

CAMOSUN COLLEGE

*School of Arts & Science
Social Sciences Department*

SSRM 280: Social Science Research Methods Section (01)

Spring 2004

Instructor: Dr. I. Thiessen

Time: TR 1:00-2:50 Lec.
10:30-11:50 lab A
3:30-4:50 lab B
Place: TBA

Office: TBA
Telephone: TBA
e-mail: TBA
Office Hours: TBA

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Identify the main differences and similarities of, and problems with, quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.
2. Formulate and justify relevant questions based on their critique of the required textbook with regard to the fundamental concepts and principles of research methods.
3. Design research questionnaire and collect data with it.
4. Analyze survey data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).
5. Produce quantitative research reports.
6. Apply the basic concepts and principles of social science research to real life and hypothetical research situations.

Course Content

This course will introduce students to the different fields, methods and problems of Social Science Research investigation. We will discuss the issues in class and design a small research project. Questions that will be asked are: Are objectivity and an accurate account of the social world possible? What issues of method are involved in participant observation? Are there controls for subjective biases? Are the Social Sciences art, craft, science, or something else? Ethical problems in participant observation and methods of questioning in cross-cultural perspectives will be discussed. The student will be introduced to the recording of oral and life history, to quantitative data collection and other special issues of research. By the end of the course the student will be familiar with the methods of research, its ethical issues and its analysis and writing up.

REQUIRED READING:

Social Research Methods, Alan Bryman, Oxford University Press. ISBN 0198742045
Additional Reading will be given in class.

Course Expectations

Students are responsible for informing themselves of all requirements in the calendar and in the handouts provided in this course, and for meeting these requirements, these include:

- Signing of the 10 Rules of Acquisition (of knowledge)
- Familiarization with the marking scheme for this course
- Students who are habitually absent will be assigned a failing grade in the course

The grading value in effect in this course is as follows:

A+ = 95 - 100%	B = 75 - 79%	D = 50 - 59%
A = 90 - 94%	B- = 70 - 74%	F = 0.0 - 49%
A- = 85 - 89%	C+ = 65 - 69%	I = See Calendar for Details
B+ = 80 - 85%	C = 60 - 64%	AUD = Audit

W = Official withdrawal has taken place.

Course Requirements

Lecture and labs: The course consists of interactive lectures. The labs consist of individual work for your research project, group-work and in-class testing. Each lab will be **5%** of your final mark (together being **50%** of your mark), except otherwise noted (Literature Review & Questionnaire lab are **10%** each).

Participation: Participation is essential to the course. Participation includes attending classes, contributing to discussions, supporting other class members and active listening. Some class time will be allotted for small-group discussions from time to time; generally every student is expected to participate actively in class discussion at all times. The participation mark will be based on responsibilities assumed and the quality of discussion in the group, as well as on attendance and participation in the class. This portion will be **10%** of your final mark.

Attendance: Punctual and continuous attendance is required. It is assumed, that if you missed more than 3 classes you will not be able to fulfill the learning goal of this course. If there are valid reasons for your absence make-up assignments can be agreed upon. Please meet with me during my office hour.

Final Research Project: You should undertake a small-scale "practical" research project. This project is intended to demonstrate your familiarity with SPSS and Statistics as a Social Science Research Method. Within your project you should discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Statistics as a Social Science Research Method, and to present your data/findings/research report in a professional, scholarly

manner. Attention to good presentation, to explicitness in writing about your method, about your goals, and 'findings' will be important, as well as the actual analytical/theoretical insights you may produce by doing the research. Your final research project has to be written in an immaculate language without spelling mistakes. It is also expected that you take great care of structuring your answers. There will be a reduction in one grade point for each spelling mistake, and a reduction of a whole grade for flawed form and presentation. Please see your handout: 'Marking schemata'. Your final Research Project has to be handed in at the end of the course. This portion of the course will count **20%**.

Any write-up should include a section on aims; a section on the method, which also discusses some of the relevant literature associated with the method, and with the issues more generally; a description of how the research was done; a substantive section of data; and an appraisal which makes an assessment of what of importance might have been learned. In writing this last section, you may refer to problems of costs, access, time constraints, and the need for help from people with particular skills, if you wish.

Your research will be a small-scale sample survey with a questionnaire, and up to 25 respondents. In order to stop this exercise from dominating your time, you should keep your research 'small scale' and 'low profile'.

You would need to formulate your questions connected to an issue, a policy, or a theoretical problem. You would need to do some "in-depth" interviews, open-ended, informal, but structured. To help get the questions right, do a pilot; perhaps two once you had a "first draft" of the questionnaire. Then do the actual survey, codify the data, and analyze it.

You need to follow the handout: 'Limitations of the Research Exercise,' N.B. If an extension of a deadline is sought, you will have to apply in written form for a deferral. Permission may not be given, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Essays submitted late without approval will be marked down 10% per day. **Deadline: last day of class.**

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

4th of May

Introduction

Readings: Chapter 11/12

6th of May

Framework for research

Readings: Chapter 1/25

Are objectivity and an accurate account of the social world possible?
What issues of method are involved in participant observation? Are there controls for subjective biases? Is anthropology art, craft, science, or something else?

<i>Lab: Literature Review 10%</i>

11th of May

Schools of thought

Readings: Chapter 1

Positivism/empiricism/realism/subjectivity/idealism/postmodernism/feminism

Lab: SPSS Research/Questionnaire Design 1/2 of 10%

13th of May

Selecting topics & methods (social theory & research)

Readings: Chapter 2

Lab: SPSS Research/Questionnaire Design 1/2 of 10%

18th of May

Ethical problems

Readings: Chapter 24

Intrusion; giving, taking, and reciprocity; research goals, and unintended consequences of paying research. Do researchers have a right to know, and do informants have a right to resist our inquiries?

Lab: Research Ethics Exercise

20th of May

Official statistics

Readings: Chapter 3

Lab: Design SPSS codebook

25th of May

Survey and Census

Readings: Chapter 4/6

Quantitative data collection

Lab: SPSS

27th of May

Questioning in cross-cultural Perspectives

Readings: Chapter 7/5

Formal and informal interviewing; open and closed questions, emic and elicitation; recording speech.

Lab: SPSS

1st of June

Oral history and life history

Readings: Chapter 13

Qualitative methods which promise to get to grips with informant experiences, and key cultural categories. What do they deliver?

Lab: Oral history exercise

3rd of June

Participant observation

Readings: Chapter 8/14

Lab: PO exercise

8th of June

Documentary research

Readings: Chapter 18

Lab: Documentary Research exercise

10th of June

Transcultural research

Readings: Chapter 15

Lab: SPSS

15th of June

Analysis, Writing up

Readings: Chapter 19/23

The textual character of the finished ethnography. Writing for whom?

Lab: SPSS final

17th of June

Conclusion

Readings: Chapter 21/22