

University of British Columbia
Sociology 217-001
Research Methods
12/22/15

Term 2: January - April 2016

Instructor: Prof. Wendy D. Roth

Class Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:00 – 3:20pm **E-mail:** wendy.roth@ubc.ca

Class Location: SWNG 122 (West Mall Swing Space Building, 2175 West Mall) **Office:** Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies, 6331 Crescent Rd., room 332

iClicker Frequency: AB

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

Teaching Assistants:

Name:	Bethany Ee	Adam Howe	Rosanna Ho
E-mail:	ee.bethany@gmail.com	adam.colin.h@gmail.com	rosannaho23@gmail.com
Office hours:	Mondays 12-1pm, AnSo 108	Tuesdays 1-2pm, AnSo 1315	Tuesdays 11:30- 12:30pm at Mercante*
	Fridays 3:00-4:00pm, AnSo 108	Thursdays 3:30-4:30pm at Mercante*	Tuesdays 5:00-6:00pm at Mercante*
Recommended for students with surnames:	A-H	I-R	S-Z
Contact for questions on:		Connect website	iClickers

*Note: Mercante is the pizza restaurant and study area near our classroom. Its address is Ponderosa Commons, 6488 University Boulevard

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;
- successfully design a research project.

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. They should be purchased and registered by the start of the second class.

Information about registering your iClicker for the class is available here:

<http://elearning.ubc.ca/connect/student-resources/register-your-iclicker-how-to/>

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS AND EVALUATION:

Evaluation for this course is based on the following:

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. You must also bring a hard copy of the assignment with you to class on the due date. Assignments which are handed in *only in one of these ways and not the other* will be subject to the lateness penalties described below (see Lateness and Extension Policies).

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. Both exams will include multiple choice questions and true/false questions. There may also be fill-in-the-blank and/or short-answer questions.
3. **Research Proposal Memo** – This memo (5 pages maximum, including appendix) asks you to apply what you have learned in the course to designing a research project of your own on a sociological topic you choose. 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. You must also bring a hard copy of the assignment with you to class on the due date. Assignments which are handed in *only in one of these ways and not the other* will be subject to the lateness penalties described below (see Lateness and Extension Policies).

4. **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, True/False questions, and short answer questions. It may include fill-in-the-blank and/or essay questions.
5. **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. Your participation in each question is worth 2 points, and getting the correct answer is worth another 2 points, for a total of 4 points per question.

iClicker questions will often come at the end of class. If you leave class early, you may miss them. Please take this into consideration when planning your course schedule.

If you are in class but have forgotten your iClicker, find one of the TAs and tell them your answer before it is revealed to get credit. If you miss class, the day's iClicker points cannot be made up.

The class as a whole will decide the distribution of weight given to these assignments for the final course grade. The options are as follows:

Option A – Balanced:	Option B – Memos worth more:	Option C – Exams worth more:
Article Memo: 20%	Article Memo: 25%	Article Memo: 15%
Midterm Exam 1: 15%	Midterm Exam 1: 13%	Midterm Exam 1: 20%
Midterm Exam 2: 15%	Midterm Exam 2: 13%	Midterm Exam 2: 20%
Research Proposal Memo: 20%	Research Proposal Memo: 25%	Research Proposal Memo: 15%
Final Exam: 20%	Final Exam: 14%	Final Exam: 20%
iClicker questions: 10%	iClicker questions: 10%	iClicker questions: 10%

The class will use iClickers to vote for these options in the 2nd class of the term. Be sure to have your iClicker registered before then.

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 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 another TA. All students are invited (and encouraged) to come to Prof. Roth's office hours.

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.

Small Group Activity Contacts: Several activities in class will be done in small groups. The groups will be organized a couple of classes into the course. Once the groups are set up, please write down the contact information for your group members below.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

You are responsible for all material presented in class (including announcements). If you are unable to attend class, please obtain notes from a group member (do not contact the teaching assistants to find out what you missed).

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. Most of the students found to have committed plagiarism have said exactly this. For this reason, we recommend that every student take UBC's Interactive Online Tutorial on 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 two memo assignments. This is a service that checks textual material for originality. **In addition to submitting a hard copy of the memos 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: 11226909; Class Name: **SOCI 217-001, Spring 2016**; Enrolment Password: **validity**

* 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). If you want to use your full name, that's okay with us too.

Use of Laptops, Electronic Devices: We understand that many students find it easier to take notes on their laptops. However, every year students report that they 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 Smart Phones or other electronic devices will be allowed in class. All phones must be turned off before the start of each class.

Lateness and Extensions Policies: 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.

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.

The two memo assignments are the only written assignment that will be handed in for this class. They must be submitted in two ways to receive full credit. They 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 submitted *only in one of these ways and not the other* will be penalized 5 points for every 24 hours they are late (out of 100), including weekends.

Late hard copies must be time stamped and dropped in the Assignment Drop-Box in the Sociology Department. If late memos are both uploaded to TurnItIn.com and dropped in the Assignment Drop-Box, the earlier of the two dates will be used for determining the lateness penalty. Once the memos are handed back to students, no additional late submissions will be accepted.

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. One make-up exam will be scheduled, usually within a week of the original exam. Students who do not attend the scheduled make-up exam 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.

You have made it through all the Course Policies. Congratulations. It’s important that you understand these policies going into the course. Toward that end, your first assignment for the class is to email Prof. Roth a sentence saying what the course policy is on use of laptops and electronic devices by 1pm on Thurs. Jan. 7. Students who do this will receive 1 extra credit point.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

Date	Lecture Topic	Required Readings	Assignments
Week 1			
Tues. Jan. 5	<i>Introduction to Class</i>	Read the entire syllabus	
Thurs. Jan. 7	<i>Basics of Research</i>	Chapter 1	
Week 2			
Tues. Jan. 12	<i>What is Theory?</i>	Chapter 2	
Thurs. Jan. 14	<i>Ethics in Research</i>	Chapter 3	

Week 3			
Tues. Jan. 19	<i>Ethics in Research and Reading Research Articles</i>	Appendix A	
Thurs. Jan. 21	<i>Research Design</i>	Chapter 4	
Week 4			
Tues. Jan. 26	<i>Research Design</i>		
Thurs. Jan. 28	<i>Sampling</i>	Chapter 6	Article Memo due
Week 5			
Tues. Feb. 2	<i>Sampling</i>		
Thurs. Feb. 4	<i>Measurement</i>	Chapter 5	
Week 6			
Tues. Feb. 9	<i>Measurement</i>		
Thurs. Feb. 11	Midterm Exam 1		Midterm Exam 1
MIDTERM BREAK			
Week 7			
Tues. Feb. 23	<i>Experiments</i>	Chapter 7	
Thurs. Feb. 25	<i>Experiments</i>		
Week 8			
Tues. Mar. 1	<i>Surveys</i>	Chapter 8	
Thurs. Mar. 3	<i>Surveys</i>		
Week 9			
Tues. Mar. 8	<i>Quantitative Analysis</i>	Chapter 14	
Thurs. Mar. 10	<i>Reading Statistics</i>	Chapter 16	
Week 10			
Tues. Mar. 15	<i>Unobtrusive Research</i>	Chapter 9	
Thurs. Mar. 17	Midterm Exam 2		Midterm Exam 2
Week 11			
Tues. Mar. 22	<i>Qualitative Field Research</i>	Chapter 10	
Thurs. Mar. 24	<i>Qualitative Field Research</i>		
Week 12			
Tues. Mar. 29	<i>Qualitative Interviewing</i>	Chapter 11	
Thurs. Mar. 31	<i>Qualitative Analysis</i>	Chapter 13	
Week 13			
Tues. Apr. 5	<i>Catch up/Review</i>		
Thurs. Apr. 7	<i>Review</i>		Research Proposal Memo due

Final Exam Date to Be Announced

Article Memo Understanding Research Papers

This assignment should be no more than 2 pages single spaced. Grammar and spelling do count.

Part I: Find and read the article assigned to you based on your last name:

If your last name begins with A-H, 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 I-R, read:

2. Rau, William and Ann Durand. 2000. “The Academic Ethic and College Grades: Does Hard Work Help Students to ‘Make the Grade’?” *Sociology of Education* 73(1): 19-38.

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

3. 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.

Part II: Answer the following questions (in no more than one page TOTAL). Do not quote or use the same wording as the article.

1. What are the research questions?
2. Does the article use nomothetic or idiographic explanation? Explain how it does this to show that you understand the concepts.
3. Does it use inductive or deductive reasoning? Explain how it does this to show that you understand the concepts.
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 in what ways the findings in each article are consistent or inconsistent with the original article you read.

Research Proposal Memo Designing Research

For this memo, you will write a short proposal to conduct a research project designed to answer a sociological question. You may choose any sociological question of interest to you, within a few limits.

An important part of the research planning process is learning how to do good research given the constraints of reality. Often the research design best-suited to answering a question is not feasible because it requires the investment of more time, money, or resources than are available for a project. Therefore, every research design is a compromise, and all researchers – including you – must learn to answer their questions *with the best data they can get, not the best data imaginable*. Therefore, your choice of research questions (and research methods) is limited by the requirement that the research you propose should be **feasible** for **you** to carry out. This means your project should be realistically do-able by you in 1 year, with resources actually available to you.

To minimize ethical concerns with your research, you may not propose to do research on minors or other vulnerable populations and you may not study illegal behaviour.

Your memo should contain the following sections:

1. Research Question(s): Explain your research question(s). Make sure that in this section you state your research question(s) directly. You should also explain briefly why this question is sociologically interesting.
2. Hypotheses: Explain what you think the answers to your questions are. State these explicitly and provide some theoretical justification of why you believe your answers are likely to be correct.
3. Research Method: What method will you use? (E.g. will you do a survey? Analyze the content of documents? Conduct interviews?) Why is this appropriate for your research question(s)?
4. Research Setting: Among what population will you conduct your research? Why is this a suitable setting in which to answer your research question(s)?
5. Sample: How will you select your sample from your population? Why is this sampling method suited to answering your question(s) or why is it the best option? Remember, your research should be feasible, so do not propose a larger sample than you could collect and analyze.
6. Concepts and Measures: Define each of the concepts in your research question and your hypotheses, both theoretically and operationally. Describe your measures. Explain why your operationalizations are well suited to measuring your theoretical concepts. Explain any potential problems with reliability and validity in your measures.
7. Discussion: In this section, discuss the overall strengths and weaknesses of your research design. This can include the strengths and weaknesses of individual components of the

design (sample, measures, etc.), and also ethical issues that might arise with your research, together with your plan for dealing with those issues.

8. Conclusion: Briefly summarize your research question, hypotheses and proposal. Explain how you would know if your hypotheses were supported or falsified. Explain what benefit would come from conducting the research you have proposed.
9. Appendix: Include a one-page excerpt from a research instrument required for your research (for example, one page of a potentially longer survey questionnaire, in-depth interview guide, or coding frame).

Evaluation: Your proposal will be evaluated based on:

1. The fit between different aspects of your project (including your research question, hypotheses, measures, and sample).
2. Your demonstrated understanding of the advantages and limitations of your methods, including the validity and reliability of your measures, the quality of your sampling strategy, and any ethical concerns your research raises.
3. The comprehensiveness of your material (inclusion of key points and appropriate contexts)
4. The quality and clarity of your writing, and how persuasively you argue for the value and appropriateness of this research project.
5. The presentation of your proposal (legibility, double-spacing, numbered pages)

Additional Information and Instructions:

- You are not required to use outside sources for this assignment.
- You should not actually collect data as part of this assignment.
- You do not need to propose a budget, but for the project to be feasible, assume that you have approximately \$500-\$1,000 at your disposal to conduct this research.
- I strongly encourage you to talk with me or a Teaching Assistant about your proposal topic.
- Complete this assignment in no more than 4 pages of text + 1 page for the appendix (5 pages maximum!), double spaced.
- Use Times New Roman 12 pt. font
- Please consider printing on both sides of the page to save paper.