

# SOCI 211 A01

## Introduction to Sociological Research

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### Course Description

Research Methods are central to Sociology and to what sociologists do. This course introduces students to important concepts and strategies of social research, including conceptualization, research design, sampling, measurement, and the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. This includes such issues as:

1. How do we know what we know (epistemology)?
2. The roles of deductive and inductive logic;
3. The framing of research questions and research design;
4. The basics of sampling, measurement, and analyses;
5. Relationships between quantitative and qualitative research;
6. Mixed methods; and
7. The ethics of social research.

**Required Reading:** Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2016), *Social Research Methods, Fourth Edition*. Oxford University Press; Don Mills, Ontario, Canada.

**Course Format:** As the course is divided into three 50 minute sessions, we will approach each weekly topic with the same general format. On Tuesdays, there will be an interactive lecture on the weekly topic; on Wednesdays, there will be interactive plenary discussions based on course material; on Friday, you will work in groups on instructor-and student-selected questions in relation to the assigned readings.

Spring 2020  
Mon., Wed., Thur: 14:30–15:20 a.m.  
Classroom: COR B108

Instructor: Dr. Simon Carroll  
Email: scarroll@uvic.ca  
Phone: (250) 853-3773  
Office: COR A327  
Office Hours: Tue, Wed, Fri: 1130-1220

### Course Materials

#### *Textbook*

Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2016), *Social Research Methods, Fourth Edition*. Oxford University Press; Don Mills, Ontario, Canada.

#### *Coursespaces:*

CRN: 22764

Additional materials will be posted to the Coursespaces site each week.

### Teaching Assistants (TA)

TA:

## Course Schedule

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### Date Topic Readings

Students will be evaluated primarily on their ability to engage with the ideas presented in the course. The expectation is that students will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to articulate the core concepts for each of the topics and to critically reflect on how these concepts and perspectives are important for understanding the foundational knowledge required for doing social research.

**Exams:** The mid-term exams tests students on the knowledge that is needed to identify and critically evaluate the ideas presented in the course. The exams are each worth **30%** of the total grade. The exams will consist of a short essay question and several short answer questions on key theoretical concepts.

**Final Paper:** The final requirement involves completion of a paper focused on one of the key topics covered in the course. This requirement is worth **40%** of the total course grade. Further information will be provided in a handout. All assignments must be referenced using the APA style. The paper will be **1500-2000** words in length.

### Important Dates

*Midterm Exam I*  
Feb. 7<sup>th</sup>, 4:00pm

*Midterm Exam II*  
March 20<sup>th</sup>, 4:00pm

*Final Paper*  
April 7, 4:00pm

<p><b>Week 1</b> Jan. 6, 8, 9</p>	<p><b>Introduction to the Course and General Research Orientations</b> <b>Bryman et al. – Guide to the Book</b> This week we will go over the course outline; discuss the purpose of the course; and, reflect on the type of pedagogy we will use in the course. For myself, I believe learning is a participatory sport, so that means we have to together decide how best to meet your learning needs. We will also introduce the textbook, and begin thinking about: the relation between theory and research; deductive and inductive approaches; Epistemology; Ontology; and, the general research orientations of so-called 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' research.</p>	<p>Bryman &amp; Bell, Chapter 1</p>
<p><b>Week 2</b> Jan. 13, 15, 16</p>	<p><b>General Research Orientations (cont.) and Research Design</b> This week, we continue exploring the core philosophical ideas underlying qualitative and quantitative approaches to research, along with looking at how research orientation relates to research design.</p>	<p>Bryman &amp; Bell, Chapter 1 &amp; 2</p>
<p><b>Week 3</b> Jan, 20, 22, 23</p>	<p><b>The Nature of Quantitative Research</b> This week we look at the core ideas behind quantitative research approaches, including: concepts and measurement; reliability and validity; goals and objectives of quantitative research; and, critiques of these approaches.</p>	<p>Bryman &amp; Bell, Chapter 4</p>

<b>Week 4</b> Jan. 27, 29, 30	<b>Survey Research and Asking Questions</b> This week look at one the core research tool/methods that quantitative social research employs: the survey interview/questionnaire; we look at the structured interview, its purposes and the various problems it must face, along with more fundamental critiques of the method. We also look at the key methodological issues facing the design of survey questions.	Bryman & Bell, Chapters 5 & 6
<b>Week 5</b> Feb. 3, 5, 6	<b>Structured Observation and Other Sources of Quantitative Data</b> Despite the central place of survey research in quantitative social research, there are a variety of other sources of quantitative data and reasons for why they might be preferred to, or used in addition to, surveys. In addition to structured observation, and traditional archival research of personal or government documents, the internet and social media provide a massive new source of data that can be collected and analyzed quantitatively.  <b>Midterm Exam I Due Feb, 7<sup>th</sup>, 4pm !!!</b>	Bryman & Bell, Chapters 7 & 8
<b>Week 6</b> Feb. 10, 12, 13	<b>The Nature of Qualitative Research</b> This week we introduce the nature of qualitative research approaches. Although under this umbrella term there are a vast array of different approaches, they share some common philosophical perspectives on the nature of research, theories and concepts, and research goals. We will look at both critiques of these approaches as well as some contrasts between qualitative and quantitative research.	Bryman & Bell, Chapter 9

<p><b>Week 7</b> Feb. 17-21</p>	<p><b>Reading Break</b> No classes this week</p>	
<p><b>Week 8</b> Feb. 24, 26, 27</p>	<p><b>Ethnography and Participant Observation</b> This week we will consider a central methodological approach used in qualitative social research. We will look at the underlying rationale for using ethnographic studies, and will consider the foundational arguments for participant observation in sociological research.</p>	<p>Bryman &amp; Bell, Chapter 10</p>
<p><b>Week 9</b> March. 2, 4, 5</p>	<p><b>Interviewing in Qualitative Research</b> This week we will look at the nature of the interview process from the perspective of the qualitative researcher as opposed to the quantitative. We will look at a variety of interview formats in qualitative research and asking ourselves about the methodological issues that arise in selecting a particular method or format.</p>	<p>Bryman &amp; Bell, Chapter 11</p>
<p><b>Week 10</b> March 9, 11, 12</p>	<p><b>Research Ethics</b> This week we will focus more directly on the ethical question at the centre of social research</p>	<p>Bryman &amp; Bell, Chapter 3</p>
<p><b>Week 11</b> March 16, 18, 19</p>	<p><b>Sampling</b> This week we look at the methodology of research sampling, both from a quantitative and qualitative perspective.</p>	<p>Bryman &amp; Bell, Chapter 12</p>
	<p><b>Midterm Exam II Due March 20, 4pm!!!</b></p>	
<p><b>Week 12</b> March 23, 25, 26</p>	<p><b>Quantitative Data Analysis</b> This week we look at the key ideas behind quantitative data analysis.</p>	<p>Bryman &amp; Bell, Chapter 13</p>

**Week 13**

March 30,  
April 1, 2

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

This week we look at the key ideas  
behind qualitative data analysis.

Bryman & Bell, Chapter 14

**Final Paper Due April 7<sup>th</sup> 4pm !!!**

## Department of Sociology Evaluation and Writing Expectations

\*Effective September 2012

100-level  
courses

<b>Minimum writing requirement</b>	In-class or take-home assignment spanning at least <b>5 pages</b> in length.
<b>Evaluation</b>	Primarily multiple-choice exams, short assignment, possibly written component on exams.
<b>Format</b>	Lectures and tutorials. Primarily textbook readings. Students also read original sociological research.

200-level  
courses

<b>Minimum writing requirement</b>	At least one assignment involving library research that spans at least <b>8 pages</b> in length.
<b>Evaluation</b>	A combination of multiple choice and written exams, including short-answer and essay questions.
<b>Format</b>	Lectures. Primarily textbook readings. Students also read original sociological research.

300-level  
courses

<b>Minimum writing requirement</b>	An essay involving literature reviews and applications of concepts. A minimum of <b>10</b> pages in length.
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# Official Grading Standards

Undergraduate Records, University of Victoria, 2014

Passing Grade	Grade Point Value	Percentage	Description
<b>A+</b>	9	90 – 100	An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
<b>A</b>	8	85 – 89	
<b>A-</b>	7	80 – 84	
<b>B+</b>	6	77 – 79	A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student's full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
<b>B</b>	5	73 – 76	
<b>B-</b>	4	70 – 72	
<b>C+</b>	3	65 – 69	A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates that the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.
<b>C</b>	2	60 – 64	
<b>D</b>	1	50 – 59	A D is earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.
<b>COM</b>	Excluded Grade	N/A	Complete (pass). Used only for 0-unit courses and those credit courses designated by the Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings.
Failing Grades	Grade Point Value	Percentage	Description
<b>E</b>	0	0-49	Conditional supplemental. Supplemental examinations are not offered by a departments and the allowable percentage may vary by program (e.g. 35-49). Students will be advised whether supplemental will be offered and if the percentage range varies when assessment techniques are announced at the beginning of the course.
<b>F</b>	0	0-49	F is earned by work, which after the completion of course requirements, is inadequate and unworthy of course credit towards the degree.
<b>N</b>	0	0-49	Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.
<b>N/X</b>	Excluded Grade	N/A	Did not complete course requirements by the end of the term; no supplemental. Used only for co-op work terms and for courses designated by Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings. The grade is EXCLUDED from the calculation of all grade point averages.
<b>F/X</b>	Excluded Grade	N/A	Unsatisfactory performance. Completed course requirements; no supplemental. Used only for co-op work terms and for courses designated by Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings. The grade is EXCLUDED from the calculation of all grade point averages.

## University Course Policies

### **Examination and Assignment Policy**

As per university policy, absence is only permitted in cases of illness, accident, family affliction, or religious obligations. Missing an exam for other reasons will result in an “F.” Students are responsible for providing official documentation to justify their absence, e.g. a doctor’s note. In cases of justified absences, the student has the right to request a make-up exam. Please note that exams will not be rescheduled to accommodate students’ personal circumstances, including travelling plans. There are no exceptions to this policy.

### **Grading**

In accordance with Senate Regulations, grading on the curve is not permitted. The grades students receive in this course reflect their performance in relation to specified academic expectations. Students should retain a copy of all submitted assignments (in case of loss) and should retain all their marked assignments in case they wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standings. Students have the right to view their marked examinations with their instructor, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. All exams remain the property of the University of Victoria.

### **Attendance**

As per university policy, attendance to all classes is mandatory. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness, accident or family affliction should report to the instructor as soon as possible. Absences that cannot be justified in accordance with university policies will be subject to penalty at the discretion of the instructor. If you are absent for reasons other than those specified under university policies, then it is not the responsibility of the instructor or the TA to help you catch up with missed lecture material.

### **Academic Integrity**

The Department of Sociology fully and rigorously enforces the Senate Policy on Academic integrity. It is of utmost importance that students who do their work honestly be protected from those who do not. Because this policy is in place to ensure that students carry out and benefit from the learning activities assigned in each course, it is expected that students will cooperate in its implementation. Students caught cheating in the course will be expelled and reported to the Chair of the Department of Sociology and the Dean of Social Sciences for disciplinary action.

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

Students must note the statement on “Plagiarism” in the UVic Calendar, and all regulations under the “Policy on Academic Integrity.” Quotes and citations must be used for any material longer than 5 words in succession that is not the student’s original work.

### **Harassment**

The Department of Sociology supports the University’s policies on harassment, and is committed to ensuring that all students, staff, and faculty are able to exercise fully their rights to participate in activities at the University without fear of harassment.

**Accommodations**

The University of Victoria accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre. The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let your instructor know in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. As per university policy, students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments, cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with the instructor before the drop date.

**Classroom Etiquette**

Distractions can easily hinder the difficult process of conveying knowledge. Please observe standard classroom etiquette. Entering the classroom after the instructor's presentation has started can be distracting both to the instructor as well as to other students. While occasional lateness may be unavoidable, your dedication to being on time is greatly appreciated. The use of electronic communication devices is also a distraction to both the instructor and classmates. This includes texting and surfing the internet. Please turn off your electronic communication devices before entering the classroom and refrain from using them during class. If there is a justifiable reason for using your device during class (e.g., expecting an urgent call related to health or illness), please notify the instructor ahead of time, keep the device on vibrate, and exit the room if you must receive a message.

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**Commitment to Inclusiveness and Diversity**

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive and safe learning and working environment for all its members. The Department of Sociology is committed to inclusiveness and to a welcoming, friendly learning and working environment. We condemn sexism, ageism, racism, ethnocentrism, homophobia and inappropriate behaviour toward people with a disability.