea to have a "friend" from whom you can borrow class notes and to study together.
- *Limit your email correspondence.* What might seem like a simple question to you may actually require extensive correspondence. It is often better to arrange to see the professor when you have a question. Please use email for administrative type questions rather than methods or content questions.
- *Do not lose your i-Clicker.* If you lose your i-Clicker, please inform the professor immediately. Do not use your friend's i-Clicker as the points will not count towards your participation grade for this course.