

Fall 2013 SOCIOLOGY 200H1F – L5101

THE LOGIC OF SOCIAL INQUIRY

Instructor: Mark D. Easton
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T.A.'s: TBA

Class Time: Wed. 6-8pm
Location: SS2117
Web Page: portal.utoronto.ca

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 a test, two writing assignments, and a final exam. The test will include multiple choice and short answer questions. The final exam will include multiple choice questions, and an essay question. Assignment instructions will be made available on Blackboard.

Test (Oct 9)	25%
Assignment 1 based on Documentary (Due Oct 30)	20%
Assignment 2 based on provided articles (Due Nov 27)	25%
Final Exam (Dec 9-20)	30%

REQUIRED TEXT

Available at the U of T Bookstore in hard copy:

Fundamentals of Social Research, 3rd Canadian Edition by Earl Babbie & Lucia Benaquisto 2013

A substantially cheaper e-version of this text is also available from the publisher. Follow this link to purchase the ebook or selected chapters directly from the publisher:

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

Note: This course uses the 3rd edition because The U of T Bookstore was unable to procure sufficient new and used copies of the 2nd edition. The 2nd edition is also more expensive. You may opt to use the 2nd edition of this text, but at your own peril. There may be substantial differences in the examples, wording, and page numbering of the two editions. This could be problematic for you at test and exam time because any test and exam materials based on the text will refer to the 3rd edition.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Readings	Notes
Week 1 Sept 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the course • Overview of the research process • The nature of inquiry in the social sciences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 2 Sept 18	<p>Hey students can you sParadigm? – Asking research questions from different perspectives</p> <p>Research design</p>	<p>Chapter 2</p> <p>Chapter 4</p>	<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
Week 3 Sept 25	Conceptualizing and measuring what you want to study	Chapter 5 & 6	
<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 			
Week 4 Oct 2	Choosing the subjects for your study	Chapter 7	
<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 			

Week 5 Oct 9	Test 1	Lecture and textbook material from Weeks 1 to 4 inclusive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 multiple choice questions based on the text • 4 short answer questions based on the text and/or lecture material
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Week 6 Oct 16	Should you be doing this? The Black, White, and Grey areas of Research Ethics	Chapter 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-lecture and introduction to the video
Class vote to watch one of two documentaries relevant to the ethics of doing research with human subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Stanford Prison Experiment (29min) - BBC Documentary (2002) • Dr. Money and the Boy with no Penis (45min) - BBC Documentary (2004) 			

Week 7 Oct 23	“Low quality” research vs. “Negative” research results	Lehrer et. al. Negative Results in Social Science. <i>European Political Science</i> (2007) 6, 51–68	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This article may help you with the second assignment
	Survey research	Chapter 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test 1 anticipated return date
<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 			

Week 8 Oct 30	Unobtrusive research	Chapter 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 1 due
<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 			

Note: Monday November 4 is the last day to “drop” this course without penalty.

Week 9 Nov 6	Quantitative data analysis Part I	Chapter 15 & 16	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Univariate Analysis - descriptive statistics (measures of central tendency, distributions, and dispersion) • Bivariate Analysis - measures of association and levels of measurement 			

Week 10 Nov 13	Quantitative data analysis Part II	Chapter 15 & 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 1 anticipated return date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inferential statistics • Probability theory and the principle of statistical significance • Statistical significance and substantive significance 			

Week 11 Nov 20	Qualitative field research	Chapter 11 & 12	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is qualitative field research and when is it appropriate? • Major qualitative field research frameworks: (e.g. grounded theory, extended case method) • Popular data collection techniques in qualitative research • The pros and cons of qualitative field research 			

Week 12 Nov 27	Introduction to qualitative data analysis	Chapter 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last class • Assignment 2 due
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The search for patterns and differences • Bringing order to the data: coding and memoing <p>The content of the final exam will be discussed in the last class</p>			

Note: An exact date for the pickup of Assignment 2 will be announced later in the term once the exam schedule for this class becomes known. However, the latest date Assignment 2 will be available for pickup is December 13 between 12:00 and 2:00pm in my office (Rm 225 at 725 Spadina). As per the course policy about submitting grade appeals for tests and assignments within one week of receipt, this date gives you exactly 1 week prior to the last day of the exam period (December 20) to submit a formal grade appeal.

Dec 9 – 20	Final Exam (exact date, time and location to be announced)
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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. Please note that there are two sections of SOC200 being offered this semester. These sections are not interchangeable: The lectures, requirements, assignments, tests, and course policies differ. Therefore, it is important that you attend the section in which you are enrolled.

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.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are due in hard copy at the beginning of class on the specified due date. Assignments will be considered late if the hard copy is not submitted on time at the beginning of class on the specified due date. Late hard copies will be penalized 5 percentage points per day if not handed in at the beginning of the class. Both early and late assignments should be submitted to the Sociology department at 725 Spadina Ave. Bring assignments to room 225, time stamp it, and drop it in the box for second year courses. Drop boxes are available from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, excluding days on which the university is closed. **DO NOT put papers in the instructor's mailbox or slide them under the instructor's door.**

MISSED TESTS

Students who miss a test will be assigned a mark of 0. Students may, **at the discretion of the instructor**, have an absence excused with proper documentation. You must also 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 of the test or assignment**. 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/> No other medical certification will be accepted. **Documentation must be presented within one week of the missed test or assignment. One make-up test will be scheduled. Students who do not attend the scheduled make-up test will receive a mark of 0.**

REQUESTS FOR RE-GRADING TESTS/ASSIGNMENTS

All requests for re-grading the term test or course assignment should be made to your TA **within one week of the date when the test/assignment was returned to the class**. 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 one week after the test or assignment was returned to the class. This deadline applies to all students including those who missed the class when the test/assignment was returned and picked up his/her test/assignment at a later date. It is the responsibility of the student to pick up their tests/assignments on time in class.

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/>

If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please speak to me or seek the advice of your college registrar.