

## Summer 2016 SOCIOLOGY 200H1F – Course Syllabus

### THE LOGIC OF SOCIAL INQUIRY

**Instructor:** Mark D. Easton  
**Office Hours:** Tuesday & Thursday 5-6pm (or by appointment)  
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**T.A.:** T.B.A.

**Class Time:** Tuesday & Thursday 6-8pm  
**Location:** SS1085  
**Web Page:** portal.utoronto.ca

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the research process used in social science, with a specific focus on the ways in which sociologists turn social issues, interests, theories and debates into social research. The first two classes begin with a more general overview of the nature of inquiry in the social sciences, while the remainder of the course is devoted to exploring the major steps, concepts, and decisions surrounding research in the social sciences, such as developing a research question, 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.
- To prepare students for more advanced courses in qualitative and quantitative research methods

### 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 19)	25%
Assignment 1 –	Based on Chapters 3, 6, 8, and 9	(Due June 3)	25%
Assignment 2 –	Based on Chapters 14, 15, and 16	(Due June 14)	25%
Final Exam –	Based on Chapters 10, 11, and 13	(June 20-24)	20%
Participation -	Weekly short online exercises based on class material	(Ongoing)	5%

**REQUIRED TEXT**

Available at the U of T Bookstore in hard copy:

*Fundamentals of Social Research, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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/978-0-17-657215-0>

**Note:** You may opt to use the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

- May 10:** first class for SOC 200H1F
- May 15:** final day to add or change an F Section Summer Term course
- May 19:** in-class test covering Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5
- May 29:** instructor will aim to have test marks posted by this date
- June 3:** assignment 1 is due covering chapters 3, 6, 8, and 9
- June 6:** final day to drop SOC200H1F without academic penalty
- June 15:** instructor will aim to have Assignment 1 marks posted by this date
- June 16:** last class for SOC 200H1F
- June 14:** assignment 2 is due covering chapters 14, 15, and 16
- June 24:** instructor will aim to have Assignment 2 marks posted by this date
- June 20-24:** final exam period for SOC200H1F covering chapters 10, 11, and 13

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Date	Topic	Readings
<b>Week 1</b> Session 1 - May 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the course</li> <li>• Overview of the research process</li> <li>• The nature of inquiry in the social sciences</li> </ul>	pg 105: Figure 4-4 Chapter 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of course themes, assignment and exam expectations, communication logistics</li> <li>• Provide some perspective on the organization of the succeeding course material by introducing how the research process is typically conceptualized (Figure 4-4)</li> <li>• What is social theory and social science, and what are its aims? Theory vs. philosophy &amp; belief; seeing social relationships through variables &amp; attributes; quantitative and qualitative data;</li> </ul>		
<b>Week 1</b> Session 2 – May 12	Hey students can you sParadigm? – Asking research questions from different perspectives  Research design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popular social science paradigms. From theory to operationalization to observation</li> <li>• Inductive vs. deductive theory</li> <li>• Exploration, Description, Explanation – the three main purposes of research</li> <li>• Thinking about causation</li> <li>• Units of analysis</li> </ul> Chapter 2  Chapter 4

<b>Week 2</b> Session 3 – May 17	Conceptualizing and measuring what you want to study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concepts &amp; constructs; nominal &amp; operational definitions; indicators &amp; dimensions</li> <li>• Levels of measurement and their implications</li> <li>• Constructing indexes and scales to measure concepts</li> <li>• Validity and reliability in measurement, and the constant tension between the two</li> </ul>	Chapter 5
<b>Week 2</b> Session 4 – May 19	<b>In-class test covering Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5</b>		
<b>Marks for the in-class test are anticipated to be posted by May 29</b>			
<b>Week 3</b> Session 5 – May 24	Choosing the subjects for your study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Populations and sampling frames</li> <li>• Non-probability sampling</li> <li>• Probability sampling (and an introduction to some basic statistical concepts)</li> <li>• Popular probability sampling designs</li> </ul>	Chapter 6
<b>Week 3</b> Session 6 – May 26	Survey Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is survey research and when is it appropriate?</li> <li>• Data collection through surveys – questionnaire design</li> <li>• The pros and cons of survey based data collection</li> </ul>	Chapter 8
<b>Week 4</b> Session 7 – May 31	Unobtrusive Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is unobtrusive research and when is it appropriate?</li> <li>• Popular data collection techniques used in unobtrusive research</li> <li>• The pros and cons of unobtrusive research techniques</li> </ul>	Chapter 9
<b>Week 4</b> Session 8 – June 2	Should you be doing this? The Black, White, and Grey areas of Research Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The history and development of a research ethics protocol</li> <li>• The current state of research ethics in the social sciences</li> </ul>	Chapter 3
	Quantitative Data Analysis Pt 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction, Coding, Data-Cleaning,</li> <li>• Univariate Analysis - descriptive statistics (measures of central tendency, distributions, and dispersion)</li> <li>• Bivariate Analysis - measures of association and levels of measurement</li> </ul>	Chapter 14
<b>Assignment 1 based on Chapters 3, 6, 8, and 9 is due Friday June 3 (Marks for Assignment 1 are anticipated to be posted by June 15)</b>			
<b>Week 5</b> Session 9 – June 7	Quantitative Data Analysis Pt 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Logic of Multivariate Analysis</li> <li>• The Elaboration Model</li> </ul>	Chapter 14  Chapter 15

<b>Week 5</b> Session 10 – June 9	Quantitative Data Analysis Pt 2 continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measures of Association with Nominal, Ordinal, &amp; Interval Level Data</li> <li>• Inferential statistics</li> <li>• The principle of statistical significance</li> </ul>	Chapter 16
<b>Assignment 2 based on Chapters 14, 15, and 16 is due June 14 (Marks for Assignment 2 are anticipated to be posted by June 24)</b>			
<b>Week 6</b> Session 11 – June 14	Qualitative Research (Field Research)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is field research and when is it appropriate?</li> <li>• Major field research frameworks</li> <li>• Popular data collection techniques in field research</li> <li>• The pros and cons of field research</li> </ul>	Chapter 10
<b>Week 6</b> Session 12 – June 16	Qualitative Research continued  Qualitative Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative Interviewing Techniques</li> <li>• The search for patterns and differences</li> <li>• Bringing order to the data: coding and memoing</li> </ul>	Chapter 11  Chapter 13
<b>Final exam based on Chapter 10, 11, and 13 to be held between June 20 and June 24</b>			

## 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, and refer regularly to their utoronto email accounts and the course website on Portal for current information and announcements relevant to this course.

### COURSE WEB SITE

The course website prepared on the Blackboard system is available at [portal.utoronto.ca](http://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.

### COURSEWORK COMPLETION POLICY

While discussing course concepts with peers is often unavoidable, you are reminded that **all coursework must be completed independently and written in your own words**. Therefore, to avoid a potential violation of the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*, please do not complete the course assignments in groups.

## ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICY

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 met by the end of the term.**

**DO NOT email copies of your assignment to the professor or TAs. Assignments are due in two formats. A hard copy of your assignment is due by 4:45pm on the specified due date, which may be submitted to the 200 level dropbox in room 225 at 725 Spadina. Room 225 at 725 Spadina is open Monday to Friday, from 9:00am to 4:45pm**

**To avoid any unnecessary late penalties, please ensure that your hard copy is time stamped before submitting. Assignments submitted after this time and date will be considered late. Due to the condensed nature of this course, a best effort will be made to have marked assignments returned within 10 business days of the assigned due date.**

**It is also requested that your assignment be submitted through turnitin.com by 11:59 on the specified due date for a textual similarity review.** Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used 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 web site.

You also have the right to opt out of submitting your coursework to turnitin.com. Should you exercise this right, please be prepared to provide rough copies of your work so that its originality can be verified.

## 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.

## MISSED TESTS/EXAMS

Students who miss a test/exam will receive a mark of zero unless students who wish to write the make-up test/exam give their TA a written request for special consideration which explains why the test/exam was missed, accompanied by **proper documentation from a physician or college registrar.** A request should be accompanied by contact information (the student's telephone number and email address) so the date, time and place of the make-up test can be communicated to the student. A student who misses a test/exam and the subsequent make-up test/exam for a valid reason will not have a third chance to take the test/exam.

## DOCUMENTATION FROM YOUR PHYSICIAN OR COLLEGE REGISTRAR FOR LATE/MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, TESTS, AND EXAMS

If you miss a test/exam or an assignment deadline, **do not** contact the instructor or a TA unless you have followed the steps described here. Telling the professor or TA why you missed a deadline or a test will not be considered.

- In case of illness, you must supply a duly completed Verification of Student Illness or Injury form (available at [www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca](http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca)). A doctor's note is not acceptable. **The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work at class or to your TA during their office hours.**
- 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, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work at class or to your TA during their office hours.**

**Due to the condensed nature of the course, documentation must be presented within three days of the missed test/exam/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 the assignment was made available for return**. A short memo that clearly explains the reasons why your assignment should be re-graded 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 re-grade 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/>