



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

Faculty of Arts

Department of Sociology

Sociology Department Home Page: <http://www.soci.ucalgary.ca>

Soci313 L01

Introductory Social Research Methods

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|---------------|---------------------|---------|
| • Winter 2019 | • MWF 14:00 – 14:50 | • SA104 |
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Lab1 (Sepideh): M 15:00 – 16:50, in TRB101

Lab 2 (Hasmik): M 15:00 – 16:50, in SA247

Instructor: Dr. Annette Tézli

Office: SS950

Email: atezli@ucalgary.ca

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

Office Hours*: Mondays 9:00 – 11:00,

Thursdays 13:00 – 15:00; and by appointment

*except during the midterm break, on statutory holidays, and the final exam period

Teaching Assistants: Hasmik Tovmasyan (hasmik.tovmasyan@ucalgary.ca) &
Sepideh Borzoo (sepideh.borzoo@ucalgary.ca)

Course Description and Objectives

Social research is research conducted by sociologists and other social scientists 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 plan and 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 intricate choices and challenges researchers face throughout the research process. Finally, we will explore how those complex choices and challenges shape our knowledge of social phenomena, and the implications of such knowledge production.

By the end of this course, successful students will be able to:

- examine social phenomena in a scientific manner.
- identify and critically assess the social context of social science research.
- retrieve, read, critically evaluate, and discuss a collection of empirical research.
- compare different theoretical, philosophical, and methodological underpinnings of empirical research.
- follow common principles of ethical research.
- explain the difference between qualitative and quantitative approaches.
- critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of key research methods.
- interpret qualitative and quantitative data.
- apply theoretical course material to a new problem.
- independently develop research questions and devise a research program.
- communicate effectively in writing.

Required Readings

(available through the UofC Bookstore or Bound and Copied)

American Sociological Association. 2014. *American Sociological Association Style Guide*. 5th ed. Washington, DC: American Sociological Association.

Neuman, W. Laurence, and Karen Robson. 2018. *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 4th Canadian ed. Toronto: Pearson.

You can rent the ebook here: <https://www.vitalsource.com/products/basics-of-social-research-fourth-canadian-w-lawrence-neuman-v9780134649108?term=9780134649108>

Please Note: The 4th edition has been updated extensively. Please do **NOT** purchase earlier editions of the text. It will inadequately prepare you for the assessments.

Additional required readings are listed in the back of the course outline.

Methods of Evaluation

Assignment Schedule and Outline

	Date due	% of final grade
10 Online reading quizzes		15
5 Lab assignments		10
Research proposal		
Assignment #1: Topic proposal	February 4	10
Assignment #2: Annotated bibliography	February 25	15
Assignment #3: Research design and sampling	March 18	20
Assignment #4: Research proposal	April 10	30

*Please note that I do **NOT** offer extra-credit options for this course beyond what is listed below.

10 Online reading quizzes

Studies repeatedly show that students will not complete their readings unless there is some form of incentive attached. However, completing the assigned readings prior to class will greatly facilitate your learning of the material. Completing the assigned readings also allows you to process some of the material prior to class and then contribute meaningfully to group and class discussions.

I will make 2 ungraded practice quizzes available during the first 2 weeks of classes. Graded quizzes will commence the second week of class. Each quiz will be made available on D2L 1 week before the corresponding chapter is covered in class and must be completed before the beginning of the respective class. For example, the first graded quiz will cover textbook chapter 4 and the corresponding journal article assigned for week 3 (January 21-25). The quiz will be posted on January 14 after class (14:50) and must be completed **before** class starts on January 21 (14:00). Each quiz has 15 questions and you will have 1 25-minute attempt to complete the quiz. Students with academic accommodations will receive extra time for the reading quizzes as indicated in their academic accommodation letters.

There will be 11 graded quizzes, but only 10 will count toward your total quiz grade. D2L will automatically drop your lowest grade. In addition, I am offering 1 bonus quiz at the beginning of the semester, which will count toward your overall reading quiz grade. Note that the total of all reading quizzes cannot exceed 100%. If you do not complete a quiz without due cause (as outlined below), you will receive a grade of 0. More information and a schedule are provided on D2L.

Research proposal

In general, a research proposal explains why and how a research study will be conducted. It is useful for planning a study, getting critical feedback before undertaking the study, and obtaining funding for the research. 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 above 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 (10%) – due February 4, at 15:00, in lab as hardcopy

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 should logically flow out of your chosen topic and provide an important first step toward planning and carrying out a research project.

2. Annotated bibliography (15%) – due February 25, at 15:00, in lab as hardcopy

The purpose of an annotated bibliography is to summarize and evaluate sources of information. For this assignment, select 5 peer-reviewed academic journal articles relevant to your research topic and critically evaluate the information provided in each source.

3. Research design and sampling (20%) – due March 18, at 15:00, in lab as hardcopy

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 (30%) – due April 10, at 14:00, in class as hardcopy

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 of data generation and analysis, including your research instrument.

Lab assignments (10%)

Labs will run every week on Mondays, starting on Monday, January 14, and provide you with an opportunity to apply theoretical material covered in lecture in a practical manner. Furthermore, labs will focus on developing and refining key skills required for the successful completion of all course assignments. Lab attendance should be considered a requirement, not an option. Your grade for this component will be based on your completion of various exercises and assignments, which will be administered and graded by your Teaching Assistants. Lab assignments are cumulative and might include material covered in past lectures as well as past labs. Assignments have to be completed and submitted to the TA during the scheduled lab time. There will be 10 graded lab assignments over the course of the semester, 5 of which will count toward your lab grade. If you complete more than 5 assignments, only your 5 highest grades will be counted. Since only 5 out of 10 assignments will count toward your lab grade, we will not grant deferrals or extensions for lab assignments. No exceptions. Please bring a laptop or tablet whenever possible.

Extra credit

To encourage you to develop and refine key academic skills, you can earn extra-credit for this course by completing *Writing Workshops* offered by the *Student Success Centre (SSC)*. A list of acceptable seminars has been posted on D2L. For each seminar you complete, you will receive **1** percentage point bonus on your final paper grade (so, for example, 79+1=80%; however, your final paper grade cannot exceed 100%). You can take as many seminars as you wish; you will receive extra credit for up to **3** of them. **Note: if you cannot make it to a workshop you booked, you must cancel it to make your spot available to another students. I will deduct 1 point from your extra-credit total for each “no show” on your registration page.** In order to receive credit, documentation of completion will be required. It is your responsibility to select, book, attend, and provide proof of completion for those workshops. To receive extra-credit, the seminar must be completed in the winter 2019 semester, seminars must be identified as *Writing Workshops* by the SSC, and you must take 3 distinct seminars. Documentation of attendance must be provided by the last day of class (April 10). Please review the detailed instructions provided on D2L under CONTENT → SUCCESS SEMINARS. A link to the Students Success Centre is provided on D2L under CONTENT → CAMPUS RESOURCES.

Final Exam Information

There will be no final exam in this course

Grading Scale

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

Grade	Percent range	Grade Point Value	Description
A+	96 – 100%	4.0	Outstanding performance
A	90 – 95.99%	4.0	Excellent-superior performance
A-	85 – 89.99%	3.7	
B+	80 – 84.99%	3.3	
B	75 – 79.99%	3.0	Good – clearly above average performance
B-	70 – 74.99%	2.7	
C+	67 – 69.99%	2.3	
C	63 – 66.99%	2.0	Satisfactory - basic understanding
C-	59 – 62.99%	1.7	
D+	55 – 58.99%	1.3	
D	50 – 54.99%	1.0	Minimal pass - marginal performance
F	<50%	0	unsatisfactory performance

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

Course Policies

Lecture Slides

PowerPoint slides for each lecture will be posted on D2L in advance of the lecture during which they will be covered. PowerPoint slides posted on D2L will provide a lecture outline, but not complete lecture content. It is your responsibility to complete each slide during lecture. I suggest printing off the slides and bringing them to class to assist your note-taking. I strongly recommend taking notes by hand rather than electronically. I provided helpful note-taking resources on D2L for those of you not used to taking notes by hand.

Recording of Lectures

Note that the audio or video recording of lectures and taking pictures of PowerPoint slides during the lecture are **NOT** permitted without explicit authorization. To do so without the instructor's authorization constitutes academic misconduct, according to the University of Calgary Calendar. For more information, see: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5-1.html>.

Sharing of Lecture Notes and Exam Questions

Note that publicly sharing lectures notes and exam questions on 3rd party sites such as OneClass, StudyBlue, Quizlet, etc. is **NOT** permitted. Any violations are subject to investigation under the UofC Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy: http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/non-academic-misconduct-policy_1.pdf.

Attendance, Participation, and Classroom Etiquette

Regular attendance and reading the assigned material, an open mind, as well as your active and meaningful participation is required for this class to reach its fullest potential and to make it a rewarding experience for you and me. Lectures will build on, but not necessarily summarize the assigned reading. I expect you to have critically read the assigned texts, that you are an active participant in class discussions, and that your contributions are informed by the assigned reading material.

I expect you to be on time so that other students in the class are not interrupted by your late arrival. During lectures, please make sure not to distract your fellow students in any way. If you come late or need to leave class early, please sit somewhere you can settle down or leave without disrupting others. If you miss a class, you will miss material relevant to your success in this course and it is your responsibility to obtain notes from one of your class mates.

Please keep in mind that all participants in this class are diverse in terms of their positions in complex social hierarchies organized around social class, race, ethnicity, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientation, age, disabilities, etc. Material discussed in class will at times reflect, at times challenge or even contradict your own life experiences. In an effort to make this course welcoming and safe for all, please interact with all participants (fellow students, instructor, and TAs) professionally and respectfully.

Reappraisal of Grades and Academic Appeals

If you chose to contest a grade you received for an assignment, please refer to the UofC Calendar for more information (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>) and follow the procedures outlined therein. Please note that the re-evaluation of course work can lead to the grade being raised, lowered, or it might remain the same.

Technology Use

Please use electronic devices is during lectures and labs for course-related purposes only. I recommend you turn off your Wi-Fi to help you stay focused during class. Please make sure to mute your cell phones and refrain from using it during lecture/lab.

E-mail

Please send emails only from your ucalgary account. Please put your course and section number in your email's subject line. 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 will be answered within one business day. I tend to not check or answer emails on weekends. Please e-mail me for administrative purposes only, for example to set up an appointment. Questions about the course content, concerns about grades, or personal issues should be discussed in person during my office hours. If you have a specific course-related question, please check the course outline first.

Emergency Evacuations

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point at the Social Science - Food Court.

Handing in Papers and Assignments

1. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
2. **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.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are only available online.

Research Ethics

Students are 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 Departmental 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

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>.

Absences and Deferrals

It is your responsibility to complete all assessments listed in this course outline. If at all possible, you must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take a test as scheduled or submit 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. Valid reasons to miss an exam are: illness, domestic affliction, religious conviction, and student athletes travelling for competitions. 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.

If you have missed an assignment, you must contact the instructor to discuss a new deadline and mode of paper submission. Assignments submitted via email or placed under my office door without prior consultation will **NOT** be accepted.

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 the final assignment 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/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 2018-19 Students' Union VP Academic is Jessica Revington (suypaca@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>

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

The student accommodation policy can be found at:
<http://www.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:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

Student Resources

[SU Wellness Centre](#)

[Campus Mental Health Strategy](#)

Thrive Priority Support Network

Your academic success and personal well-being are important to me. Please feel free to contact me at any time you need academic or personal support and I will help you identify the appropriate resources. Please note that I am working closely with the Thrive Priority Support Network, which seeks to identify students who are facing academic challenges and provide appropriate support services early. This tool monitors this course's D2L gradebook for sudden changes in a student's academic performance and alerts academic development specialists, who will then reach out to the student to touch base. Engagement with the academic development specialist is entirely voluntary and all information is confidential. More information is provided here:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/advising/thrive>.

Course Schedule

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

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
1. How We Know What We Know			
1	Jan 11	Course welcome	Neuman and Robson, Ch.1 Appendix (p. 365-74)
2	Jan 14-18	Foundations of scientific inquiry	Neuman and Robson, Ch.2 Rogers Stanton (2014)
2. Planning Social Research			
3	Jan 21-25	Research questions & Literature reviews	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 4 Greil et al. (2010)
4	Jan 28-Feb 1	Research ethics	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 3 CORE tutorial (link on D2L)
5	Feb 4-8 February 4	Designing a study Assignment #1 due – 15:00, in lab	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 1, 5
6	Feb 11-15	Quantitative and qualitative sampling	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 7 Abrams (2010)
7	Feb 18-22	MIDTERM BREAK – NO CLASS	
8	Feb 25-Mar 1 Feb 25	Quantitative and qualitative measurement Assignment #2 due – 15:00, in lab	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 6 Glasser and Smith III (2008)
3. Methods of Data Generation			
9	Mar 4-8	Nonreactive methods	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 10,14
10	Mar 11-15	Survey research	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 8 Wechsler et al. (1994)
11	Mar 18-22 March 18	Field research Assignment #3 due – 15:00, in lab	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 13 Marvasti (2002)
12	Mar 25-29	Qualitative interviewing	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 12 Sears et al. (2006)
4. Data Analysis & Representation			
13	Apr 1-5	Quantitative data analysis	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 11
14	Apr 8-12 April 10 Apr 12	Qualitative data analysis Assignment #4 due – 14:00, in class BSD – NO CLASS	Neuman and Robson, Ch. 15

Assigned Journal Articles

Note: All assigned journal articles can be downloaded without charge through the UofC library.

Abrams, Laura S. 2010. "Sampling 'Hard to Reach' Populations in Qualitative Research: The Case of Incarcerated Youth ". *Qualitative Social Work* 9(4):536 - 50.

Glasser, Howard M., and John P. Smith III. 2008. "On the Vague Meaning of 'Gender' in Education Research: The Problem, Its Sources, and Recommendations for Practice." *Educational Researcher* 37: 343-350.

Greil, Arthur L., Kathleen Slauson-Blevins, and Julia McQuillan. 2010. "The Experience of Infertility: A Review of Recent Literature." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 32(1):140-62.

Marvasti, Amir B. 2002. "Constructing the Service-Worthy Homeless through Narrative Editing." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 31(5):615-51.

Rogers Stanton, Christine. 2014. "Crossing Methodological Borders: Decolonizing Community-Based Participatory Research." *Qualitative Inquiry* 20(5):573-83.

Sears, Heather A., E. Sandra Byers, John J. Whelan and Marcelle Saint-Pierre. 2006. "'If It Hurts You, Then It Is Not a Joke'." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 21(9):1191-207.

Wechsler, Henry, Andrea Davenport, George Dowdall, Barbara Moeykens, and Sonia Castillo. 1994. "Health and Behavioral Consequences of Binge Drinking in College: A National Survey of Students at 140 Campuses." *JAMA* 272(21):1672-77.