



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA

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

Department of Sociology University of Manitoba

Fall 2011 3 Credit Hours CRN: 14814

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Instructor: Dr. Lori Wilkinson

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Office hours: Wednesdays 5:30 – 6:30 or by appointment

Class time: Wednesdays 2:30-5:25pm

Class location: 335 Isbister

Computer lab: 336 Isbister

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology 7390 is a graduate level course providing a general overview 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 to 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 a 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

Don Dillman, Jolene Smyth and Leah Christian (2008) *Internet, Mail and Mixed Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Wiley.

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 a fourth (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 26

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, begins on October 12)

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 7**

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 30**  
 Part Two: completed journal paper **due December 7**

*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 (20%) critical review paper	<u>n/a</u>	<u>15%</u>
Total	100%	100%

**GRADE DISTRIBUTION**

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

- 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 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 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.
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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 and prepare a research proposal
- Link theories and literatures 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 dishonesty is a serious offence. Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on 'Personation at Examinations' (Section 5.2.9) and 'Plagiarism and Cheating' (Section 8.1) found online under UManitoba Catalog 2011-2011>General Academic Regulations>Section 8. Academic Integrity

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.

**Note: the VW date for this course is November 16, 2011**

### Some words for inspiration

Estimating parameters is easier than dealing with real life.

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