

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
CAMOSUN COLLEGE**

**SSRM 280: SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH METHODS:  
COURSE OUTLINE FOR FAL 2002**

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Paul Brady      Email: brady@camosun.bc.ca  
OFFICE: Fisher 314a      Phone: 370-3210  
OFFICE HOURS: 5:30-6:30 Mon/Wed; 9:30-10:30 Tue/Thu or by appointment

**COURSE CONTENT:**

This course focuses on qualitative and quantitative approaches to social science research with special emphasis on:

- finding and defining research topic.
- formulating intelligent research question and hypothesis.
- identifying variables and their levels of measurement.
- designing a research project.
- gathering data.
- using SPSS in processing and analyzing data.
- interpreting SPSS outputs.
- writing a research report.

It adopts a problem solution-centered orientation to the use of research procedures and statistics. Specifically, the course introduces students to:

1. the scientific method;
2. the central methodological concerns of science regarding conceptualization and measurement and their relations to validity, reliability, generalizability, causality, and sampling;
3. the role of deductive and inductive logic in designing research;
4. the methods and techniques of collecting qualitative and quantitative information;
5. computer-aided analysis of quantitative data using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS);
6. the politics and ethics of social science research.

**COURSE ORGANIZATION AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

The course uses interactive lectures, examinations, survey, laboratory sessions, and written report to help students to:

1. know and understand the basic principles, methodologies, methods, and techniques of social science research,
2. have hands-on experience with research procedures, particularly the use of SPSS in data analysis, and
3. lay a good foundation for a higher level social science research methods course.

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

Del Balso, M. and Lewis, Alan D.

2001: **First Steps: A Guide to Social Research**. Second Edition,  
Scarborough, Ont.: ITP Nelson.

## GRADING

Mid-term Examination	20%
Labs.	30%
Research Report	10%
Group Discussions	15%
Final Examination	25%

**NOTE: To attain a passing grade, students must complete all the evaluation components of the course.**

## GRADING SYSTEM

The following percentage conversion to letter grade will be used:

A+ = 95 - 100%	B = 75 - 79%	D = 50 - 59%
A = 90 - 94%	B- = 70 - 74%	F = 00 - 49%
A- = 85 - 89%	C+ = 65 - 69%	I = See Calendar for Details
B+ = 80 - 84%	C = 60 - 64%	AUD = Audit

*W = Official withdrawal has taken place.*

## INTERACTIVE LECTURES:

This is the instructor's presentations on selected topics indicated in the course schedule. Students are encouraged to ask questions, make comments and respond to questions during the presentation process.

**You will be required to apply issues covered in the lectures to the Labs. The presentations are also relevant for mid-term and final examinations.**

## ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

There is an Academic Conduct Policy. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, Registration, and on the College web site in the Policy Section. Please see:

**<http://www.camosun.bc.ca/divisions/pres/policy/2-education/>**

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following acts:

- (i) giving, receiving, or obtaining unauthorized information during any type of examination or test;
- (ii) obtaining or providing unauthorized questions or answers relating to any examination or test prior to the time of the examination or test;
- (iii) asking or arranging for another person to take any examination or test in one's place.
- (iv) plagiarizing, that is, appropriating the work of another or parts or passages of another's writing, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as a product of one's own mind or manual skill.
- (v) disruptive behaviour/disorderly conduct

This includes any behaviour that interferes with the provision of college services or of instruction or interferes with any member of the Camosun College community by students and any others accompanying them. Examples: Verbal outbursts, physical gestures, actions or interruptions, which limit or interfere with the provision of college services or instructional activities; unwarranted and unreasonable disturbances during any Camosun College related activity.

Academic misconduct will result in a grade of "F" for the entire course. The students should note that in accordance with the college policy quoted above, mere access to unauthorized information constitutes academic misconduct. It is not necessary for the instructor to prove that the student has used the information.

## **RESEARCH: SOCIAL SURVEY (Lab 5: 6%):**

This component of the course involves the use of pre-coded survey questionnaire on the selected topic (**death penalty**) to collect information from a random sample of residents of the Capital Region District of Victoria.

**RESEARCH TOPIC:** Death penalty

## **LABORATORY SESSIONS (30%):**

There are twelve laboratory sessions for this course and students are required to submit completed eleven lab assignments for grade. Labs 1 - 5 are take-home, and the remaining seven are computer-based to be done in the Ewing 110 computer lab. **The computer labs for Tuesday and Thursday sections begin on October 15 and 17, 2002, respectively.**

Lab 1: Literature review for research question and hypothesis =2%

**Due Date: Thursday, September 19**

Lab 2: Design a sampling procedure for the research project =2%

**Due Date: Thursday, September 26**

Lab 3: Questionnaire construction = 2%

**Due Date: Thursday, October 3**

Lab 4: Critique the questionnaire and suggest improvements =4%

**Due Date: Thursday October 10**

Lab 5: Collect data through a telephone survey =6%

**Due Date: Thursday, October 17**

Lab 6: Enter the responses to the survey questionnaire into SPSS spreadsheet =4%

**Due Date: Thursday, October 24**

Lab 7: Univariate Analysis: Frequency Distribution Tables and Graphs =2%

**Due Date: Thursday, October 31**

Lab 8: Univariate Analysis: Measures of Central Tendency and Dispersion =2%

**Due Date: Thursday, November 5**

Lab 9: Bivariate Analysis: Measures of Association: Contingency Tables and Graphs =2%

**Due Date: Thursday, November 7**

Lab 10: Bivariate Analysis: Measures of Association Statistics =2%

**Due Date: Thursday, November 14**

Lab 11: Inferential Analysis: Test of Significance or Hypothesis =2%

**Due Date: Thursday, November 21**

Lab 12: Crash Data Analysis for Research Report =no marks

**Must be completed by November 28**

❖ **Note that the instructor will not accept late labs after labs have been marked**

## **RESEARCH REPORT (10%):**

Produce a research report based on Lab 12: Crash Data Analysis. Provide a suitable title for the report. The report must have sections on

1. Executive summary or abstract
2. Introduction
3. Research Design
4. Data Analysis
5. Findings or Results
6. Interpretation and Discussion of Findings
7. Conclusion, References and Appendix

**The length of the report must be eight pages or less. The due date for the report is Thursday December 5, 2002. You lose marks for late submission--5 marks a day.**

**MIDTERM EXAMINATIONS (20%):**

The date for the midterm examination is **Tuesday October 15, 2002**. The instructor will give specific research methods concepts discussed in the course to study for at least five days before the examination date. You are required to study these concepts thoroughly. Twenty (20) multiple-choice questions will be set for the midterm examination for you to answer within 50 minutes.

**FINAL EXAMINATION (25%)**

The final examination will be held during the official **examination week (Dec. 9-17)**. The instructor will give you specific research methods concepts chosen from the readings and interactive lectures for you to study at least five days before the examination date. You are required to study these concepts thoroughly. Three essay questions will be set for you to answer any one within 60 minutes.

**GROUP DISCUSSIONS (15%)**

There are twelve group discussion sessions based on selected topics from the required text for the course. Each week thoroughly read the designated chapter for the week. Do that week's exercises/questions provided in the student manual and create one question that is relevant but not adequately addressed in the readings and the exercises/question. In each of the group discussion sessions form a group with three or four other students (you don't have to be in the same group for all the twelve sessions) and discuss each member's question, and:

- a. by consensus come up with one question based on the main theme of the readings but different from the guiding questions and exercises
- b. state the importance of the question
- c. on a piece of paper write this question and the rationale, and list all the names of students who participated in your group's discussion and submit to the instructor for marks

**You will be required to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the group discussions to the labs and examinations.**

## **COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

### **SEPTEMBER**

#### **Introduction:**

Tue. 3 A discussion of course outline and requirements

#### **Group Discussion #1**

Thu.. 5 Social science research: Need, Aims, Rules and Steps

#### **Chapters 1 & 2**

#### **Interactive Lecture 1**

Tue. 10 Social Science Research: Relevant perspectives and Concepts

#### **Chapter 2**

#### **Group Discussion #2**

Thu. 12 Finding and defining the research topic: Doing the literature search and review for

**Chapter 3** research question and hypothesis.

## **Interactive Lecture 2**

Tue. 17 The Essential of literature search and review.

### **Chapter 3**

## **Group Discussion #3**

Thu. 19 Choosing whom and what to study: Random or probability and non-probability sampling

### **Chapter 4**

## **Interactive Lecture 3**

Tue. 24 The Essentials of Sampling.

### **Chapter 4**

## **Group Discussion #4**

Thu. 26 Gathering Data: Social Survey: General Principles and questionnaire construction

### **Chapter 5**

## **OCTOBER**

## **Interactive Lecture 4**

Tue. 1 The challenges of using various types of survey in gathering data

### **Chapter 5**

## **Group Discussion #5**

Thu. 3 Gathering Data: Experimental Research: Laboratory,

**Chapter 6** Field and Natural Experiments

## **Interactive Lecture 5**

Tue. 8 Gathering Data: Experimental Research: General Principles  
**Chapter 6** and Applications

Thu. 10 Gathering Data: Field Research Method

**Tue 15 MID-TERM EXAMINATION  
TRIAL COMPUTER LAB FOR TUESDAY SECTIONS**

**Wed 16 TRIAL COMPUTER LAB FOR WEDNESDAY SECTION**

## **Group Discussion #6**

Thu. 17 Gathering Data: Field Research Method

**Chapter 7 TRIAL COMPUTER LAB FOR THURSDAY SECTIONS**

## **Interactive Lecture 6:**

Tue. 22 Cost and Benefit Analysis of Field Research

### **Chapter 7**

## **Group Discussion #7**

Thu. 24 Gathering Data: Non-reactive Method: Secondary Data

### **Chapter 8**

## **Interactive Lecture 7**

Tue. 29 Coding, Content Analysis and Frequency Distribution

**Chapter 8**, p. 232-240 and Chapter 9, pp. 256-293

**Group Discussion #8**

Thu. 31 Analyzing Quantitative Data: Levels of Measurement  
Chapter 9 Measures of Central Tendency and Dispersion

**November**

**Interactive Lecture 8**

Tue. 5 Levels of Measurement, Measures of Central Tendency  
Chapter 9 and Dispersion Revisited

**Group Discussion #9**

Thu. 7 Analyzing Quantitative Data: Measures of Association:  
Chapter 9 Contingency Tables and Graphs

**Interactive Lecture 9**

Tue. 12 Analyzing Quantitative Data: Measures of Association Graphs

**Group Discussion #10**

Thu. 14 Measures of Association Statistics  
Chapter 9

**Interactive Lecture 10**

Tue. 19 Appropriate Measures of Association Statistics:

**Group Discussion #11**

Thu.s 21 Test of Significance or Test of Hypothesis  
Chapter 10

**Interactive Lecture 11**

Tue 26 Further Thoughts on Test of Hypothesis

**Group Discussion #12**

Thu. 28 Doing Research Report  
Chapter 10

**DECEMBER**

**Interactive Lecture 13**

Tue. 3 Important things to know about writing the Research Report  
Thu. 5 Course Review: Challenges of and Prospects for Social Science Research  
Chapter 10