

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY
Department of Sociology

SOCI 2911: Social Research Traditions
Winter 2018
Thursday 11:30-2:30pm
OA2018

Course Director: Dr. Arthur McLuhan
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology—the study of human group life—is an empirical discipline. Sociological theory is developed, tested, revised, and rejected against an obdurate social reality. The process of how sociologists research the social world is the subject matter of this course. Specifically, we will consider research orientations and designs; research objectives and ethics; quantitative and qualitative research assumptions and strategies; strengths and limitations of various research techniques; and research experiences and presentations. Throughout the course our emphasis will be on developing familiarity with the basic fundamentals of the research process to enable critical engagement with existing research as well as logical development of original research projects.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Students will overview the major research orientations, designs, and ethical issues in sociology
- Students will examine and engage the quantitative and qualitative research methods debate in the social sciences
- Students will be able to identify, illustrate, and assess the basic assumptions, rationales, and procedures of quantitative and qualitative sociological research
- Students will design an original research study to examine a local issue or problem

REQUIRED TEXTS

Note: Additional readings may be assigned or recommended during the course

Bryman, Alan, and Edward Bell. (2016). *Social Research Methods*. 4th Canadian Edition. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

EVALUATION

Midterm Examination (30%)

The mid-term examination will cover lectures, required readings, films, and guest speakers. The exam will consist of multiple-choice, true/false, and short answer questions. It will be held in class on **February 15**.

Research Proposal (30%)

In this written assignment, you will design a study to investigate a social issue or problem in Orillia. In your research proposals, you will define the research problem, design a research study to investigate the problem, address potential ethical issues with conducting the research, and identify the limitations of the research study design. Assignment instructions will be provided on Desire2Learn. A 7-page paper is due in class on **March 29**.

Final Examination (40%)

The format for the final exam will be the same as that for the mid-term. You will be responsible for the material covered since the mid-term exam. The final exam will be scheduled during the formal examination period, **April 13 to 24**.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING POINTS CAREFULLY:

Assignments and Exams

Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, assignments for this course must be received on the due date specified for the assignment. All assignments and exams must be completed in order to pass the course.

Please submit your assignments at the beginning of class on the day that they are due. Do not bring assignments to the main office. The staff do not date-stamp assignments, nor do they monitor the submission or return of papers.

Assignments will be returned to you in class.

There will be no extra assignments for extra credit in this course.

Students are expected to take responsibility for their performance in the course. If you are not meeting your grade expectations, consult with your instructor before the deadline to drop courses about developing strategies to improve your performance and reassessing your grade expectations.

The Course Instructor reserves the right to subject assignments to electronic submission and screening by commercial plagiarism software (e.g., Turnitin). These papers will remain in the database for future comparisons.

Late Penalty

The due dates are fixed and non-negotiable. There will be a deduction of 5% per day for all late assignments. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., **may** be entertained by the Course Instructor, but will **require supporting documentation** (e.g., attending physician's statement). If you and the instructor arrange an extended deadline, the late penalties apply if you miss the new deadline. Further extensions or accommodation will require students to submit a formal petition to the Faculty.

Missed Tests

If you miss a test, a make-up test will not be automatically granted. Students with a documented reason for missing a course test, such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., which is confirmed by supporting documentation may request accommodation from the Course Instructor. A single time and date will be set for all students writing the make-up midterm examination.

If you are unable to write the midterm examination for a valid reason (e.g., illness), adhere to the following procedure:

1. **Contact the course instructor by email at least 24 hours prior to the test** if you are physically unable to write it.
2. **Obtain and submit formal documentation for a valid absence.** In the case of illness, the only acceptable documentation is an attending physician's statement dated prior to the test date. A regular doctor's note is insufficient.
3. **Request by email to meet with the course instructor to review your absence and documentation.** If the course instructor judges your absence and supporting documentation to be valid, then you will be able to write the make-up test. If the course instructor judges your absence and supporting documentation invalid, you will receive a zero (0) grade for the missed test and you will not be able to write the make-up test.

Further extensions or accommodation will require students to submit a formal petition to the Faculty.

Additional Information

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given. It is the responsibility of students to check their Lakehead email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

It is the policy of Lakehead University that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own Lakehead University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a Lakehead account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities and/or medical conditions to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, please contact Student Accessibility Services <http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca> (SC0003, 343-8047 or sas@lakeheadu.ca)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Lakehead University takes academic integrity seriously and believes that any form of academic dishonesty is destructive to the values of the University. Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on student behaviour policies, disciplinary procedures, and academic integrity:
<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/provost-vice-president-academic/academic-integrity-plans-policies>

TOPIC AND READING SCHEDULE

PLEASE NOTE: The following schedule is meant to provide a sense of order and direction. We may modify it slightly as we move through the material. Announcements about any such change will be made in class.

Jan. 11	Introduction
Jan. 18	Research Orientations and Designs <i>Readings</i> <i>Social Research Methods</i> – Chapter 1 and 2
Jan. 25	Research Ethics <i>Readings</i> <i>Social Research Methods</i> – Chapter 3

Feb. 1	Quantitative Research: Basic Assumptions and Rationale <i>Readings</i> <i>Social Research Methods</i> – Chapter 4
Feb. 8	Qualitative Research: Basic Assumptions and Rationale <i>Readings</i> <i>Social Research Methods</i> – Chapter 9
Feb. 15	**MIDTERM EXAMINATION**
Feb. 22	NO CLASS – READING WEEK
Mar. 1	Sampling <i>Readings</i> <i>Social Research Methods</i> – Chapter 12
Mar. 8	Quantitative Data Collection <i>Readings</i> <i>Social Research Methods</i> – Chapter 5, 6, 7, and 8
Mar. 15	Qualitative Data Collection <i>Readings</i> <i>Social Research Methods</i> – Chapter 10 and 11
Mar. 22	Data Analysis <i>Readings</i> <i>Social Research Methods</i> – Chapter 13 and 14
Mar. 29	**RESEARCH PROPOSALS DUE** Reconciling the Qualitative-Quantitative Divide <i>Readings</i> <i>Social Research Methods</i> – Chapter 15 and 16
April. 5	Conducting and Presenting Research <i>Readings</i> <i>Social Research Methods</i> – Chapter 17 and 18