

University of Manitoba **Department of Sociology**
SOC 2290 Introduction to Research Methods **Credit Hours: 6**
MWF, 10:30 – 11:20 a.m. Fall/Winter 2007-08
229 St Paul's College

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* Please include SOC 2290 in the subject line

Required Textbook

Babbie, Earl and Lucia Benaquisto (2002). *Fundamentals of Social Research* (1st 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? Do three-quarters of Canadians engage in kinky sex? 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 to Social Research Methods 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 every day.

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.

This course has a formal lab component, and we will also do some exercises during class, in addition to lectures. In order to cover the large volume of new material and skills that you will gain during the course, 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. Students are expected to read the relevant chapter before class, and to participate in the exercises. Because of the nature of this material, attending every class and reading the textbook is crucial.

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; I hope that you will enjoy it.

Evaluation

1) Unit tests (18.75% per test x 4 tests = 75%). Each test will be based upon readings and in-class material. Tests are not strictly cumulative, but you will need to remember earlier concepts in order to comprehend later ones. Test format will include multiple choice and open-ended questions. Please note that during tests, only a basic, non-programmable calculator is permitted; no other electronic devices are allowed. The policy regarding make-up tests is described below under "Attendance Policy".

Test #1 (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5): **October 10 & 12**, 2007

Test #2 (Chapters 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14): **November 28 & 30**, 2007

Test #3 (Chapters 16, pp. 411-445): **February 13 & 15**, 2008

Test #4 (Chapter 16 pp. 445-463, & Ch. 7): **April 7 & 9**, 2008

2) Lab Component (25%). This course has a mandatory lab component. Evaluation will be based upon four tests. The first test is worth 5.5% of your final grade and the rest are each worth 6.5%. Further details will be provided in your Lab Manual. Please review the attendance policy below, as it can have serious consequences for students.

Lab Test # 1: Week of **October 15-19**, 2007*

Lab Test # 2: **TBA** (during December Exam Period)

Lab Test # 3: Week of **February 25-29**, 2008*

Lab Test # 4: **TBA** (during April Exam Period)

* Students will write during their normally scheduled lab time that week. You must write on the day/time for which you are registered.

The lab component comprises 25 percent of your final grade in the course. Laboratory attendance is compulsory. The details and requirements of the labs will be provided by the lab instructor. For now you need to note the following critical point: ***You must achieve a passing grade (i.e. 50 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, and therefore fail the course, will be required to retake the entire course (not just the lab component) in order to achieve credit in SOC2290.

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.

Student Conduct and Academic Regulations

Academic Integrity

Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on "Examinations: Personations" (p. 27) and "Plagiarism and Cheating" (p. 28) found in the *Undergraduate Calendar*.

Voluntary Withdrawal

The final date for voluntary withdrawal from this course is March 20, 2008.

Classroom Disruptions

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.

Other

Please remember that if you miss a class, it is your responsibility to acquire lecture material, updates to our schedule, or other material, from classmates.

Attendance Policy

1. Missed tests (including lab tests)

Accommodations for missed tests will be permitted only for students who have a legitimate emergency – such as serious illness or bereavement, and excluding things like routine medical appointments or vacations - if written documentation is provided within two days after the missed test. Documentation must cover the date missed and must specify that the patient is unable to attend school. (See examples below.) It will be kept strictly confidential. Students requiring make-up tests must be prepared to write them at the same time and date as others who are also doing so.

2. Missed Labs

The Department of Sociology has instituted a “third strike” policy on absences from the lab. Students are permitted to miss two labs per term for undocumented reasons. If you provide appropriate documentation, that date will not count as an absence. (Attending a lab other than the section for which you are registered is permissible but is still counted as an absence.) Students who have more than two absences in a term will be withdrawn from SOC 2290. That is, if you miss a third lab for undocumented reasons, only the Head of the Sociology Department can reinstate you. In order to be considered for an appeal of your expulsion, you will need to provide him/her with an explanation of your reasons for each of your absences within one week following the third missed lab.

Examples of appropriate documentation:

Illness – Original physician’s note specifying work/school absence for that period

Bereavement - Death certificate; or, obituary that includes your name

Religious observation – No documentation needed but instructor must be notified

WebCT

This course will have a companion website which can be reached at the following link:

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/campus/ist/cms/webct>

This page shows you how to log into WebCT. If you do not have a home computer, you can access the site from one of the campus labs (e.g. Dafoe Library). For any technical questions re: WebCT, phone 474-9788 or use the email addresses on the above page. Once you have successfully logged into WebCT and found the website for this course, you should see something similar to the following screen. Just click on the links to access your grades (the “My Grades” link). On this page you will also find links to various documents, such as class handouts that you may have missed, all in MS Word. They will be posted as they become available throughout the course.

Tentative Schedule

Term 1

September 10 – October 12*: Human Inquiry/Paradigms, Theory, and Research; The Idea of Causation in Social Research; Research Design; Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement

October 15 – November 30*: Unobtrusive Research; Survey Research; Indexes, Scales and Typologies; Qualitative Research

* No class on October 8 (Thanksgiving) or November 12 (day in lieu of Remembrance Day)

Term 2

January 7 – February 15: Introduction/Measures of Central Tendency and Dispersion; Types of distributions/the Normal Curve; Z-scores; Standardizing Data; Bivariate relationships; Multivariate relationships; PRE Measures of Association: Lambda and Gamma

February 18-22: READING WEEK (No classes)

February 25-April 11*: Pearson correlation; Linear regression; Introduction to Inference -
> Sampling and probability; Confidence Intervals; Chi-square test of significance

** No class March 21 (Good Friday)*