

Summer 2015 SOCIOLOGY 200H1F – Course Syllabus

THE LOGIC OF SOCIAL INQUIRY

Instructor:	Mark D. Easton	Class Time:	Tuesday & Thursday 5-7pm
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces you to the research process used in social science, with a focus on the ways in which sociologists turn social issues, interests, theories and debates into social research. The first two classes begin with an overview of the nature of inquiry in the social sciences, while the remainder of the course is focussed on introducing you to the major steps, concepts, and decisions involved in social science research; from developing a research question, to research design, to data collection, analysis and reporting. You will learn about the major decisions researchers typically face at each stage in the research process, and how the choices they make (or don't make!) can affect the research outcome. The types of key decisions the course will look at include the development of viable research questions from theory; developing testable hypotheses from a research question; the choice of whether to use quantitative and/or qualitative methods to investigate the research question; choosing your study population; dealing with ethical issues; and the many research techniques available, including: survey research, field research, experimental research, and unobtrusive techniques.

Prerequisites: SOC101Y or both SOC102H and SOC103H. Students lacking this prerequisite can be removed at any time without notice.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To introduce and engage students with the theory and practice of doing both qualitative and quantitative sociological research.
- Developing skills in formulating researchable questions.
- Advancing independent thinking regarding the selection of appropriate research methods and techniques, data collection strategies, and analytical approaches in sociological research.
- Improving students' overall critical thinking skills surrounding the methodological strengths and weaknesses of sociological research.
- Getting students to demonstrate their understanding of the steps in the research process through completing assignments that apply the concepts and address the major issues covered in class.
- To enable students to be informed and critical consumers of the research they encounter within and beyond academic settings.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Course requirements include **one in-class test**, **two take-home assignments** that require you to demonstrate and apply your understanding of the course material, and a **final exam**. The due dates and grade weights of these course requirements are as follows:

In-Class Test – Based on Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5	(May 21)	25%
Assignment 1 – Based on Chapters 3, 6, 8, and 9	(Due June 5)	25%
Assignment 2 – Based on Chapters 14, 15, and 16	(Due June 19)	25%
Final Exam – Based on Chapters 10, 11, and 13	(June 22-26)	25%

REQUIRED TEXT

Available at the U of T Bookstore in hard copy:

Fundamentals of Social Research, 3rd Canadian Edition by Earl Babbie & Lucia Benaquisto 2014

An environmentally friendly e-version of this text is also available from the publisher at half the cost here:

<http://www.nelsonbrain.com/shop/isbn/9780176662479>

Note: You may opt to use the 2nd edition of this text, but there may be substantial differences between the two editions. This could be problematic for your successful completion of the coursework because all course requirements will be based on the 3rd edition.

IMPORTANT DATES

May 12: first class for SOC 200H1F

May 18: Final day to add or change an F Section Summer Term course

May 21: In-Class Test covering Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5

May 31: Instructor will aim to have test marks posted by this date

June 5: Assignment 1 is due

June 8: Final day to drop SOC200H1F without academic penalty

June 14: Instructor will aim to have Assignment 1 marks posted by this date

June 18: last class for SOC 200H1F

June 19: Assignment 2 is due

June 26: Instructor will aim to have Assignment 2 marks posted by this date

June 22-26: Final exam period for SOC200H1F

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Readings	
Week 1 Session 1 - May 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the course • Overview of the research process • The nature of inquiry in the social sciences 	pg 105: Figure 4-4 Chapter 1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of course themes, assignment and exam expectations, communication logistics • Provide some perspective on the organization of the succeeding course material by introducing how the research process is typically conceptualized (Figure 4-4) • What is social theory and social science, and what are its aims? Theory vs. philosophy & belief; seeing social relationships through variables & attributes; quantitative and qualitative data; 			
Week 1 Session 2 – May 14	Hey students can you sParadigm? – Asking research questions from different perspectives Research design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular social science paradigms. From theory to operationalization to observation • Inductive vs. deductive theory • Exploration, Description, Explanation – the three main purposes of research • Thinking about causation • Units of analysis 	Chapter 2 Chapter 4
Week 2 Session 3 – May 19	Conceptualizing and measuring what you want to study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concepts & constructs; nominal & operational definitions; indicators & dimensions • Levels of measurement and their implications • Constructing indexes and scales to measure concepts • Validity and reliability in measurement, and the constant tension between the two 	Chapter 5
Week 2 Session 4 – May 21	In-Class Test covering Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5		
Marks for the in-class test are anticipated to be posted by May 31			
Week 3 Session 5 – May 26	Choosing the subjects for your study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Populations and sampling frames • Non-probability sampling • Probability sampling (and an introduction to some basic statistical concepts) • Popular probability sampling designs 	Chapter 6
Week 3 Session 6 – May 28	Survey Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is survey research and when is it appropriate? • Data collection through surveys – questionnaire design • The pros and cons of survey based data collection 	Chapter 8

Week 4 Session 7 – June 2	Unobtrusive Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is unobtrusive research and when is it appropriate? • Popular data collection techniques used in unobtrusive research • The pros and cons of unobtrusive research techniques 	Chapter 9
Week 4 Session 8 – June 4	Should you be doing this? The Black, White, and Grey areas of Research Ethics Quantitative Data Analysis Pt 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The history and development of a research ethics protocol • The current state of research ethics in the social sciences • Introduction, Coding, Data-Cleaning, • Univariate Analysis - descriptive statistics (measures of central tendency, distributions, and dispersion) • Bivariate Analysis - measures of association and levels of measurement 	Chapter 3 Chapter 14
Assignment 1 based on Chapters 3, 6, 8, and 9 is due Friday June 5 (Marks for Assignment 1 are anticipated to be posted by June 14)			
Week 5 Session 9 – June 9	Quantitative Data Analysis Pt 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Logic of Multivariate Analysis • The Elaboration Model 	Chapter 14 Chapter 15
Week 5 Session 10 – June 11	Quantitative Data Analysis Pt 2 continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures of Association with Nominal/Ordinal/Interval Level Data • Inferential statistics • The principle of statistical significance 	Chapter 16
Assignment 2 based on Chapters 14, 15, and 16 is due June 19 (Marks for Assignment 2 are anticipated to be posted by June 26)			
Week 6 Session 11 – June 16	Qualitative Research (Field Research)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is field research and when is it appropriate? • Major field research frameworks • Popular data collection techniques in field research • The pros and cons of field research 	Chapter 10
Week 6 Session 12 – June 18	Qualitative Research continued Qualitative Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative Interviewing Techniques • The search for patterns and differences • Bringing order to the data: coding and memoing 	Chapter 11 Chapter 13
Final Exam based on Chapter 10, 11, and 13 to be held between June 22 and June 26			

COURSE POLICIES

ACCESSIBILITY

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/> as soon as possible.

ATTENDANCE AND PREPARATION

Attendance is required. Students are responsible for all material presented in class. Students who are unable to attend class on a given day are responsible for obtaining from their classmates notes on all material covered, as well as information regarding any administrative announcements that may have been made. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings in advance of the class period for which they are assigned.

COURSE WEB SITE

The course website prepared on the Blackboard system is available at portal.utoronto.ca. The site will contain the course syllabus, all handouts, links of interest, and course announcements. Students are responsible for the content of all course materials. Discussion boards have been enabled on the course web site. All students are expected to behave respectfully towards their classmates and towards the professor and T.A.s.

EMAIL

When emailing your instructor or TAs, **you must use your utoronto.ca address**, as this is the only address we can be sure is yours. Please also be sure to include "SOC200" in the subject line. All students are responsible for checking their official utoronto.ca email addresses regularly, including the evening before class. While the instructor and TA's do their best to be available for students, a prompt reply cannot be guaranteed if your email comes within 24 hours of a test, assignment, or exam, or if your email is submitted over the weekend. If you have a question or need to meet with the instructor or T.A., please give reasonable time for them to respond.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION

Please note that this course is a major prerequisite for subsequent courses in Sociology. **Therefore, students are required to submit all coursework to achieve the maximum possible grade in the class. Students will receive a grade of 0 for any course requirement that is not submitted by the end of the term.**

DO NOT email copies of your assignment to the professor or TAs. Assignments are due online through turnitin.com by 11.59 on the specified due date. Assignments submitted after this time and date and/or not submitted through turnitin.com will be considered late. Due to the condensed nature of the course, a best effort will be made to have marked assignments returned through Blackboard within 7 business days of submission. It is the responsibility of the student to retrieve their marked assignment online through Blackboard.

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to *Turnitin.com* for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the *Turnitin.com* reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. The terms that apply to the University's use of the *Turnitin.com* service are described on the *Turnitin.com* web site.

LATE/MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will be penalized 5 percentage points per day (including weekends and holidays). Students may, **at the discretion of the instructor**, have a late assignment excused with proper documentation. To qualify for an excused lateness, you must submit an original University of Toronto Verification of Student Illness or Injury Form completed by a doctor who treated you **on or before the day the assignment is due**. The Form is available on the University of Toronto's web site and may be completed by a Health Services physician or by your own physician: <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/> The form must be placed in a sealed envelope and be addressed to the instructor. No other medical certification will be accepted. **Due to the condensed nature of the course, documentation must be presented within three days of the missed assignment.**

If a **personal or family crisis** prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies). **The letter must be placed in a sealed envelope and be addressed to the instructor. Due to the condensed nature of the course, documentation must be presented within one week of the missed assignment.**

REQUESTS FOR RE-GRADING ASSIGNMENTS

Due to the condensed nature of the course, all requests for re-grading a course assignment should be made to your TA **within two days of the date when the assignment was returned to you on Blackboard**. A short memo that clearly states specific reasons to justify the request and backs up these reasons with evidence from your assignment must be submitted to your TA. No re-grading requests will be considered if the request is submitted more than two business days after the assignment was returned. This deadline applies to all students. **Be advised that requesting a regrade may result in a lower mark.**

USE OF WRITING CENTRES

All students are encouraged to use their available writing centres. Writing tutors help you to think through your ideas, develop a thesis, organize your paper, present your evidence effectively, argue logically, and express yourself more clearly and concisely. Proofreading and copyediting for spelling, grammar, or format are *not* within the primary scope of the writing labs' services.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Including references to sources that you did not use.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work, having someone rewrite or add material to your work while "editing".
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers
- Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor's notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the *Code*. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek out additional information from me, or from other available campus resources like the U of T Writing Website: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/>