

## COURSE OUTLINE

### Soci313-02: Introduction to Social Research Methods

University of Calgary – Department of Sociology

Fall 2014

**Lecture:** TR 2:00 – 3:15 PM, in SB 148

**Labs:** Lab3 – T 3:30 – 5:20 PM, in ST 063 (Mariama)

Lab4 – R 3:30 – 5:20 PM, in EDC 172 (Alla)

**Instructor:** Dr. Annette Tézli

Office: SS950

Phone: 403-220-6513 (during office hours only)

Email: atezli@ucalgary.ca

Office hours: M 9:30 – 10:45 AM,

T 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM,

W 12:15 – 1:30 PM; or by appointment

**Teaching Assistants:** Alla Konnikov and Mariama Zaami

#### Course Description

Generally speaking, social research is research conducted by sociologists and other social investigators to explore, describe, explain, critique and offer suggestions for improving aspects of the social world. Producing high quality social research, however, is an art that requires specific skills. This course is designed to provide you with the skills and resources necessary to conduct scientifically sound social research. These skills will not only make you a good researcher, they will also transform you into a critical consumer of social research presented to you in the academic and popular realms. Over the course of the semester, we will discuss the research process in its entirety, focusing on philosophical underpinnings of social science research and their implication for research design, ethical considerations, research planning, quantitative and qualitative methods of data generation, and data analysis. Furthermore, we will discuss the often intricate choices and challenges researchers face throughout the research process.

This course will provide you the opportunity to:

- examine social phenomena in a scientific manner;
- critically assess the use of scientific methods as a means to understand the social world;
- critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of various research methods;
- develop your written skills through informal and formal writing assignments;
- develop a research proposal;
- be part of a class in which participation in discussions and group exercises is encouraged.

#### Course Format

I will begin each class with a short lecture to cover key concepts and other pertinent information that will complement but not summarize the assigned readings. The remainder of the class will be interactive. We will engage in group and class discussions, hands-on exercises and watch pertinent films. After each activity, we will reflect on insights gained through discussions and various formal and informal writing assignments.

## Required Readings

### *Textbook*

(available through the UofC bookstore)

**Neuman, W.L. & K. Robson (2015).** *Basics of social research: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian ed.). Toronto: Pearson.

**Please Note:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition has been updated extensively. Please do not purchase earlier editions!

You can rent an e-copy of the textbook here:

<http://www.coursesmart.com/basics-of-social-research-qualitative-and/w-lawrence-neuman-karen-robson/dp/9780205998081>

One copy of the textbook is also available on reserve at the Taylor Family Digital Library.

A study guide and a variety of free, course-related resources and quizzes are available through **MySearchLab**, which you can access with the code provided in your book.

### *Supplementary Texts*

For some classes, I selected short supplementary readings. Please refer to the course schedule for which days supplementary readings have been assigned. Electronic copies of the readings listed below are available through the UofC library (TFDL) or Desire2Learn (D2L).

#### Book chapters

Bouma, G. D., Ling, R., & Wilkinson, L. (2012). *The research process* (2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian ed.). Don Mills, ON: Oxford.

Flick, U. (2011). *Introducing research methodology: A beginner's guide to doing a research project*. London: Sage.

#### Journal articles

Head, E. (2009). The ethics and implications of paying participants in qualitative research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(4), 335-344.

Lindsey, E.W. (1998). Service providers' perception of factors that help or hinder homeless families. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 79(2), 160-172.

Mason, R. (2003). Listening to lone mothers: Paid work, family life, and childcare in Canada. *Journal of Children and Poverty*, 9(1), 41-54.

McChesney, K.Y. (1995). A review of the empirical literature on contemporary urban homeless families. *Social Service Review*, 69(3), 429-460.

Schneider, B., Chamberlain, K., & Hodgetts, D. (2010). Representations of homelessness in four Canadian newspapers: Regulation, control, and social order. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 37(4), 147-172.

Taylor-Powell, E. (1998). *Questionnaire design: Asking questions with a purpose*. Madison: University of Wisconsin.

## Methods of Evaluation

### *Assignment Schedule and Outline*

Please note: All assignments are due at the **beginning** of class.

	<b>Date due</b>	<b>% of final grade</b>
5 Reading quizzes	unannounced	15
5 Tutorial assignments	see tutorial outline	15
Topic proposal	September 25	5
Annotated bibliography	October 14	15
Research design and sampling	November 13	20
Research Proposal	December 4	30

#### 5 unannounced reading quizzes (15%, 3% each)

The quality of the class and your final grade depend in part on your attendance, preparation and class participation. To encourage attendance and preparation, you will write 5 unannounced, short reading quizzes which will cover the readings assigned for the day of the quiz. Quizzes will be written at the beginning of class. If you are late or miss a quiz for legitimate reasons as specified in the assignment policies below, the average of the remaining quizzes will be entered as your grade for the quiz you missed. In all other cases, a grade of 0 will be entered automatically.

#### 5 tutorial assignments (15%, 3% each)

Tutorials provide you with an opportunity to apply theoretical material covered in lecture in a practical manner and thus deepen your understanding of the subject matter. Attendance should be considered a requirement, not an option. Your grade for this component will be based on your participation in various exercises and assignments, which will be administered and graded by your graduate Teaching Assistants. More information will be provided during your tutorials and on D2L.

#### Written Assignments – Preparing a Research Proposal (70%)

The remainder of your grade will be based on sequenced, written assignments which constitute different sections of your research proposal. In general, a research proposal explains why and how a research study will be conducted. It is useful for planning a study and for getting critical feedback before undertaking the study. The objective of this assignment is for you to practice writing a well-structured research proposal. This is your opportunity to prepare a proposal and receive feedback on each individual assignment. I will return each assignment before the next one is due, so that you can make necessary revisions. Please refer to the assignment schedule for the due dates of each assignment. Individual assignments are outlined below. More detailed information will be provided in class and on D2L.

##### *1. Topic & research question proposal – 2 pages (5%)*

Before you can write a research proposal, you have to decide on a topic. For this assignment, I expect you to discuss your research topic and a set of research questions that flow out of this topic. You can select any topic that interests you, but keep in mind that you have to examine your topic sociologically. Please explain your topic, telling me why this topic interests you and briefly outlining its sociological relevance. Secondly, what is/are your research question(s)? Research questions flow out of your chosen topic and provide an important first step toward planning and carrying out a research project. What is the research question you are trying to find the answer to? This can also be termed as the aim or purpose of the research. Think about how you finish this statement: “The purpose of this research is ...”

## 2. Annotated Bibliography – length will vary (15%)

The purpose of an annotated bibliography is to summarize and evaluate sources of information. For this assignment, select 10 scientifically sound sources relevant to your research topic and critically evaluate the information provided in each source.

## 3. Research Design and Sampling – no more than 6 pages (20%)

This section should include an extensive discussion of your proposed methodology, your sample and your sampling technique. You will also discuss ethical considerations pertaining to your proposed research.

## 4. Research Proposal – no more than 15 pages (30%)

Here is where you put everything together into a final, polished proposal, which is the final product of your work throughout the semester. Your final research proposal will include an introduction, a literature review, and a discussion of your chosen methods if data generation and analysis, including your research instrument. Most of your final research proposal you will have already written in previous assignments, so do not feel intimidated by the length of the assignment. As long as you stay on top of your revisions throughout the semester, putting together the research proposal should be fairly straightforward.

### Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned and submitted to the registrar based on the following scale:

A+	96 – 100%	B+	80 – 84%	C+	67 – 69%	D+	55 – 58%
A	90 – 95%	B	75 – 79%	C	63 – 66%	D	50 – 54%
A-	85 – 89%	B-	70 – 74%	C-	59 – 62%	F	<50%

The grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and to conform to departmental norms.

### Emergency evacuations

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point by the ICT - Food Court (primary).

### Course Policies

#### Technology Use

You are welcome to use your laptop/tablet in class. If you are using a laptop/tablet in class, I would kindly ask you to sit in the back of the class so that other students are not distracted. Please use your laptop/tablet for course-related purposes only (i.e. to access course presentations, take notes). Bear in mind that using your computer/tablet/phone to surf the net, shop, email, check Facebook, update your tweets, etc. is distracting to your classmates. It is also a waste of your tuition fees. Permission to use laptops/tablets may be withdrawn if they are not used appropriately. Please make sure to mute your cell phone and refrain from using it during class.

#### Attendance and Participation

Reading the assigned material, an open mind, and your active participation is required for this class to reach its fullest potential and to make it a rewarding experience for you and me. Furthermore, attendance is important in any class. If you miss a class, you will miss material relevant to your success in this course. To attend classes regularly is your responsibility. If you have to miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain the covered material from one of your class mates. If you need to leave class early, it is courteous to sit somewhere that will allow you to leave without disrupting others.

### E-mails

Feel free to contact me over email at any time. Please put your course number and section in your email's subject line. Also, it is courteous to include a proper salutation, your full name, student ID, and a proper closing in the body of your email. All emails violating customary email conventions will be ignored. All other emails will be answered within one business day. I do not answer emails over the weekend. Please take that into account when emailing me questions pertaining assignments or exams. If you have a course-related question, please check the course outline first. Questions that can be answered by consulting the course outline will not be answered. Also, please e-mail me for administrative purposes only, for example to set up an appointment. Please do not use e-mail as a replacement for an office visit, if there is something you want to discuss. Questions about the course content and readings, concerns about grades, or any other personal issues should be dealt with in person during my office hours.

### Assignments and Deferrals

It is your responsibility to complete and submit all assignments outlined in this course outline. If at all possible you must provide **advance** notice to the instructor if you are unable to take a test or pass in an assignment on time. All requests for a deferral of an exam or assignment due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while you have the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. **Travel arrangements, misreading of the syllabus, and scheduling conflicts with other classes or employment responsibilities** 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. There are absolutely NO EXCEPTIONS.

If you have missed an exam for a legitimate reason, I 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 I schedule a "make up" test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department.

Assignments submitted late (as of the beginning of class on the dates indicated in the assignment schedule) without due cause are subject to a **5 percentage points deduction** (i.e. 80% instead of 85%) for **each day** past the due date. Assignments not submitted within 7 calendar days of the due date without approval for extension will automatically receive a grade of 0.

#### *Deferred Term Work Form:*

Please note that requests to defer a final paper 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:

[http://wcm.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred\\_termwork.pdf](http://wcm.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred_termwork.pdf)

### Handing in papers outside of class, return of final papers, and release of final grades

1. When students are unable to submit papers in class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor. Electronic submissions via email or D2L, papers placed under the instructor's door, or those submitted to the administrative assistants in the department's main office will **NOT** be accepted.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the main Sociology Department office. The Freedom of Information and Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place (i.e. outside an instructor's office, the department office etc.) Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will be available for pick-up only during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or at the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are available only online.

## **Ethics Research**

Please be advised that any research involving human subjects - including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the Faculty Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, you must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing your plans with me, to determine if ethics approval is required.

## **Academic Misconduct**

Plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct are regarded as serious academic offences. Please be advised to consult the University Calendar which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

## **The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation**

...disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department's main office. I will return written assignments individually during class, or during my office hours. If you are unable to pick up your assignment, you may provide me with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of your assignment.

## **Student Representation**

The 2014-15 Students' Union VP Academic is Hana Kadri; email: [suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto:suvpaca@ucalgary.ca). The Faculty of Arts has four SU representatives who may be contacted at any of the following email addresses: [arts1@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@ucalgary.ca), [arts2@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@ucalgary.ca), [arts3@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@ucalgary.ca), and [arts4@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts4@ucalgary.ca). You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds/role>

## **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. You can also contact Campus Security from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

## **Academic Accommodation**

Students who require academic accommodation, must register with Student Accessibility Services (formerly the Disability Resource Centre) at MC 452 (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/> or phone 403-220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. It is a student's responsibility to register with Student Accessibility Services and to request academic accommodation, if required.

## **Reappraisal of Grades and Academic Appeals**

If you chose to challenge a grade you received for an assignment, please refer to the UofC Calendar for more information and follow the procedures outlined therein.

## Course Schedule

Subject to change. Changes will be announced and discussed in class.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
	<b>1. How We Know What We Know</b>	
September 9	Course welcome	
September 11	Foundations of scientific inquiry	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 1
September 16	Theory and social research	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 2
	<b>2. Planning Social Research</b>	
September 18	Selecting a research problem and formulating research questions	Bouma, Ling & Wilkinson, Ch. 3 <b>(D2L)</b>
September 23	Reviewing the existing literature	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 4 McChesney (1995) <b>(TFDL)</b>
September 25	Ethical considerations	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 3 <u>and</u> Head (2009) <b>(TFDL)</b>
September 30	Selecting a research design <b>Proposal due</b>	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 5
October 2	Quantitative research design	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 6
October 7	Quantitative research design, cont.	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 6
October 9	Qualitative research design	Flick (2011), Ch. 4 <b>(D2L)</b>
October 14	Selecting a sample <b>Annotated bibliography due</b>	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 7
	<b>3. Methods of Data Generation</b>	
October 16	Selecting a research method	Flick (2011), Ch. 6 <b>(D2L)</b>
October 21	Nonreactive quantitative research	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 10 <u>and</u> Schneider, Chamberlain & Hodgetts (2010) <b>(TFDL)</b>
October 23	Nonreactive qualitative research	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 14
October 28	Quantitative research: Experiments	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 9
October 30	Quantitative research: Surveys	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 8
November 4	Quantitative research: Survey design	Taylor-Powell (1998) <b>(online)</b>
November 6	Qualitative research: Fieldwork	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 13
November 11	<b>Reading Break, NO CLASS</b>	
November 13	Qualitative methods: Observations <b>Research design and sampling due</b>	
November 18	Qualitative methods: Interviews	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 12
	<b>4. Data Analysis &amp; Representation</b>	
November 20	Quantitative data analysis	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 11
November 25	Quantitative data analysis, cont.	Lindsey (1998) <b>(TFDL)</b>
November 27	Qualitative data analysis	Neuman & Robson, Ch. 15
December 2	Qualitative data analysis, cont.	Mason (2003) <b>(TFDL)</b>
December 4	Final class discussion <b>Research Proposals due</b>	