

University of Manitoba
Department of Sociology
SOC 2290 A01
INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODS
Fall/Winter 2011-12 (6 Credit Hours)

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Office Hours: Monday morning 10:30-12:00, or by appointment
Classroom: Room 137, Isbister Building
Timeslot: Mon, Wed, & Fri 9:30 AM – 10:20 AM

Required Textbook:

Babbie, Earl and Benaquisto, Lucia. (2010). *Fundamentals of Social Research*, (Second Canadian Edition). Toronto, ON: Nelson.

There is a companion website for the textbook. It contains a number of useful features to help facilitate your learning in the course including study flashcards, web quizzes, and links to various web resources for students. It is located at:

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

Please note: The *i>clicker* response unit is bundled with the course text and available at the Bookstore (students with used texts can buy the *i>clicker* separately). Students must 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 of this course 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 clearly explained on the first day of class.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course entails an introduction to the philosophy and practice of social science research, and will cover key topics such as the assumptions of scientific inquiry, the conceptualization of research problems, qualitative and quantitative approaches, basic statistical analysis, and computer-assisted statistical analysis with SPSS. The main objective of the course is to provide students with a general understanding of the principles of social scientific research methods such that they are better prepared to: a) undertake their own research projects, and/or b) be critical consumers of published research.

The first half of the course (Fall term) will cover a number of issues related to the research process such as the nature of scientific knowledge, the place of theory and causality, and some basic methodological approaches to asking and addressing research questions. The second half of the course

(Winter term) will focus largely on basic statistical methods and techniques for data analysis, with the basic goal of increasing students' statistical literacy.

While this course does not require a strong mathematics background, students will need to use a calculator to work through some basic problems and statistical techniques. As most students will be new to the statistical techniques relevant to this course, regular lecture and lab attendance is essential. Course material is presented in a logical sequence with new topics and concepts building upon previous ones; therefore, missing lectures and labs is likely to create cumulative difficulties with mastery of this material, especially in the later stages of the course.

Course Reading Requirements:

Unit Test 1: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6

Unit Test 2: Chapters 4, 7 (pp.176-189; 198-217), 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12

Note: The reading requirements for the tests in the *second term* will be provided to you early in the new year. The second half of this course is primarily concerned with basic methods and techniques for data analysis and interpretation, which are not extensively discussed in the course textbook. Consequently, class attendance is crucial.

Lab Component:

There is a lab component to this course, which comprises 25 percent of your final grade in the course. You should all have registered for a lab section. You will all be receiving an outline for the lab component, but for now, please note the 2 following critical points:

- 1) ***You must achieve a passing grade (i.e. 60 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 will also fail the course and therefore be required to retake the entire course (not just the lab component) in order to achieve credit in SOC2290.
- 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. Students missing more than two labs without appropriate documentation during a single term will fail the course. (See lab outline for more detail).

COURSE EVALUATION

Participation: This 5% portion of your grade is calculated based on class attendance and the answers you provide using the i>clicker response unit throughout both semesters. The i>clicker questions are asked based on the topic of the lecture, more details are provided in class

Tests: There will be 4 unit tests. Please note that the tests will cover the reading, lecture, and application materials. Test questions will be drawn from assigned readings and class lectures, and each test will occupy two class periods and will include both multiple choice and written responses. The tentative test dates and contribution toward your final grade are as follows:

	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Test 1	October 19 & 21	17.5%
Test 2	December 5 & 7	17.5%
Test 3	February 15 & 17	17.5%
Test 4	April 2 & 4	17.5%
Lab Tests	(see lab outline)	25.00%

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

Missed Unit Tests: Any student who misses a test or exam is required to provide written documentation of a legitimate reason, such as serious illness or bereavement. *This requirement will be strictly enforced.* No student will be allowed to write a make-up test without appropriate written documentation. Any student who does not inform me (by phone/voice mail) of their unavoidable absence *prior* to test time *will not* be allowed to write a make-up test. This rule will also be strictly enforced. There will only be one make-up test scheduled per unit test (date and time TBA). Note: make-up tests will differ from the tests administered in class.

Grade 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: 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.

Grades will be posted exclusively on the course's Angel companion site at:

<https://angel.cc.umanitoba.ca>

Students must consult this website to access their grades. For technical questions regarding logging on to Angel or gaining a password, please contact IST at 123 Fletcher Argue, 474-8600 or support@cc.umanitoba.ca.

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION

Class will not be held on the following dates:

Fall term: October 10 – Thanksgiving; November 11 – Remembrance Day

Winter term: February 20-24 – Mid term break

Voluntary Withdrawal Deadline Date:

March 16, 2012

Academic Integrity:

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 2011-2012>General Academic Regulations>Section 8. Academic Integrity.

Conduct in Class:

Excessive talking, late arrivals, or early departures are impolite and distracting for both the instructor and classmates. Please be considerate and respectful of the needs and rights of others in the class. Students are required to silence all electronic devices (i.e. cell phones, pagers, PDAs, etc.). Persistent disruption will 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.

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 three weeks notice of absence should normally be given where special arrangements are sought.

FALL TERM THEMATIC OUTLINE

Below is a list of dates, themes and readings for the fall term. A list for the winter term will be distributed in the new year.

First Day of Class: September 9

Introduction and Orientation

Week 1: September 12-16

Lecture Theme: *Science as a Way of Knowing*

Readings: Chapter 1

Week 2: September 19-23

Lecture Theme: *Theory Construction*

Readings: Chapter 2

Week 3: September 26-30

Lecture Theme: *Ethics*
Readings: Chapter 3

Week 4: October 4 & 6
Lecture Theme: *Measurement Part 1*
Readings: Chapters 5 & 6

Week 5: October 12 & 14 (**No class on Oct 10**)
Lecture Theme: *Measurement Part 2*
Readings: Chapters 5 & 6

Week 6: October 19 & 21: Unit Test 1 (Wednesday and Friday)

Week 7: October 24-28
Lecture Theme: *Causation*
Readings: Chapter 4

Week 8: October 31-November 3
Lecture Theme: *Quantitative Research Designs*
Readings: Chapter 8

Week 9: November 7-11 (**No class on November 11**)
Lecture Theme: *Qualitative Research Designs*
Readings: Chapters 11 & 12

Week 10: November 14-18
Lecture Theme: *Sampling*
Readings: Chapter 7 (pp.176-189; 198-217)

Week 11: November 21-25
Lecture Theme: *Survey Research*
Readings: Chapter 9

Week 12: November 28-December 2
Lecture Theme: *Unobtrusive Research*
Readings: Chapter 10

Week 13: December 5 & 7: Unit Test 2 (Monday and Wednesday)

First class of the winter term is **January 4, 2012.**