

## **SOC 315 A2: Introduction to Social Methodology**

Fall 2015

Lecture section A2 – Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:00 am – 10:50 am, T 1-91

*Lab section D3 – Thursday 9:00 am – 10:50 am, CL 1-30*

*Lab section D4 – Thursday 1:00 pm – 2:50 pm, CL 1-30*

---

### **Instructor:**

Laura Aylsworth

Office: Tory 4-28

Office Hours: by appointment

Email: [laura.aylsworth@ualberta.ca](mailto:laura.aylsworth@ualberta.ca) \* Please use your UofA email for all communication

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course covers research design, data collection, and data processing strategies used by sociologists and other social scientists. Topics include research values and ethics, reliability and validity, experimentation, survey research techniques, historical methods, field research, and content analysis. Students will be exposed to a variety of quantitative and qualitative research methods and actively participate in the design of a sociological research project.

*Prerequisite: SOC 210 or consent of instructor.*

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

This course provides an understanding of sociological research methods and is designed to enhance students' ability to undertake social research. By the end of this course, students should:

- 1) possess an ability to assess the quality of social research;
- 2) understand and be able to practice a range of skills and research strategies;
- 3) appreciate the analytical and philosophical complexities of social research; and
- 4) develop a more nuanced understanding of methodological matters in the context of the social sciences.

### **REQUIRED TEXT**

Bryman, Alan, Edward Bell and James J. Teevan. 2012. *Social Research Methods: Third Canadian Edition*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

*Additional required readings will be posted on eClass.*

### **COURSE EVALUATION:**

To accommodate different learning styles and develop research skills, this course consists of multiple requirements:

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| <b>1. Lab Assignments</b> (ongoing)                           | 15% Total (see next page) |
| <b>2. Research Project</b> (ongoing, see next page)           | 35% Total (see next page) |
| <b>3. Midterm Examination</b> (October 7)                     | 20%                       |
| <b>4. Final Examination</b> (tentative: December 15, 9:00am*) | 30%                       |

*\*It is your responsibility to verify the date and time of the final exam in Beartracks*

**Lab Assignments** (5 x 3% = 15%)

Lab assignments require students to apply the concepts, theories, or methods they are learning. This may be an application of what you learned in the present session or previous labs. They will be assigned, completed, and submitted during lab sessions. The lab schedule will be provided during the second week of class.

**Research Project** (35% total)

Students will actively participate in the design of a sociological research project by completing the following research components:

*Draft Question* (1%, due September 14)

- Opportunity to get feedback on your research question

*Abstract* (5%, due September 28)

- Concise summary of proposed sociological research project (1 page)

*Annotated Bibliography* (9%, due October 30)

- Descriptive and evaluative summary of the existing scholarly literature on the topic (7 sources, 1 page each)

*Proposal* (20%, due December 4)

- Detailed outline of proposed research (6-8 pages)

Detailed information and grading rubrics will be shared prior to the deadline of each component.

**Examinations**

All materials covered in lectures, labs, and required readings are subject to examination. The midterm exam will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. The final exam will consist of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. Example examination questions will be reviewed in class and made available on eClass.

**COURSE FORMAT:**

This course has both a lecture and a lab component. Lectures will cover central methodological concepts and research components, while labs enable application of some of the issues discussed in lecture. To do well in this course you will have to attend lectures and labs, take good notes, and carefully read assigned readings. All material is subject to examination.

- Lectures and labs will not simply replicate what is covered in the text. They may explore, build on, and potentially challenge key themes and concepts in the text or introduce new topics and examples. It is therefore important to attend class and complete assigned readings *prior* to class. I will post some of the PowerPoint on the course website. These slides are not a comprehensive outline of what is discussed in class.
- Lectures / labs will be enhanced by class discussions and exercises. Student engagement is strongly encouraged and is dependent upon attendance and comprehension of readings.
- Lectures /labs will also be enhanced by guest speakers and films. Neither the text nor the instructor will replicate what is said by the speakers or in the films.

**Atmosphere:**

The classroom is intended as a safe and welcoming place for all. Life experiences may mirror, challenge, or conflict with course material and/or the experiences of others. It is important to consider, integrate, and critique class material and alternate experiences as opposed to simply dismissing or criticizing them. Discussion and debate are encouraged, but respect, open-mindedness, and awareness are essential. There will be zero tolerance for disrespectful or offensive behaviour. This includes distracting or disrupting your fellow classmates, instructors, and guest speakers.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Absence from Lectures:**

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. If you are unable to attend lecture due to illness or other reason, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate to find out what was discussed and get notes. Lecture notes, detailed PowerPoints, in-class films, guest presentations, and class discussions will not be available online, nor will they be provided by your instructor.

### **Absence from Labs:**

Attendance is required to complete the laboratory assignments, which must be submitted at the end of that lab's session. Students who are absent from lab, and therefore cannot participate in the exercise for that class, will forfeit their grade for that particular assignment. There will NOT be make-up assignments.

### **Absence from Midterm examination:**

Should you miss a midterm examination, you must contact the instructor via email within two working days of the exam, or as soon as you are able to, having regard to the circumstances underlying the absence. Excused absence for a missed exam is not automatic and, depending on the circumstances, appropriate documentation may be required. Travel plans, weddings, and vacations are not excusable absences as per University policy. Please familiarize yourself with § 23.3(1) of University *Calendar*. Students with an excused absence will be required to write a make-up exam or have the weight of the missed midterm exam transferred to the final exam, at the instructor's discretion. If the student does not write the assigned make-up exam at the prescribed time set by the instructor, a raw score of zero will be assigned for the missed exam.

### **Absence from Final Examination:**

A student who has missed a final exam must formally apply to *their* Faculty office within two working days following the scheduled date of the missed final exam (or as soon as the student is able, having regard to the circumstances underlying the absence) in order to be considered for a deferral final examination. The decision to grant a deferred final exam is NOT the instructor's. Deferred examinations are intended to accommodate students who have experienced an incapacitating illness, severe domestic affliction or other compelling reason (including religious conviction). "A deferred final examination will not be approved if a student (a) has not been in regular attendance where attendance and/or participation are required, and/or, (b) excluding the final exam, has completed less than half of the assigned work, as stated in §23.3(2)c of the *Calendar*." Please familiarize yourself with § 23.3(2) of the University *Calendar*. The deferred final exam will take place on January 16th 2016 at 9:00am in BUS 1 06.

### **Late Assignment Policy**

Components of the Research Project must be submitted at the beginning of class on the date they are due. Late assignments will result in a 10% penalty per day, including weekend days.

If you will be absent from class the day an assignment is due and do not want to receive a late penalty, you must send an electronic copy of your completed assignment to the instructor PRIOR to the beginning of class (before 10:00am the date it is due). You must then submit a hardcopy of the same assignment to the Sociology Department (5-21 Tory building, during business hours) within 2 business days of the assignment due date. Should the hardcopy differ from the electronic copy, the late penalty will be applied according to the submission date stamped on the hardcopy (i.e. if the hardcopy is submitted 2 days after the due date, the late penalty will be 20%).

### Grade Appeal Policy\*

Students may appeal the grade they received on a component of the Research Project if they believe that the instructor has applied inappropriate criteria in the evaluation and/or unfairly interpreted the work in light of stated criteria. To do so, students must wait 24 hours after the return of an assignment before approaching the instructor, either in person or by email, to discuss their grade. This gives you time to review the assignment expectations, the grading rubric, and the feedback provided carefully. To appeal a grade, you must formulate an argument (approximately 250 words) for why the grade you received is not an accurate representation of the quality of your work or inconsistent with the grading outlined in the syllabus/grading rubric. This must be provided no later than 7 days after the assignment has been returned.

\*Students may ask for additional feedback on assignments or how they can improve their writing without disputing their grade once the 24-hour period has passed. This is encouraged! If you are struggling with some of the course material and/or assignments do not hesitate to contact to me.

**I am here to help!**

### Grading

Grades will not be scaled or bell curved. The final grade will be converted to a 4-point scale and letter grade according to the following schedule:

Percentage	Letter Grade	Point Value	Description
90–100	A+	4.0	Excellent
86-89	A	4.0	Excellent
82-85	A-	3.7	Excellent
78-81	B+	3.3	Good
74-77	B	3.0	Good
70-73	B-	2.7	Good
66-69	C+	2.3	Satisfactory
62-65	C	2.0	Satisfactory
58-61	C-	1.7	Satisfactory
54-57	D+	1.3	Poor
50-53	D	1.0	Minimal Pass
0-49	F	0.0	Failure

### UNIVERSITY POLICIES

#### Recording of Lectures:

“Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor as part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and it not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).”

#### Student Assistance:

The University has a commitment to the education of all academically qualified students and special services are regularly provided on campus to assist students through Student Accessibility Services (SAS)(780-492-3381, [sassrec@ualberta.ca](mailto:sassrec@ualberta.ca)). Students who have registered with SAS are provided with a Letter of Introduction to give to their instructors and are advised to talk with instructors early in the term to discuss what types of accommodation they require. Students requiring assistance for a variety of needs are encouraged to refer to [Student Services](#).

## Learning and Working Environment

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or if there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy, you may contact the [student ombudservice](#) or review the [Discrimination, Harassment and Duty to Accommodate Policy](#).

## Plagiarism and Cheating

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honest and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (<http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx>) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension, or expulsion from the University.”

An instructor who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. Ignorance is NOT an acceptable defense in cases of academic offences. Students are expected to know what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts, and participation in an offence. Students are also expected to know sanctions that follow academic offences and the processes through which academic offences will be investigated. All students should consult the Office of Student Judicial Affairs website at <http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/>, “Don’t Cheat” and “Don’t Do It”.

Some of the most important provisions include:

### 30.3.2(1) Plagiarism:

No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student’s own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

### 30.3.2(2) Cheating

- a. No Student shall in the course of an examination or other similar activity, obtain or attempt to obtain information from another Student or other unauthorized source, give or attempt to give information to another Student, or use, attempt to use or possess for the purposes of use any unauthorized material.
- b. No Student shall represent or attempt to represent him or herself as another or have or attempt to have himself or herself represented by another in the taking of an examination, preparation of a paper or other similar activity. See also misrepresentation in 30.3.6(4).
- c. No Student shall represent another’s substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the Student’s own work.
- d. No Student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course Instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project, assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has previously been obtained by the Student or which has been or is being submitted by the Student in another course or program of study in the University of elsewhere.
- e. No Student shall submit in any course or program of study any academic writing, essay, thesis, report, project, assignment, presentation or poster containing a statement of fact known by the Student to be false or a reference to a source the Student knows to contain fabricated claims (unless acknowledged by the Student), or a fabricated reference to a source.

**Tentative Lecture Schedule and Required Readings\***

\*Lecture schedule and corresponding readings subject to change in accordance with guest speaker availability (TBD) and time constraints. You will be notified accordingly.

**INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL INQUIRY****Sept 2 – Course Introduction & Why Social Research Matters**

1. Review Course Syllabus

**Sept 4 – Research Audiences & Purpose(s)**

Sept 7 – NO CLASS

**APPROACHING RESEARCH****Sept 9, 11 – Research Orientations**

1. Bryman, Bell and Teevan – Chapter 1
2. Carter, S. M. and M. Little. 2007. "Justifying Knowledge, Justifying Method, Taking Action: Epistemologies, Methodologies, and Methods in Qualitative Research" in *Qualitative Health Research* 17(10): 1316-1328.

**Sept 14, 16– Research Design**

1. Bryman, Bell and Teevan – Chapter 2
2. Bryman, Bell and Teevan – Chapter 18

**Sept 18, 21, 23 – Nature of Qualitative & Quantitative Research**

1. Bryman, Bell and Teevan – Chapter 3
2. Bryman, Bell and Teevan – Chapter 8

**Sept 25, 28 , 30– Ethics**

1. Bryman, Bell and Teevan – Chapter 11
2. Bernard, C. 2013. "Ethical Issues in Researching Black Teenage Mothers with Harmful Childhood Histories: Marginal Voices" in *Ethics and Social Welfare* 7(1): 54- 73.

**Oct 2, 5 - Sampling**

1. Bryman, Bell and Teevan – Chapter 12
2. Abrams, L. S. 2010. "Sampling 'Hard to Reach' Populations in Qualitative Research: The Case of Incarcerated Youth" *Qualitative Social Work* 9(4): 536-550.

**Oct 7 – MIDTERM****DATA COLLECTION****Oct 9 – Surveys & Asking Questions**

1. Bryman, Bell and Teevan – Chapter 4
2. Bryman, Bell and Teevan – Chapter 5 (ONLY p.83-93, Practical Tip Box-p.96, Box 5.9-p.98, Checklist -p. 99)
3. Krumpal, I. 2013. "Determinants of social desirability bias in sensitive surveys: A literature review" in *Quality and Quantity* 47: 2025 - 2047.

Oct 12 – NO CLASS

**Oct 14, 16 - Surveys & Asking Questions (Cont)****Oct 19, 21, 23 – Interviews**

1. Bryman, Bell and Teevan - Chapter 10
2. Halkier, B. 2010. "Focus groups as social enactments: Integrating interaction and content in the analysis of focus group data" *Qualitative Research* 10(1): 71-89.

**Oct 26, 28, 30 – Ethnography & Participant Observation**

1. Bryman, Bell and Teevan - Chapter 9
2. Reeves, C. L. 2010. A difficult negotiation: fieldwork relations with gatekeepers" in *Qualitative Research* 10(3): 315-331.
3. Davis, A. M. 2013. "(Un)Stable Space(s): An Ethnography of a (Sometimes) Gay Bar" in *The Qualitative Report* 18:1-14.

**Nov 2, 4, 6 – Other Sources of Data**

1. Bryman, Bell and Teevan - Chapter 7
2. Chauhan, A. and J. Foster. 2014. "Representations of poverty in British newspapers: A case of 'othering' the threat?" in *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 24: 390-405.

Nov 9-13 – No Class

**Nov 16, 18 - Power in the Research Process**

1. Rogers Stanton, C. 2014. "Crossing Methodological Borders: Decolonizing Community-Based Participatory Research" in *Qualitative Inquiry* 20(5): 573-583.
2. Swartz, S. 2011. "'Going deep' and 'giving back': strategies for exceeding ethical expectations when researching amongst vulnerable youth" in *Qualitative Research* 11(1)" 47-68.

**Nov 20, 23 – Mixed Methods**

1. Bryman, Bell and Teevan - Chapter 15
2. Leech, N. L. and A. J. Onwuegbuzie. 2009. "A typology of mixed methods research designs" in *Quality and Quantity* 43:265-275.

**DATA ANALYSIS****Nov 25, 27, 30 - Qualitative and Quantitative Data Analysis**

1. Bryman, Bell & Teevan - Chapter 13
2. Bryman, Bell & Teevan - Chapter 14

**Dec 2 - TBD****THE FINAL STEPS****Dec 4, 7 – Writing Up & Disseminating Research**

1. Bryman, Bell and Teevan - Chapter 18 (review)
2. Krause, S. D. 2007. "Chapter 11: Alternative Ways to Present Your Research" in *The Process of Research Writing*. Available at [www.http://www.stevendkrause.com/tprw/](http://www.stevendkrause.com/tprw/)