

University of Manitoba
Department of Sociology

SOC 2290 A01
RESEARCH METHODS
2007-2008

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Office: 321 Isbister Building
Office Hours: Wednesday morning, 8:30- 10:30, or by appointment.
Classroom: Room 312 Tier
Credit Hours: 6

Required Textbook:

Babbie, Earl & Lucia Benaquisto
2002 Fundamentals of Social Research (1st Canadian Edition). Thompson Nelson.

NOTE: It is preferable to obtain a textbook containing a bundled SPSS software CD.

Overview

This course introduces you to the ideas and practice of social scientific inquiry. The course surveys a wide variety of topics, ranging from philosophy of science considerations to computer-assisted statistical analysis. The course aims to make you a more intelligent consumer of social science research, and will give you the opportunity to grasp and integrate several kinds of information. Some areas of the course may tax both your mind and endurance, but with steady work I am confident we shall all find the experience rewarding.

Course Requirements

Your grade in this course will be assigned based on your mastery of the contents of the lectures and the readings, as well as your application of the ideas contained in these sources.

Lecture Periods: Our class periods will usually be composed of lectures, although sometimes we shall include application activities. The lectures will either cover topics not included in the textbook or will examine textbook topics from a different perspective. The in-class applications will provide opportunities for you to practice using the abstract concepts and principles you are learning.

Reading Requirements: You are responsible for mastering the reading material for each unit. The readings covered on each unit test are as follows:

- Test 1: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- Test 2: Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, 13
- Test 3: Chapters 12, 14, 15
- Test 4: Chapters 6, 7, 16

Note: The second half of this course deals largely with issues of data analysis and interpretation. The textbook does not cover these topics extensively. Therefore, the readings will not always be synchronized with the lecture topics. Since you are responsible mastering the readings through independent study, this lack of synchronization does not present a serious problem.

Unit Tests: There will be 4 unit tests on the contents of the reading and lecture material. Please note that the tests will cover the reading, lecture, and application materials. Each unit test will take up two class periods and will be composed of both objective and written answer questions.

The dates reserved for testing and contribution toward your final grade are as follows:

	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Test 1	October 24	18.75%
Test 2	December 5	18.75%
Test 3	February 27	18.75%
Test 4	April 9	18.75%

Note: During tests, only a basic, non-programmable calculator is permitted; no other electronic devices are allowed.

Applications: To do well in this course it is not enough that you *know* the material; you must be able to *apply* what you know. The application component of the course occurs in the weekly lab periods. You should all have registered for a lab section. The lab instructor will introduce you to the lab requirements and assignments. Your performance in the labs will account for *25 percent* of your final grade in the course.

For now, several things about the *lab component* of the course need to be highlighted.

1. The lab instructor is completely responsible for delivering the labs and assigning your grade in the lab component of the course. Therefore, *any questions or issues you have with the lab component of the course should be directed to the lab instructor*. I will, however, spend part of our time each week preparing you for the following week's lab.
2. 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.
3. Your "lab grade" (i.e. 25% of your final grade) is based upon four tests. The first test is worth 5.5% of your final lab grade and the rest are each worth 6.5%. Make-up tests for documented reasons (e.g. illness, bereavement) must be arranged with the Lab Instructor within two days of the missed test. Make-up tests may differ in content and format from the tests given to the rest of the students. Further details will be provided in your Lab Manual. Please review the attendance policy (point 4 below), since it has serious consequences.

The dates for the lab tests are as follows:

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

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

Lab Test # 3: Week of **February 11-15, 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.

4. 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

Some Final Notes

- 1) Only documented reasons are acceptable for not meeting course requirements, which includes class attendance (see Undergraduate Calendar).
- 2) You are responsible for mastering the contents of the readings through independent study. Therefore, please get started early and plan your study time accordingly.
- 3) Class will not be held on the following dates: February 20 -- Mid-Term Break
- 4) Voluntary withdrawal deadline date: March 20, 2008.
- 5) As a cautionary note, students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on Academic Integrity, including 'Personation at Examinations' (Section 4.2.8) and 'Plagiarism and Cheating' (Section 7.1) found in the Undergraduate Calendar.
- 6) On the issue of politeness: Disruptions due to talking or early departures from the classroom are disrupting. 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 the class early should inform the instructor at the beginning of class.
- 7) Students always ask how I translate the percentage grades received on tests, exams, and projects into the letter grades awarded at the end of the year. My procedure is straightforward. I weight each course component according to its contribution toward your final grade and add these weighted products. Then I use the following key:

Total Percentage	Letter Grade
90+	A+
80-89	A
75-79	B+
70-74	B
65-69	C+
60-64	C
50-59	D
0-49	F

Note: 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.