

University of British Columbia
Sociology 217A-001
Research Methods

Term 2: January - April 2014

Class Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:00 – 3:20pm

Class Location: Friedman 153

Instructor:

Professor Wendy D. Roth

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Office: ANSO 3115

Office phone: 822-4845

Office hours: Thursdays 3:30-4:30pm
or by appointment

Teaching Assistants:

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Office:	ANSO 108	ANSO 108	ANSO 1315
Office hours:	Wednesdays 1:00-2:00pm or by appointment	Tuesdays 3:30-4:30pm or by appointment	Thursdays 12:45- 1:45pm or by appointment

Recommended for students

A-I

J-Q

R-Z

with surnames:

Contact for questions on: Connect website

iClickers

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to social science research methods. It is the duty of a sociologist to ask and answer questions about the social world, and this course is basic training. You will learn how to ask sociologically relevant questions and how to discover the answers to those questions ethically, logically, rigorously and systematically. In the first part of the course you will learn the major steps in designing a social research project, including how to ask sociological questions that derive from theories about the social world, how to develop logical and testable hypotheses, how to define and measure concepts, and how to identify an appropriate sample. In the second part of the course you will learn about different methods of collecting data. Throughout we will focus on how different methods are suited to answering different questions and how the methods we choose affect the answers we are able to see.

Objectives:

Students should finish the course with practical skills that they can apply to their academic and everyday lives. We will learn to evaluate social research we come across, develop tools for studying the social world ourselves, and learn how to actually do sociology research.

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- distinguish conventional from social scientific knowledge;
- locate, read, and evaluate sociological journal articles;
- formulate empirically testable sociological questions and hypotheses;

- identify key concepts in sociological theories, questions and hypotheses;
- describe, develop and evaluate measures of sociological concepts;
- describe, develop and evaluate sampling procedures for sociological research;
- describe different methods of collecting sociological data and evaluate their merits and limitations.

Required Texts:

Babbie, Earl and Luca Benaquisto. 2014. *Fundamentals of Social Research: 3rd Canadian edition*. Nelson Education.

This text is available at the UBC Bookstore and is on reserve in Koerner Library.

Required Equipment:

iClicker

iClickers can be purchased at the UBC Bookstore.

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS AND EVALUATION:

Evaluation for this course is based on the following:

Article Memo: 20%

Midterm Exam 1: 20%

Midterm Exam 2: 20%

Final Exam: 30%

Answers to iClicker questions: 10%

1. **Article Memo** – This memo (2 pages maximum) focuses on your ability to read a sociological article and understand central aspects of the research involved. Details about this assignment appear at the end of the syllabus.

This assignment must be uploaded to TurnItIn.com before the beginning of class on the due date (see details below). You must also bring a hard copy of the assignment with you to class.

2. **Midterm Exams** – There will be two in-class midterm exams. Midterm 1 will cover material in the first 6 weeks of the class. Midterm 2 will cover material in weeks 7-10. The exams will consist primarily of multiple choice and True/False questions. There may also be some fill-in-the-blank and short-answer questions.
3. **Final Exam** – The final exam will be scheduled during the exam period (date to be announced). It will cover material from the entire course. The exam will include multiple choice and True/False questions. There may also be some fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay questions.

4. **Answers to iClicker questions** – At various times during lectures, multiple choice questions will be shown on the screen. You will be asked to answer the questions using your iClicker.

COURSE POLICIES

iClicker Use: Only you may use your iClicker. You may not under any circumstances give it to another student or ask someone else to answer for you. During lectures, we will check that iClickers are being used correctly by randomly selecting a student who has clicked in. If that student is not actually present, both s/he and the student who clicked in on her/his behalf will be penalized 25% of their entire mark for the course.

Teaching Assistant Office Hours: Each of the three Teaching Assistants for the class will hold weekly office hours. We ask that you visit the TA to whom you have been assigned based on the first letter of your surname. However, if you are unavailable at that TA's office hour time, you may visit the office hours of one of the other TAs. You may also e-mail your TA to schedule an appointment at a different time.

E-mail Addresses: All e-mails to students will be sent out through the Faculty Service Centre. This uses whatever e-mail address you gave to the university. It is your responsibility to make sure that this address is current and that you actively check it or forward it to another account. You are responsible for checking this e-mail account every 24 hours, including the evening before class.

Student Contacts: You are responsible for all material presented in class (including announcements). If you are unable to attend class, you should obtain notes from a classmate (do not contact the teaching assistants to find out what you missed). Write down the names and contact information for two of your classmates below and contact them about any questions.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when one person presents as one's own the words or ideas of another. This includes quoting sources, paraphrasing, or summarizing source material without indicating through the use of proper citation methods that the specific material in question was quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from a given source. Plagiarism of any form, even unintentional, will not be tolerated.

Many students think they know all about plagiarism and are not in danger of committing it. Surprisingly, most of the students I have found committing plagiarism have said exactly this. For this reason, I recommend that every student take UBC's online tutorial in Academic Integrity and

Plagiarism. This is available online at: <http://help.library.ubc.ca/planning-your-research/academic-integrity-plagiarism/>

TurnItIn.com: To deter and detect plagiarism, this course will make use of UBC's subscription to TurnItIn.com for the Article Memo. This is a service that checks textual material for originality. In addition to submitting a hard copy of the Article Memo in class, you will be required to upload written assignments to TurnItIn.com. By taking this course, you agree that your assignment may be subject to submission for textual similarity review by TurnItIn.com. All submitted assignments will be included as source documents in the TurnItIn.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the TurnItIn.com service are described on the TurnItIn.com website.

* To access the course on TurnItIn.com, you will need this information – Class ID: **7438394**; Class Name: **SOCI 217, Spring 2014**; Enrolment Password: **empirical**

* UBC asks that you do not use your real name in your TurnItIn.com account. However, to allow us to identify who you are, for this class you should create an account that consists of the first three letters of your last name followed by the first three letters of your first name (EX: RotWen).

Use of Laptops, Electronic Devices: It has become increasingly common for students to bring laptops to class. However, some students find it very distracting when their classmates are engaged in activities on their laptop that are not related to class. Research also shows that multitasking during lecture reduces memory of what is covered. Laptops should be used only for note-taking and activities related to class. Using laptops in an appropriate way is part of the general standards of consideration and respect that UBC students are expected to show to their professors and their fellow students. Students using laptops in inappropriate ways may be called on, asked to put their laptop away, or asked to leave class.

No other electronic devices will be allowed in class. Please turn off all cellular phones before the start of each class.

Lateness and Extensions Policy: The only written assignment that will be handed in for this class is the Article Memo. It must be submitted in two ways to receive full credit. It must be uploaded to TurnItIn.com before 2:00pm on the due date, and a hard copy must also be handed in at the end of class. Assignments which are late in either of these ways will be penalized 5 points for every 24 hours they are late (out of 100), including weekends. Handing one in on time but not the other does not avoid the lateness penalty! Lateness will not be excused without a letter of consideration from Arts Advising.

Similarly, extensions will not be granted without a letter of consideration from Arts Advising This is to ensure that all students are evaluated equally and none are given advantages not offered to the rest of the class.

Late Article Memos must be time stamped and dropped in the dropbox outside the sociology department mailroom. On the first page, they must include your name and student ID number, the name of the course and section number, and the name of the professor.

Missed Exams: Students who miss exams will be assigned a mark of 0. Students may, at the professor's discretion, have an absence excused with a letter of consideration/standing deferred from Arts Advising. Doctor's notes must be taken to Arts Advising and a letter of consideration received. Doctor's notes without a letter of consideration from Arts Advising will not be accepted for missed exams. One make-up test will be scheduled. Students who do not attend the scheduled make-up test will receive a mark of 0.

Returned Assignments and Marks: Aside from computational or other minor errors on our part, all marks assigned are final. We will not discuss assignments in the first 24 hours after they are returned so that students can spend that time considering the comments or going over the assignments themselves.

Early Alert: During the term, we will do our best to reach out and offer support if we are concerned about your academic performance or wellbeing. We also encourage you to come and speak with any of us if you need assistance. In addition, we may identify our concerns using Early Alert. The program allows academic, financial, or mental health concerns to be identified sooner and responded to in a more coordinated way. This provides you with the earliest possible connection to resources like academic advising, financial advising, counselling, or other resources and support to help you get back on track. The information is treated confidentially and is sent because we care about your academic success and wellbeing. For more information, please visit earlyalert.ubc.ca.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

Date	Lecture Topic	Required Readings	Assignments
Week 1			
Tues. Jan. 7	<i>Introduction to Class</i>	No reading assignment	
Thurs. Jan. 9	<i>Basics of Research</i>	Chapter 1	
Week 2			
Tues. Jan. 14	<i>What is Theory?</i>	Chapter 2	
Thurs. Jan. 16	<i>Ethics in Research</i>	Chapter 3	
Week 3			
Tues. Jan. 21	<i>Ethics in Research and Reading Research Articles</i>	Appendix A	
Thurs. Jan. 23	<i>Research Design</i>	Chapter 4	
Week 4			
Tues. Jan. 28	<i>Research Design</i>		
Thurs. Jan. 30	<i>Sampling</i>	Chapter 6	Article Memo due
Week 5			
Tues. Feb. 4	<i>Sampling</i>		
Thurs. Feb. 6	<i>Measurement</i>	Chapter 5	

Week 6			
Tues. Feb. 11	<i>Measurement</i>		
Thurs. Feb. 13	Midterm Exam 1		Midterm Exam 1
MIDTERM BREAK			
Week 7			
Tues. Feb. 25	<i>Experiments</i>	Chapter 7	
Thurs. Feb. 27	<i>Experiments</i>		
Week 8			
Tues. Mar. 4	<i>Surveys</i>	Chapter 8	
Thurs. Mar. 6	<i>Surveys</i>		
Week 9			
Tues. Mar. 11	<i>Quantitative Analysis</i>	Chapter 14	
Thurs. Mar. 13	<i>Reading Statistics</i>	Chapter 16	
Week 10			
Tues. Mar. 18	<i>Unobtrusive Research</i>	Chapter 9	
Thurs. Mar. 20	Midterm Exam 2		Midterm Exam 2
Week 11			
Tues. Mar. 25	<i>Qualitative Field Research</i>	Chapter 10	
Thurs. Mar. 27	<i>Qualitative Field Research</i>		
Week 12			
Tues. Apr. 1	<i>Qualitative Interviewing</i>	Chapter 11	
Thurs. Apr. 3	<i>Qualitative Analysis</i>	Chapter 13	
Week 13			
Tues. Apr. 8	<i>Review</i>		

Final Exam Date to Be Announced

SOCI 217-001
Article Memo
Understanding Research Papers

This assignment should be no more than 2 pages single spaced. Please write in full sentences. Grammar and spelling do count.

Part I: Find and read one of the following articles, assigned according to surname:

If your surname begins with A-I, read:

1. Cross, Jennifer E., Don Zimmerman, & Megan A. O'Grady. 2009. "Residence hall room type and alcohol use among college students living on campus." *Environment and Behavior* 41(4): 583-603.

If your last name begins with J-Z, read:

2. Stearns, Elizabeth, Claudia Buchmann, & Kara Bonneau. 2009. "Interracial friendships in the transition to college: Do birds of a feather flock together once they leave the nest?" *Sociology of Education* 82 (April): 173-195.

The articles are available from the UBC library website. Part of the assignment is for you to find the article yourself so you can familiarize yourself with using the library system to find sociology sources.

Part II: Answer the following questions (in no more than one page TOTAL). Do not quote or use the same wording as the article. Paraphrase what it has to say to show that you understand it.

1. What are the research questions?
2. Does the article use nomothetic or idiographic explanation? Does it use inductive or deductive reasoning?
3. Describe the theory or theories that shape the research? What do those theories say?
4. What are the key dependent variables and independent variables? Explain the difference between an independent variable and a dependent variable.
5. What research method is used? Who or what are studied? What are the units of analysis?
6. What is the time dimension of the research design?
7. What are the main findings?

Part III: If you were doing a research paper on this topic, you would need more than one source for your literature review. Find two other sociology sources from the UBC library or google scholar that provide research on the same topic. For each one, provide the bibliographic citation (like those above) and a short paragraph explaining the research and what it finds. You can find this from skimming the paper (you don't need to read these articles closely). Explain whether the findings in each article are consistent or inconsistent with the original article you read.