

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Seminar in Quantitative Research Methods  
Sociology 613.01 (Fall 2017)

**Instructor:** Dr. Jean E. Wallace

**Class:** Thursday, 12:30-3:15 in SS 921

**Office:** Social Sciences 914  
**E-Mail:** jwallace@ucalgary.ca

**Phone:** 403-220-6515  
**Office Hours:** by appointment

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a graduate-level seminar on sociological research methods. It is assumed that all students have successfully completed an introductory course in social research methods at the undergraduate level.

Throughout the term, we will examine the fundamental principles and logic governing research design. In doing so, we will address many of these issues as they relate to survey methods and mixed methods from a quantitative perspective. It is expected that upon completion of this course, students will have a good understanding of key decision-making issues related to carrying out quantitative research in sociology.

**CLASS FORMAT**

Students will participate in small group settings that provide a supportive environment for active and collaborative learning, faculty to student contact, and a high level of academic challenge. The format for this course is interactive seminar. Students are expected to come prepared with questions based on the pre-class readings. *All students are expected to participate in class discussions.* Students are encouraged to reflect on the relevance of the topic under discussion as it relates to their area of practice/population of focus or to their research question.

**EVALUATION**

Method	Due	Grade Percentage
Reflective Memos	Weeks 2-11	10 weeks x 2% = <b>20%</b>
Article Critique (Nov 16)	Week 10	<b>20%</b>
Seminar Introductions	TBA during Weeks 2-11	2 x 10% = <b>20%</b>
Final Project (Oral + Written)	Week 14 + Dec 18	10% + 30% = <b>40%</b>

- **Reflective Memos:** Reflective memos will be submitted weekly for Weeks 2 through 11 (2% per week) by Wednesday at noon before the relevant class. The memos will be no more than 2 pages and should not simply present summaries of the articles, but rather should be used to link the themes and issues raised across the assigned readings for the week. The memo should reflect more of a conversation across the articles than a linear summary of them. At the end of each memo

suggest one or two questions that might be raised by that week's readings. These memos will form part of the basis for discussion in each class (*Value=10 x 2% = 20%*).

- **Article Critique:** Select 2 quantitative methods research papers relevant to your area of interest and critique them using the assessment tool that will be provided by the instructor. Paper will be a maximum of 10 pages (*Value = 20%*).
- **Seminar Introductions:** Students will have the opportunity to provide seminar introductions for two topics that they chose from Weeks 2 to 11. You will pick 2 or 3 undergraduate research methods text books that cover the topic of your chosen weeks. You will lead a 30 minute introduction to that week's topic to provide an overview of key concepts, issues and topics covered in the relevant chapters from the texts. You will be expected to provide a 1-2 page summary of the key concepts related to this topic for your classmates (*Value = 2 x 10% = 20%*).
- **Final Project and Presentation:** The final project for this course will be submission of a research proposal that may serve as a preliminary draft of your MA prospectus. You will receive detailed information about the expectations for the proposal as well as suggestions for submitting materials for feedback prior to the final due date (*Value = 30%*). In addition, in the last class (Week 13) you will give a 10 minute presentation of your final project to the class as well as lead a 10 minute facilitated discussion around 3-4 questions you have about your proposed project (*Value = 10%*).

**Grading System:** Grades are entered as raw scores into the grading system. Your final letter grade is computed based on the weighted sum of your raw scores. The letter grade descriptions listed below are from the University of Calgary calendar. Please note that the full range of these letter grades may be used in evaluating your assignments.

Excellent, superior performance:	A+ = 95%-100%	A = 85%-94%	A- = 80%-84%
Good, above average performance:	B+ = 77%-79%	B = 73%-76%	B- = 70%-72%
Satisfactory, basic understanding:	C+ = 67%-69%	C = 63%-66%	C- = 60%-62%
Minimal pass, marginal performance:	D+ = 55%-59%	D = 50%-54%	
Unsatisfactory performance:	F = 0%-49%		

## ASSIGNED READINGS

### Week 1: Introduction: Linking Theory and Data (September 14)

Lieberson, S. (1992). Einstein, Renoir, and Greeley: Some Thoughts about Evidence in Sociology.  
*American Sociological Review*, 57:1-15.

<https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/docview/218813913>

### Week 2: Research Questions, Variables & Hypotheses (September 21)

Merton, R.K. (1959). "Introduction: Notes on Problem Finding in Sociology" (pp. ix-xxxiv) in R.K. Merton, L. Broom & L.S. Cottrell (Eds.), *Sociology Today: Problems and Prospects*. New York: Basic Books, Inc. [Posted on D2L]

Bryman, A. (2007). The Research Question in Social Research: What is its Role? *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 10:5-20.

<http://ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=24175645&site=ehost-live>

### Week 3: Introduction to Causation (September 28)

Marini, M.M., & B. Singer (1988). Causality in the Social Sciences. *Sociological Methodology*, 18:347-409.

<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/stable/271053>

Stack, S., & J. Gundlach (1992). The Effect of Country Music on Suicide. *Social Forces*, 71:211-218.  
<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/stable/2579974>

#### **Week 4: And More on Causation (October 5)**

Russo, F., & J. Williamson (2007). Interpreting Causality in the Health Sciences. *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, 21:157-170.

<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/10.1080/02698590701498084>

Piquero, A.R. (2009). Do Gun Laws Affect Crime the Way Steroids Affect Homeruns in Baseball?  
*American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 34:3-8.

<https://link.springer.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/article/10.1007%2Fs12103-009-9059-1>

#### **Week 5: Research Design (October 12)**

Spector, P.E., & L.L. Meier (2014). Methodologies for the Study of Organizational Behavior Processes: How to Find your Keys in the Dark. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 35: 1109-1119.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/doi/10.1002/job.1966/abstract>

Fowler, F.F. (1993). "Methods of Data Collection (pp. 54-68) in *Survey Research Methods*. Sage University Paper series on Applied Social Research Methods, Volume 1. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

<http://methods.sagepub.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/book/survey-research-methods/n5.xml>

Burns, K.E.A., Duffett, M., Kho, M., et al. (2008). A Guide to the Design and Conduct of Self-Administered Surveys of Clinicians. *CMAJ*, 179:245-252.

<http://www.cmaj.ca.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/content/179/3/245>

#### **Week 6: The Qualitative vs. Quantitative Debate (October 19)**

Coser, L.A. (1975). "Presidential Address: Two Methods in Search of a Substance." *American Sociological Review*, 40:691-700.

<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/stable/2094174>

Johnson, R.B., & Onwuegbuzie, A.J. (2004). Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7):14-26.

<http://journals.sagepub.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/doi/abs/10.3102/0013189X033007014>

O'Cathain, Murphy, E., & J. Nicholl (2008). The Quality of Mixed Methods Studies in Health Services Research. *Journal of Health Services Research and Policy*, 13:92-98.

<http://ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=44185562&site=ehost-live>

#### **Week 7: Sampling (October 26)**

Teddlie, C., & F. Yu (2007). Mixed Methods Sampling: A Typology with Examples. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1:77-100.

<http://journals.sagepub.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/doi/abs/10.1177/2345678906292430>

Onwuegbuzie, A.J., & K.M.T. Collins (2007). A Typology of Mixed Methods Sampling Designs in Social Science Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 12(2): 281-316.

<http://ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login?url=https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ800183>

**Week 8: Measurement Validity and Reliability (November 2)**

Drost, E.A. (2011). Validity and Reliability in Social Science Research. *Education Research and Perspectives*, 39(1): 105-123.

<http://www.erpjournal.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/ERPV38-1.-Drost-E.-2011.-Validity-and-Reliability-in-Social-Science-Research.pdf>

Kimberlin, C.L. & Winterstein, A.G. (2008). Validity and Reliability of Measurement Instruments Used in Research. *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*, 65(23): 2276-2284.

<http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?p=HRCA&sw=w&u=uocalgary&v=2.1&id=GALE%7CA191955612&it=r&asid=742118bb0e21ce5b3f186bb7597d0c73>

**Week 9: Questionnaire Design and Question Writing (November 9)**

Woodward, C.A. (1988). Questionnaire Construction and Question Writing for Research in Medical Education. *Medical Education*, 22:347-363.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/doi/10.1111/j.1365-2923.1988.tb00764.x/full>

Lietz, P. (2010). Research into Questionnaire Design: A Summary of the Literature. *International Journal of Market Research*, 52(2):249-272.

<http://ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=49391536&site=ehost-live>

**Week 10: Mail-Out Surveys (November 16)**

Rattray, J., & Jones, M.C. (2007). Essential Elements of Questionnaire Design and Development. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 16:234-243.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/doi/10.1111/j.1365-2702.2006.01573.x/abstract>

Diaz de Rada, V. (2005). Influence of Questionnaire Design on Response to Mail Surveys. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8:61-78.

<http://ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=16677328&site=ehost-live>

**Week 11: High Tech Surveying (November 23)**

Brick, J.M. (2011). The Future of Survey Sampling. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 872-888.

<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/stable/41345915>

Brick, J.M., Brick, P.D., Dipko, S., Presser, S., Tucker,C., & Yuan,Y. (2007). Cell Phone Survey Feasibility in the US: Sampling and Calling Cell Numbers versus Landline Numbers. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 71:23-39.

<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/stable/4500358>

Shin, E., T.P. Johnson & K. Rao (2012). Survey Mode Effects on Data Quality: Comparison of Web and Mail Modes in a U.S. National Panel Survey. *Social Science Computer Review*, 30:212-228.

<http://journals.sagepub.com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/doi/full/10.1177/0894439311404508>

**Week 12: Proposal Writing and Ethics (November 30)**

Common Issues and How to Avoid Them (2015). Prepared by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board, University of Calgary.

[http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/files/research/150218-cfreb\\_common\\_issues\\_2015.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/files/research/150218-cfreb_common_issues_2015.pdf)

Crow, G., Wiles, R., Heath, S., and Charles, V. (2006). Research Ethics and Data Quality: The Implications of Informed Consent. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 9:83-95.

<http://ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=20855672&site=ehost-live>

## Week 13: Presentation of Proposals (December 7)

### CLASS POLICIES AND INFORMATION

1. Grade Reappraisal: Within two weeks of the date the exam/assignment is returned, students seeking reappraisal of examinations or assignments must submit a written response to the instructor explaining the basis for reconsideration of one's mark. The instructor will reconsider the grade assigned and will then book a time with the student to discuss his or her work and rationale. It should be noted that a reconsidered mark may be raised, lowered, or remain the same.
2. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
3. Academic Misconduct: Please refer to the website listed below for information on University of Calgary policies on Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct:  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html>
4. Protection of Privacy: The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation does not allow students to retrieve any course material from public places. Anything that requires handing back will be returned directly during class or office hours. "If students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment."
5. Ethical Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.
6. Deferrals: If possible, please provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to write an exam or complete/turn-in assignments on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the health issue rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student. If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a "make up" test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a "make up" test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Department of Sociology. Deferred Final Exam Form: Please note that requests to defer a Registrar scheduled final exam are dealt with through the Registrar's Office. Further information about deadlines, and where paperwork should be taken, is available on the form, which can be found at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/student-forms>

Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term also requires a form to be filled out. It's available at [https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred\\_termwork15\\_0.pdf](https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred_termwork15_0.pdf)

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

7. Student Representation: The 2017-18 Students' Union VP Academic is Tina Miller ([suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto:suvpaca@ucalgary.ca)).

For more information, and to contact other elected officials with the Student's Union, please visit this link: <https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/>

You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/contact>

8. Emergency Evacuation: In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point at Professional Faculties Food Court (Primary Assembly Point) or the Education Block Food Court (Alternate Assembly Point). Please check these assembly point locations for all of your classes at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

9. Safewalk: The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

10. Academic Accommodation: The student accommodation policy can be found at: [ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy](http://ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy). Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities [ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy](http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy). Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.