

Introduction to Social Methodology
SOC 315 (Section B1), Winter 2018
University of Alberta

Lecture	Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00 – 3:20 pm Tory 1-93
Laboratory	Students must register for one of the following H1: Mondays 9:00 – 10:50 am, BUS B-18 H2: Wednesdays 4:00 – 5:50 pm, Tory B-39
Instructor	Andrew C. Patterson acpatter@ualberta.ca Tory 6-15 Office hours: Tuesdays 3:30 – 5:30 pm
Teacher Assistant	Amanda Evans acevans@ualberta.ca

Course Description and Objectives[†]

This course provides students with essential training in empirical research, particularly from a sociological frame of thinking. Qualitative and quantitative approaches are both discussed, but undergirding all forms of research is a common logic and rationale as well as some important epistemological assumptions. This course trains students in the basic tactical considerations involved in research but also in developing their capacities as conscientious scholars who are able to contribute knowledge about the social world.

Evaluation

Take-home quiz	5%	Due January 25th (at class time)
Article critique 1 (quantitative)	7.5%	Due February 6th (at class time)
Lab assignment 1 (quantitative)	15%	Due February 16th, 12:00 PM
Midterm exam	20%	March 1st (during classtime)
Article critique 2 (qualitative)	7.5%	Due March 20th (at class time)
Lab assignment 2 (qualitative)	15%	Due March 29th (at class time)
Final exam	30%	Date and time: TBA

Prerequisites

SOC 210.

[†] I am indebted to Harvey Krahn for sharing the lab materials used in this course.

Required readings

Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2016). *Social research methods* (4th Canadian ed.). Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Any additional readings will be posted to eClass or indicated in a handout for the assignments.

Grades

For each assignment and exam a numeric score, expressed as a percentage up to 100%, will be given to assess performance. The final score for the course will be a weighted sum based on the relative worth of each as specified in this syllabus. Letter grades will be attached to the scores as follows:

Descriptor	Percentage	Grade	Value
Excellent	95-100	A+	4.0
	90-94	A	4.0
	85-89	A-	3.7
Good	80-84	B+	3.3
	75-79	B	3.0
	70-74	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	66-69	C+	2.3
	62-65	C	2.0
	58-61	C-	1.7
Poor	54-57	D+	1.3
Minimal Pass	50-53	D	1.0
Fail	0-49	F	0.0

Course requirements

Exams. The midterm exam will occur during the regular class session on the date specified in this syllabus. The date, time, and location for the final exam will be determined by the University. All exams will consist of a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. Sample questions for the exams will be provided in advance to assist students with their preparation.

Take-home quiz. The take-home quiz will test your knowledge of fact-based reasoning in the social sciences. You will be asked to assess examples of arguments according to whether they are based on facts or rhetoric. Additional tasks will involve identifying the particular form of the argument, including but not limited to the premises that they assume.

Lab assignments (2). Using real data collected by faculty and staff in the Department of Sociology, the laboratory assignments require students to implement a selection of the methods taught in this course. These will follow the curriculum focusing first on quantitative, then qualitative methods. You will be asked to use the appropriate techniques to examine the patterns that are evident, then to interpret what you find, not unlike the routine tasks that professional researchers undertake.

Article critiques (2). The article critiques will require you to assess the merits of real articles published in peer-reviewed academic journals based on the methods you learn in the course. The first article will be based on quantitative methods and the second on qualitative methods.

Rules and Procedures

Policy about course outlines can be found in Course Requirements, Evaluation Procedures and Grading of the University Calendar.

Etiquette and Decorum. In every way students must use a professional and respectful demeanour during class discussions, verbal exchanges, and written communications. This includes any and all communication with the instructor, teacher assistants, and fellow students before, after, and during class sessions. Students are also expected to give their respectful attention during lectures and to eliminate any disruption of the attention of their classmates. The use of cell phones and internet during class is distracting to your fellow students and—importantly—yourselves! Students who choose to use their laptops for personal reasons during the lectures may do so provided that they sit at the back of the classroom. Please otherwise restrict laptop use to the lecture material and stow away your cell phones after turning them off or to ‘silent’ mode before class starts.

Academic Integrity. 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 honesty 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 (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) 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.

Students commit **plagiarism** when they include phrasing, ideas, findings, images, or any other content in their own submissions for graded coursework that someone else has created, or that they previously submitted for another course, while representing it as their own original contribution. An example is when students fail to note the details of the source (author, year of publication) where they had discovered information they are using to support an argument in their term papers. Plagiarism also occurs when including word-for-word text of another author, but without identifying it as a quote *and* then citing both the page number and source where it was found. To avoid allegations of plagiarism, make sure you are citing your sources properly, i.e., by citing the authors whose ideas you are drawing for your own work, as well as the page number for text that you are copying over verbatim. Far from detracting from the quality of your work, citing other authors shows diligence on your part and even supports the credibility of your work, which can only strengthen your work. So there is no good reason not to cite content you are using in your assignments. A related problem is **cheating**, in which students find out what answers their fellow students are giving on exams or other assignments and then write the same for their own submissions. Both are serious offenses that could result in a grade of zero for the respective assignment, an ‘F’ in the course, and/or expulsion from the university. To avoid such outcomes, please ensure you are familiar with university policy on academic integrity.

Intellectual property. Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Protocols for Written Assignments. For all assignments, you may not use work submitted to another course or work created in part or in whole by anyone other than yourself. On all homework please identify your name, student number, the course and section number, name of the instructor, and the date. This should be on a cover page for the lab submissions and the upper-right corner of the first page of all other homework. Soft copies (unprinted documents sent via email) are not acceptable. Submissions for the regular chapter-wise assignments may be either handwritten or typed. Lab assignments must be created using standard word processing software, printed and stapled prior to submission and you must retain an electronic copy of these. In addition, the following guidelines are required for lab submissions:

- Times New Roman font.
- 12-point font
- Double-space text
- Margins no larger than 1.25 inches
- Page numbers at the top right of each page

Missed Exams. Exam times begin for everyone at the dates and times specified in this syllabus and will not be extended for those arriving late. As stipulated in the Academic Calendar, students who claim religious reasons for missing any scheduled exam must seek accommodation within two weeks of the start of a fall or winter term and within three days of the start of a spring or summer term. Instructors and Faculties are not required to excuse absences for unacceptable reasons that include, but are not limited to personal events such as vacations, weddings, or travel.

Missed Final Exams. Accommodations for absences from final exams are granted only at the discretion of the responsible Faculty. Please note that instructors do not have this authority. Students who do not take the final exam at the scheduled time and date can only seek accommodation by submitting an application to their home Faculty for a deferred exam. Students absent during a final exam must contact their Faculty office within two working days of the scheduled exam date or as soon as they are able as regards the circumstances of their absence. The department-set date for Fall 2017 deferred exams is 9:00 AM, Saturday, May 5^h in BUS 1-10. Deferred exams will not be approved for students who have not attended class regularly where attendance and/or participation is required, or who have completed less than half of the antecedent term work.

Missed midterm exams. Unexcused absences will result in a mark of zero for midterm exams and can seriously compromise a student's chances of passing the course. In cases of missed midterm exams, wherever possible students are asked to contact the instructor in advance. Accommodations for missed midterm exams are granted at the discretion of the Instructor. If you miss a midterm exam

because of an incapacitating illness, you must contact me within two business days or as soon as you are physically able to do so. Students in the Faculty of Arts must also complete a Medical Declaration Form, whereas those from other faculties must submit a Statutory Declaration completed by their own Faculty office or by the Registrar. Supporting medical documentation, such as a University of Alberta Medical Statement signed by a doctor, may be submitted in lieu of or in addition to these. Accommodation for absences due to other reasons may require other kinds of documentation that apply to the situation, such as a police report, an accident report, or juror summons.

Late assignments. All other assignments are due on the deadlines specified in this syllabus. A penalty of 10 points will be accorded for each day late, with Saturdays and Sundays together counting as a single day along with contiguous statutory holidays. To request exceptions to this policy, students must adhere to all of the same rules that apply to missed midterm exams including the provision of appropriate documentation. Make sure to notify the Instructor within two business days of a missed deadline and to provide the appropriate documentation.

Lecture Schedule

Week 1

Jan 9: Background and introduction

Jan 11: Orientation
Bryman & Bell, Chapter 1

Week 2

Lab #1: Topic TBA

Jan 16: Research designs
Bryman & Bell, Chapter 2

Jan 18: Quantitative research in broad view
Bryman & Bell, Chapter 4

Week 3

Lab #2: Topic TBA

Jan 23: Sampling
Bryman & Bell, Chapter 12

Jan 25: Survey logistics
Bryman & Bell, Chapter 5
Due: Take-home quiz at the start of class

Week 4

Lab #3: Topic TBA

Jan 30: Survey logistics, cont'd
Bryman & Bell, Chapter 6

Feb 1: Quantitative data analysis
Bryman & Bell, Chapter 13

Week 5

Lab #4: Topic TBA

Feb 6: Quantitative data analysis, cont'd
Due: Article critique #1 at the start of class

Feb 8: Structured observation and other sources of data
Bryman & Bell, Chapters 7 & 8

Week 6

Lab #5: Topic TBA

Feb 13: Focus groups and interview guides
[Guest lecture from Harvey Krahn]

Feb 15: Qualitative research in broad view
Bryman & Bell, Chapter 9

Lab assignment #1 is due Friday, February 16th at 12:00 PM, but may instead be handed in during the lecture time the previous day.

Week 7

Feb 19: Family Day. University buildings closed.

Feb 20-23: Reading week.

Week 8

Feb 27: Review

Mar 1: **Midterm exam**

Week 9

Lab #6: Topic TBA

Mar 6: Ethnography and participant observation
Bryman & Bell, Chapter 10

Mar 8: The qualitative interview
Bryman & Bell, Chapter 11

Week 10

Lab #7: Topic TBA

Mar 13: The qualitative interview, cont'd

Mar 15: Qualitative data analysis
Bryman & Bell, Chapter 14

Week 11

Lab #8: Topic TBA

Mar 20: Qualitative data analysis, cont'd
Due: Article critique #2 at the start of class

Mar 22: Content analysis
Bryman & Bell, Chapter 16

Week 12

Lab #9: Topic TBA

Mar 27: Comparative-historical research
[Reading will be provided on eClass.]

Mar 29: Bridging the qualitative and quantitative divide
Bryman & Bell, Chapter 15
Due: Lab assignment #2 at the start of class

Week 13

Apr 3: Research ethics
Bryman & Bell, Chapter 3

Apr 5: Spearheading a research project
Bryman & Bell, Chapters 17 & 18

Week 14

Apr 10: Concluding thoughts

Apr 12: Review

Final exam: Date, time, and location TBA. The final exam will be scheduled to occur sometime between the 16th and the 28th of April.