Introduction to Research Methods
SOC 2290 A01 – Summer session
University of Manitoba
Department of Sociology
6 credit hours (2011)

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Class: Tuesday & Thursday evening (7:00-9:30 p.m.); Room 202 Isbister
Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00-4:00 (or by appointment)

Required Texts:

Babbie, Earl and Lucia Benaquisto (2009) *Fundamentals of Social Research.* Second Canadian Edition. Scarborough: Thomson Nelson.

Roberts, Lance W., Karen Kampen, and Tracey Peter (2009) *The Methods Coach: Learning Through Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

***There are companion websites for the two textbooks that contain a number of helpful features to aid your learning including study flashcards, web quizzes, crosswords and links to other resources:*

http://www.fundamentalssocialresearch2.nelson.com/student

http://www.oupcanada.com/methodscoach

Course Objectives and Description:

Sociology 2290 introduces students to social science research methods, which are essential skills for investigation used to generate new knowledge, develop sociological theories, and design effective social policy. The goal of this course is to provide students with a general understanding of sociological research methods in order to enhance students' ability to undertake proper, quality research and to be informed consumers of published research.

The first half of the course (May/June Term) explores the study of assumptions, principles, and techniques of various research methods used in sociology. The intended outcome is for students to become familiarized with the general principals of research methods and their application in the collection of data for analysis. The second half of the course (June/July Term) will cover basic statistical methods and techniques for data analysis. The primary goal here is to enhance students' statistical literacy.

Although there is no formal lab component for this course, we will be working on 'lab-like' material. The Roberts et al. text will be your lab manual for the May/June term. I will be providing you with a manual

for the second term that provides instructions on how to use the SPSS computer program needed to perform data analysis. In order to remain consistent with the regular fall/winter sections of SOC 2290, evaluation of these lab materials will be worth 25% of your final grade in the course. There is also one critical point you need to be aware of: **You must achieve a grade of 60% on the lab evaluation in order to pass the course.** In other words, achieving 60% on this component of the course is required, *independent* of how you do in the other course components. Students that fail to achieve this lab evaluation standard, and therefore fail the course, will be required to retake the entire course (and not just the lab component) in order to achieve credit in SOC 2290.

Please note that this is not a math course. You will be using a calculator in order to systematically work through basic problems and concepts. You do not require any advanced mathematical training to do well in this course. Given that most students will not be familiar with statistical techniques, regular class attendance is essential. Course material is presented in a logical sequence; therefore, missing class may result in difficulty with future material.

It is critical that students take responsibility for learning the SPSS statistical procedures independently of the instruction provided in class. Because our time is so short, I will only be able to offer limited exposure to the SPSS computer program. The program (along with practice datasets) is available in the open air campus computer labs for your use, whenever you wish. Your lab manual provides step by step instructions to assist you. Do not wait to begin learning the SPSS program techniques!

Weekly Topic Breakdown:

The following is a guideline of the topics to be covered each week. Please note that it is subject to change based on issues we may encounter with class time.

Week 1
May 3rd - Introduction and orientation; begin Unit 1, Introduction to Inquiry
May 5th - Finish Unit 1, Introduction to Inquiry (if time, begin Unit 2)

Week 2
May 10th - Unit 2, Research Design & Causation (if time, begin Unit 3)
May 12th - Unit 3, Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement

Week 3
May 17th - Test #1
May 19th - Unit 4, Experiments

Week 4
May 24th - Unit 5, Survey Research
May 26th - Unit 6, Unobtrusive Research

Week 5
May 31st - Unit 7, Qualitative Field Research
June 2nd - Unit 8, Qualitative Interviewing

Week 6

June 7th - Unit 9, Qualitative Data Analysis
June 9th - Unit 1 of Term 2, Univariate Measures of Central Tendency and Graphing Techniques

Week 7
June 14th - Test #2
June 16th – Lab Test #1

Term 2 – Statistics Portion

Week 8
June 21st – Finish Unit 1; Unit 2, Univariate Measures of Dispersion
June 23rd - Unit 3, Types of Distributions, the Normal Curve, and Z-scores

Week 9
June 28th - Unit 4, Bivariate Relationships
June 30th - Unit 5, PRE Measures of Association for Nominal and Ordinal Level Variables

Week 10
July 5th - Unit 6, PRE Measures of Association for Interval and Ratio Level Variables
July 7th - Unit 7, Linear Regression

Week 11
July 12th - Test #3
July 14th - Unit 8, the Elaboration Model

Week 12
July 19th - Finish Unit 8 (if time, begin Unit 9)
July 21st - Unit 9, Probability Theory and Tests of Significance

Week 13
July 26th - Unit 10, Sampling
July 28th - review/free time in lab

Week 14
August 2nd - review/free time in lab
August 4th –Hand in lab assignment at start of class; test #4

Course Evaluation

Grades:

A+ = 90% and over	4.5
A = 80% to 89%	4.0
B+ = 76% to 79%	3.5
B = 70% to 75%	3.0
C+ = 66% to 69%	2.5
C = 60% to 65%	2.0

D = 50% to 59% 1.0
F = Under 50% 0.0

Students should be aware that the above grades are only guidelines. Different cut-off percentages may be used depending on final grade distributions.

Note: Senate Policy #1307 requires "A post-examination review of final grades in multi-sectioned courses that will encourage 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 such equity and, therefore, your final grade may be changed.

Test 1:	May 17th, 2011	18.75%
Test 2:	June 14th, 2011	18.75%
Test 3:	July 12th, 2011	18.75%
Test 4:	August 4th, 2011	18.75%
May/June Term Lab Test:	June 16th, 2011	12.5%
June/July Term Lab Project:	August 4th, 2011	12.5%

Tests: There are four unit tests covering class lectures and assigned readings. Each test will include a mixture of multiple choice and written responses and/or mathematical problem solving. The specifics of each test will be discussed in class. Each test will contain a mixture of assigned reading and class lecture material. *Please note: The second half of the course covers basic statistical methods and techniques for data analysis, which are not discussed in great detail in the course textbook. For this reason, class attendance is critical.*

May/June Term Lab Component: This will consist of a 'lab' test, which will be based on the Roberts et al textbook. Details of specific chapters as well as the test format will be discussed in class.

June/July Term Lab Component: This will consist of an individual class project. Details of the project will be discussed in class.

Required Reading:
Test 1: Chapters: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Test 2: Chapters: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14
Test 3: Chapters: 15, 16
Test 4: Chapter: 7, 16

Missed Tests: Any student who misses a test or exam must provide a doctor's note (or appropriate equivalent). **This will be strictly enforced.** No student will be allowed to write a make-up test without a doctor's note (or some form of written documentation). Any student who does not inform me (by phone/voice mail) **prior** to test time (that they will be absent for the test) **will not** be allowed to write a make-up test. This also will be strictly enforced.

Student Conduct and Academic Regulations of the University

Voluntary Withdrawal: The final date for voluntary withdrawal from this course is July 12th, 2011. There are no refunds on this date – see the Summer Session Calendar for details.

Academic Dishonesty: Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on 'Examination: Personations' (p. 26) and 'Plagiarism and Cheating' (p. 27) found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Electronic Devices: Students are required to silence all electronic devices (cellular phones, PDAs, pagers, etc.) when in the classroom.

Classroom Disruptions: Students should recognize that excessive talking or early departures from the classroom are disrupting for both the instructor and classmates. Please be considerate of others in the class. Continual disruption by a student may result in disbarment from the course. Please notify the instructor at the onset of class if you need to leave early.

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 one week notice of absence should normally be given where special arrangements are sought.