

**Sociology 313 (Section 2)**  
**Introductory Social Research Methods**  
**January, 2017**

**Instructor**

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**Calendar description**

Research processes including problem definition, data collection and analysis; quantitative and qualitative strategies. Students are expected to acquire skills through doing research.

**Times and locations**

Classroom sessions are from 09:30 to 10:45 on Tuesdays **and** Thursdays, in room SA 121.  
Laboratory sessions are from 15:30 to 17:20 on Tuesdays (CHE 202) **or** Thursdays (EDC 172).

**Teaching and learning strategies**

There are three teaching and learning strategies for this course, each of which contributes to the overall learning outcome of building students' knowledge and skills with regards to conducting and assessing social research for academic and applied purposes.

First, students **read a textbook** written by Earl Babbie and Lucia Benaquisto (2014): *Fundamentals of Social Research*, Third Canadian Edition. This textbook provides a coherent and accessible overview of key concepts and processes in the conduct of social research.

Second, students **attend lectures** in which the professor uses examples, including those from his own research career, to illustrate concepts and processes described in the textbook. Such lectures provide insight into actual practices of conducting empirical research for academic and applied purposes, and the opportunity to ask questions about such practices. Classroom sessions involve both lectures and opportunity for Q&A and discussion of required readings. Lectures will not repeat material from the textbook.

Third, students **work in small groups**, with tutorial support from graduate teaching assistants during laboratory sessions, to (1) develop a detailed proposal for a research project that would hypothetically involve survey or interview methods; and (2) undertake a modest empirical research project using unobtrusive methods. Note that research involving human subjects is not permitted to be undertaken for this course.

## **Part I (10 & 12 January): Thinking about social research**

### **Objectives:**

- To understand key differences between empirical sociological research and other means of understanding and explaining social reality.
- To understand that all forms of social research are grounded in ontological, epistemological, methodological, and ethical assumptions.
- To become aware of important ethical issues in social research.
- To form working groups (of five members each) and define the themes concerning which the groups will complete two projects over the course of the semester.

### **Readings:**

Chapter 1: Human Inquiry and Science

Chapter 2: Paradigms, Theory, and Research

Chapter 3: Ethical Issues for Social Researchers

### **Lectures:**

1. Course overview.
2. Thinking sociologically.
3. Three sociological ways of seeing.
  - McLean, Scott, 1999. Thinking about Research in Continuing Education: A Meta-Theoretical Primer. *Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education*, 25 (2) 23-42. (Note that this and subsequent readings listed under "lectures" are not required reading, but may be consulted for further information.)
4. Ethical principles for social research.

### **Group project work:**

- Review the two projects that must be completed by each small group.
- Form groups of five students, and define themes on which each group will work.

## **Part II (3 weeks, 17 January – 2 February): Planning research processes**

### **Objectives:**

- To learn the major elements of sociological research design.
- To understand processes of conceptualization and operationalization.

- To recognize the roles of indexes, scales, and typologies in social research.
- To understand the importance of sampling in social research, and recognize various approaches to sampling.
- To undertake background research for the small group projects, and plan for (1) developing a proposal for research utilizing survey or interview methods; and (2) undertaking a research project involving unobtrusive methods.

**Readings** (with deadlines for first reading):

Chapter 4: Research Design and the Logic of Causation (17 January)

Chapter 5: Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement (24 January)

Chapter 6: The Logic of Sampling (31 January)

**Lectures:**

5. Applied research design.
6. Pure research design.
7. Conceptualization, operationalization, and index construction (1).
  - Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre, 2004. *Health Promotion Capacity Checklists: A Workbook for Individual, Organizational, and Environmental Assessment*. Saskatoon: PRHPRC.
8. Conceptualization, operationalization, and index construction (2).
  - Legewie, Joscha & Thomas DiPrete, 2014. The high school environment and the gender gap in science and engineering. *Sociology of Education* 87 (4) 259-280.
9. Illustration of the use of typologies (1).
  - McLean, Scott, & Laurie Vermeylen, 2014. Transitions and Pathways: Self-Help Reading and Informal Adult Learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 33 (2) 125-140.
10. Illustration of the use of typologies (2).
  - Roksa, Josipa & Daniel Potter, 2011. Parenting and academic achievement: intergenerational transmission of educational advantage. *Sociology of Education* 84 (4) 299-321.
11. Illustration of the use of typologies (3).
  - Logan, John, Elisabeta Minca & Sinem Adar, 2012. The geography of inequality: why separate means unequal in American public schools. *Sociology of Education* 85 (3) 287-301.

12. Sampling for purposes of conducting exploratory research.

- McLean, Scott, 2015. Individual Autonomy or Social Engagement? Adult Learners in Neo-Liberal Times. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 65 (3) 196-214.

13. Sampling to test hypotheses and support the use of inferential statistics.

- Zarifa, David, 2012. Persistent inequality or liberation from social origins? Determining who attends graduate and professional schools in Canada's expanded postsecondary system. *Canadian Review of Sociology* 49 (2) 109-137.

### **Group project work:**

- Undertake a modest literature review.
- Move from a "theme" to developing research questions that may be addressed by (1) survey or interview methods; and (2) unobtrusive methods.
- Plan in detail for both small group projects.

### **Mid-term examination**

The mid-term examination will be written at the conclusion of Part II, during the class session on 2 February.

### **Part III (6 weeks, 7 February – 16 March): Gathering data**

#### **Objectives:**

- To compare and contrast five modes of observation in social research: experiments; survey research, unobtrusive research, qualitative field research, and qualitative interviewing.
- To distinguish between the purposes, questions, and contexts in which various modes of observation are more and less appropriate.
- To become aware of basic guidelines for undertaking the various modes of observation in social research.
- To understand the unique contexts and challenges of evaluation research.
- To develop and present (in both oral and written formats) a proposal, using a standard format consistent with that used by the *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada*, for a modest research project involving survey or interview methods.
- To gather and manage data in a modest research project involving unobtrusive methods.

## Readings (with deadlines for first reading):

- Chapter 8: Survey Research (7 February)
- Chapter 11: Qualitative Interviewing (14 February)
- Chapter 9: Unobtrusive Research (21 February)
- Chapter 10: Field Research (28 February)
- Chapter 7: Experiments (7 March)
- Chapter 12: Evaluation Research (14 March)

## Lectures:

14. Illustration of the use of surveys in applied research.
  - McLean, Scott, Lori Ebbesen, Katheryn Green, Bruce Reeder, David Butler-Jones and Sheilagh Steer, 2000. Continuing Education for Health Promotion: A Case Study of Needs Assessment Practice. *Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education*, 26 (1) 11-30.
15. Illustration of the use of surveys in pure research.
  - Martin, Karin, 2009. Normalizing Heterosexuality: Mothers' Assumptions, Talk, and Strategies with Young Children. *American Sociological Review*, 74 (2) 190-207.
16. Using Fluid Surveys (online research tool).
17. Illustration of qualitative interviewing (1).
  - McLean, Scott & Jaya Dixit, 2017. Passive dupes or creative subjects? The complex reception of self-help books. *Manuscript under review*.
18. Illustration of qualitative interviewing (2).
  - Papapolydorou, Maria, 2014. 'When you see a normal person...': social class and friendship networks among teenage students. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 35 (4) 559-577.
19. Illustration of qualitative interviewing (3).
  - Lehmann, Wolfgang, 2013. Habitus transformation and hidden injuries: successful working class university students. *Sociology of Education* 87 (1) 1-15.
20. Illustration of unobtrusive research (1).
  - McLean, Scott, 2008. Extending Resources, Fostering Progress, or Meeting Needs? University Extension and Continuing Education in Western Canada. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 29 (1) 91-103.

21. Illustration of unobtrusive research (2).
  - Denny, Kathleen, 2011. Gender in Context, Content, and Approach: Comparing Gender Messages in Girl Scout and Boy Scout Handbooks. *Gender & Society*, 25 (1) 27-47.
22. Illustration of unobtrusive research (3).
  - Kimmel, Michael & Matthew Mahler, 2003. Adolescent masculinity, homophobia, and violence: random school shootings, 1982-2001. *American Behavioral Scientist* 46 (10) 1439-1458.
23. Illustration of unobtrusive research (4).
  - Raby, Rebecca, 2005. Polite, well-dressed and on time: secondary school conduct codes and the production of docile citizens. *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 42 (1) 71-91.
24. Illustration of qualitative field research (1).
  - McLean, Scott, 2000. Between Rationality and Politics: Autobiographical Portraits of Adult Education Programme Planning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 19 (6) 493-505.
25. Illustration of qualitative field research (2).
  - Ispa-Landa, Simone, 2013. Gender, race, and justifications for group exclusion: urban black students bussed to affluent suburban schools. *Sociology of Education* 86 (3) 218-233.
26. Illustration of qualitative field research (3).
  - Halliday-Hardie, Jessica & Karolyn Tyson, 2013. Other people's racism: race, rednecks, and riots in a Southern high school. *Sociology of Ed.*, 86 (1) 83-102.
27. Illustration of experiments.
  - Pager, Devah, Bruce Western & Bart Bonikowski, 2009. Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment. *Am. Sociological Rev.*, 74 (5) 777-799.
28. Illustration of evaluation research.
  - McLean, Scott and Gwenna Moss, 2003. They're Happy, but did they Make a Difference? Applying Kirkpatrick's Framework to the Evaluation of a National Leadership Program. *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 18 (1) 1-23.

#### **Group project work:**

- Complete and submit a proposal for research (not to be conducted in this course) that would utilize survey or interview methods – **due on 16 March**.
- Give a six-minute synopsis of that research proposal to the class in the form of an oral presentation with PowerPoint slides – **on 16 March**.
- Gather data utilizing unobtrusive methods.

## Part IV (4 weeks, 21 March – 11 April): Analyzing data

### Objectives:

- To become aware of basic guidelines and processes for undertaking the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data.
- To understand the connections between analyzing data and making claims to knowledge in pure and applied sociology.
- To analyze data from a modest research project, and submit a final report (in both oral and written formats) from that project.

### Readings (with deadlines for first reading):

Chapter 13: Qualitative Data Analysis (21 March)

Chapter 14: Quantitative Data Analysis (28 March)

Chapter 15: The Logic of Multivariate Analysis (4 April)

Chapter 16: Social Statistics (4 April)

### Lectures:

29. Illustration of qualitative data analysis (1)

- McLean, Scott & Laurie Vermeylen, 2017. From getting ahead to getting back on one's feet: Performing masculinity as a self-help reader. *Manuscript under review*.

30. Illustration of qualitative data analysis (2)

- McLean, Scott & Heather Rollwagen, 2008. Progress, Public Health, and Power: Foucault and the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 45 (3) 225-245.

31. Illustration of qualitative data analysis (3)

- Garcia, Lorena, 2009. 'Now why do you want to know about that?' Heteronormativity, sexism, and racism in the sexual (mis)education of Latina youth. *Gender & Society* 23 (4) 520-541.

32. Illustration of quantitative data analysis (1)

- McLean, Scott & Dirk Morrison, 2000. Learners' Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Participation in Computer Conferencing. *Journal of Distance Education*, 15 (2) 17-36.

33. Illustration of quantitative data analysis (2)

- Rippeyoung, Phyllis, 2013. Can breastfeeding solve inequality? The relative mediating impact of breastfeeding and home environment on poverty gaps in Canadian child cognitive skills. *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 38 (1) 65-85.

34. Multivariate analysis and statistics.

- Frenette, Marc (2014) *An investment of a lifetime? The long-term labour market premiums associated with a postsecondary education*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Gosine, Kevin (2000) Revisiting the Notion of a 'Recast' Vertical Mosaic in Canada: Does a Post-Secondary Education Make a Difference? *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 32 (3) 89-104.

**Group project work:**

- Analyze data gathered through unobtrusive methods.
- Complete and submit a final report of research conducted using unobtrusive methods – **due on 11 April**.
- Give a six-minute synopsis of that final report to the class in the form of an oral presentation with PowerPoint slides – **on 11 April**.

**Assignments and grading**

Grades in this class will be based on the completion of the following requirements:

- Mid-term examination held in class on 2 February (20%)
- Small group research proposal and presentation due on 16 March (20%)
- Small group research findings report and presentation due on 11 April (20%)
- Final examination to be held on the date and time as scheduled by the Registrar (40%)

Performance will be assessed, and grades will be assigned, based on the University of Calgary standards as described in the Calendar. The chart on the following page will be used to translate examination results into a final letter grade.

<b>Points (/100)</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>
96-100	A+
90-95	A
86-89	A-
81-85	B+
76-80	B
71-75	B-
67-70	C+
62-66	C
59-61	C-
54-58	D+
50-53	D
49 or less	F

### **OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.

#### **Office hours and e-mail contact**

Office hours are by appointment only. If you wish to make an appointment, please contact the instructor using the e-mail address or telephone number on the first page of the outline. If communicating by e-mail, please include your full name and a description of the question or issue that you would like to discuss. Note that, as appropriate, some questions or issues may be addressed via e-mail or telephone rather than through an in-person meeting.

#### **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.

### **Notification of final grades**

Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are only available online.

### **Ethics in 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 Faculty Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human research involving human subjects without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

### **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-2-1.html>

### **Deferrals**

When possible, please provide advance notice 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, misreading the syllabus, and scheduling conflicts with other classes or employment 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).

## **Student Representation**

The 2016-17 Students' Union VP Academic is Alicia Lunz ([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>

## **Emergency Evacuations**

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point at the **Social Science Food Court**. Please check these assembly point locations for all of your classes at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

## **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.

## **Academic Accommodation**

Students needing an accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should contact Student Accessibility Services (MC 293, phone 403-220-8237) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities available at <http://ucalgary.ca/access/>. Please provide academic accommodation letters to the instructor as early in the semester as possible and no later than two weeks after the course begins.