



School of Arts & Science
SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT
SSRM 280-01
Social Science Research Methods
2006F

COURSE OUTLINE

The Approved Course Description is available on the web @ _____

Ω Please note: this outline will be electronically stored for five (5) years only.
It is strongly recommended students keep this outline for your records.

1. Instructor Information

(a)	Instructor:	Dr. Alex Ipe		
(b)	Office Hours:	Tuesday, 11:20 am – 12:20 pm, Thursday, 11:20 am – 12:20 pm		
(c)	Location:	Paul 237		
(d)	Phone:	370-3352	Alternative Phone:	
(e)	Email:	ipe@camosun.bc.ca		
(f)	Website:			

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

(No changes are to be made to this section, unless the Approved Course Description has been forwarded through EDCO for approval.)

Upon completion of this course the student 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.

3. Required Materials

(a)	Texts	Frank E. Hagan. 2003: Research Methods in Criminal Justice and Criminology, 6th Edition. Boston: Pearson Education, and Course Package.
(b)	Other	

4. Course Content and Schedule

(Can include: class hours, lab hours, out of class requirements and/or dates for quizzes, exams, lectures, labs, seminars, practicums, etc.)

COURSE CONTENT:

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

- **Understanding the research process.**
- **Having the foundation to formulate intelligent research questions and hypotheses.**
- **Being able to identify variables and their levels of measurement.**
- **Being able to think critically about data.**
- **Using SPSS in processing and analyzing data.**
- **Interpreting SPSS outputs.**
- **Writing analytical research essays.**

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); and (6) the politics and ethics of social science research.

Course Content and Readings

Topics and Readings

SEPTEMBER

Week 1:	Chapter 1: Introduction to Methods
Week 2:	Chapter 1: Introduction to Methods
Week 3:	Chapter 3: Research Design; pages 70-91, only.
Week 4:	Chapter 2: Ethics in Research

OCTOBER

Week 1	APPENDIX A: The structure of a journal article.
Week 2	Chapter 12: Descriptive Statistics; pages 353-363, 379-382, only.
Week 3	Chapter 12 continued
Week 4	Chapter 5: Sampling Theory

NOVEMBER

Week 1	Chapter 6: Survey Research; Chapter 4: pages 115-124, only.
Week 2	Chapter 12: Inferential Statistics; pages 369-373.
Week 3	Chapter 12: Inferential Statistics continued.
Week 4	Chapter 7: Participant Observation DECEMBER
Week 1	REVIEW SESSION

**** It should be noted that the above schedule is tentative and is listed here only as an approximate guide for the student.****

5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

(Should be linked directly to learning outcomes.)

(a)	Assignments	Research Essays/Labs Assignments 40% (2 assignments, 20% each)
(b)	Quizzes	
(c)	Exams	In Class Test#1 20%
		In Class Test#2 20%
		Final Exam 20%
(d)	Other (eg, Attendance, Project, Group Work)	

In Class Tests (60% of Total Grade)

*The test and final exam will consist of approximately 20-40 multiple-choice questions and students will have the entire class time to complete the test. It should be noted that the test will have approximately 1-5 bonus questions – also multiple choice – in addition to the regular test questions. The purpose of having the bonus questions is to give students an opportunity to score 100% or higher on the test. **The first test will take place on Tuesday, October 11 and it will cover Chapters 1-3 and Appendix A; the second test will take place on Tuesday, November 15, and it will cover Chapter 12, but only on the topic of descriptive statistics, pages 353-363, 379-382, and the final exam will take place during the official examination week; a more precise date will be announced in class. The final exam will cover chapters 5-6, Chapter 12 on inferential statistics and Chapter 7.***

LAB ASSIGNMENTS (40% of Total Grade)

There are just two labs associated with this course. The labs require you to analyze two data sets that will be handed out during the respective lab times after the first in-class test. The lab portion of the course is very straight-forward and it should not take students more than 15 minutes to complete the lab assignments using SPSS.

*However, **the difficult part is to write a research essay on the data that you have analyzed with SPSS.** Indeed, it should be noted that a majority of the grade assigned to each assignment will be based on the student's ability to interpret and analyze data in a critical fashion. Numbers do not speak for*

themselves; it is the job of the researcher to make sense of the data that is set before them and to interpret its significance for a given audience.

If you should end up in a career as a data analyst or a researcher, it is very likely that the results of your analysis will be studied by individuals who may have very little, if any, background in research methodology and/or elementary statistics. As such, it is imperative that you are able to convey the important aspects of your study in a clear, concise and well-articulated manner so that a broad range of people may be able to plainly understand the significance of your research.

In composing your research paper, assume that the reader does not know anything about the topic or discipline in question. As such, it is up to you to clearly explain concepts, theories and the meaning of the output derived from statistical formulas and what it is that graphs and charts are describing in as clear and straightforward manner as possible!!!

¹ While the Instructor will not drop poor test results or lab assignments, the overall weight of the worst grade – whether it’s a test or assignment – will be reduced to 10% and the weight of the best grade will be increased by 10%.

This does not mean that you have to explain, for example, what a standard deviation is in painstaking detail, but give a brief over view of the concepts you are using – in your own words – so the reader feels confident that you know what you are talking about. Please do not babble!!!

You are not writing a mystery novel but an academic paper. As such, do not leave your reader guessing or confused with what you are going to be arguing or demonstrating in your paper.

As such, every lab assignment should be written in an essay format with the following headings:

HEADINGS	BASIC REQUIREMENTS	TOTAL POSSIBLE MARKS OUT OF 100	YOUR GRADE
INTRODUCTION	<i>Tell the reader what your research report will be about. What is it that you will be trying to argue, how will you be trying to substantiate your argument and why is your study important.</i>	30	/30
DATA ANALYSIS	<i>In this section, tell the reader the results of your computational analysis. Be as detailed and as specific as possible, but try to avoid jargon and explain your analysis in a clear manner. If you do use technical terms, try to give a brief explanation of the term(s) you are using and cite all sources used. YOU NEED TO USE AT LEAST TWO REFERENCES!!! Examples on how to cite information is presented later in this outline.</i>	40	/40

	<p><i>Please note: You are not writing a mystery novel but an academic paper. As such, do not leave your reader guessing or confused with what you are going to be arguing or demonstrating in your paper. Do not leave your reader wondering what it is you are trying to say. For example, do not write things like: “There are lot of guns in the U.S. that’s why they have high homicide rates.” This is a very vague statement and leaves the reader wondering how the two are explicitly connected.</i></p> <p>Most importantly, look at your data in a critical fashion and explain what it is the data is trying to tell you. An example of critical thinking is presented on the next page. Come up with possible explanations as to why the data is behaving the way it is. Indeed, much of the grade in this section will be based on the quality of the critical thinking you demonstrate in your analysis.</p>		
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CONCLUSION	<i>In this section, summarize what you did in your paper and the findings of your research. Discuss the importance of your study, any problems you encountered in conducting your research and how you could improve and expand upon what you did in a future project.</i>	30	/30
	SUB-TOTAL	100	/100
	NO HEADINGS	-20	
	NO BIBLIOGRAPHY¹	-30	
		FINAL TOTAL	

Earl Babbie² stated that critical thinking essentially involves five steps, these being:

- a) **Observe the way things are;**
- b) **Ask why they are this way;**
- c) **Suggest an explanation;**
- d) **Then ask yourself, if this explanation is true, or you think has merit, what else must (or might) be true;**

¹ **Note: You are expected to have a minimum of two academic references in your bibliography. If you hand in your paper with just one reference, you will lose 15 marks. In addition, do not pad your bibliography; that is, if you do not directly cite a reference or use it in any fashion, do not bother listing it in the bibliography.**

Earl Babbie

1986 *Understanding Ourselves*. Belmont, CA: Wadworth.

e) Look to see if it is true.

So, for example – a hypothetical example at that – let's say as an analyst you do some number crunching and discover that Hungary has one of the highest crime rates in the world and you feel that this a direct result of monumental economic reforms that were undertaken in 1956.

Well, if this is the case, logic would dictate that you should discover that before 1956, crime rates in Hungary were very low – is this the case?

If logic follows, other nations that had tried drastic economic reforms might also have very high crime rates – do they? Look it up.

Lastly, one could argue that people who were very young, or not even born in 1956, would be relatively unaffected by the drastic economic changes, and as such, crime rates among this specific demographic would be much lower – is this the case? Look it up. Find out.

In short, critical thinking forces you to dig deep into your data and to extract possible explanations of why a given set of data is behaving the way it is.

² **Note: You are expected to have a minimum of two academic references in your bibliography. If you hand in your paper with just one reference, you will lose 15 marks. In addition, do not pad your bibliography; that is, if you do not directly cite a reference or use it in any fashion, do not bother listing it in the bibliography.**

Earl Babbie

1986 *Understanding Ourselves*. Belmont, CA: Wadworth.

As such, it is required that students seek out at least two academic references – (e.g. books, journals, documents) in order to back up a statement or line of reasoning they have with respect to interpreting the data presented in the lab assignments³. *You may use your textbook as one source if you sincerely feel it is useful.*

For example, going back to the above example and the related critical thinking questions, if you were studying crime rates in Hungary, you might want to look up historical references that give you an idea of what Hungary was like before 1956 to see if crime rates before economic reforms were decidedly different.

Similarly, you might look up information on another country that underwent drastic reforms (e.g. Russia) to see if great economic changes correlate with a surge in crime rates.

One very important thing to note is that you will most likely not find the TRUE reason why crime rates – or whatever phenomenon that you are studying – went up or down in a given year or why it behaved the way it did over a certain time.

Social phenomena is so complex that often it is practically impossible to find the absolute cause of a particular social trend or pattern.

³ **NOTE: if you do use references in your assignment, please be sure to cite all sources used in the body of your paper; as such, your paper must have a proper bibliography. Please see pg 6 of this outline for more information.**

As such, what you, as a researcher, are trying to do is to put forth reasonable explanations for why something is the way it is and then to back it up with documented evidence.

So, for example, if you feel that homicide rates increased substantially in a given nation because that nation experienced a recession or economic depression during a specific time period, do some research and find sources that would tell you how that nation was doing during the time period you are interested in. **Was it going through a recession? If so, you have evidence that bolsters your argument. However, if the economy was doing well, you need to come up with another explanation.**

It is important to note that evidence that does not support your argument is important, too, so do discuss it since it may provide clues as to what alternative factors may be influencing the phenomenon you are studying.

Lastly, please cite any factual evidence or explanation that is completely not your own, or that you derived from a book, periodical, tv, or the internet.

CITING REFERENCES WITHIN THE RESEARCH ESSAY

- (1) "Researchers who focus on causal relations usually begin with an effect, then search for its causes" (Neuman, 1997:107) **[Author's last name, year book was published, page number of cited material].**

CITING REFERENCES IN YOUR BIBLIOGRAPHY

- (2) To cite a journal article: (e.g. Kent, Susan
1995 "Unstable Households in a Stable Kalahari
Community in Botswana." *American
Anthropologist* 97 (2): 292-312).

- (2a) To cite a book: Macionis, John J., S. Mikael Jansson and Cecilia M. Benoit.
2005 **Society: The Basics.** Toronto: Prentice-Hall.

- (2b) To cite a movie: *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets.* Warner Brothers.
2002.

- 3) To cite something from the internet, the website and the date the cite was visited should be included. For example:

**United States Department of Energy
1996 Impact of the Human Genome Project. March 3
[<http://www.gdb.org/Dan/DOE/prim5.html>]**

Remember, references in your bibliography must be in alphabetical order by last name of the principal author of the work you are citing. Lastly, do not bother listing references in your bibliography that you did not explicitly use.

For more information on citation styles, please consult the **Style Manual for the Social Sciences** available at the bookstore or at the Camosun Library.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE DUE DATES FOR THE RESEARCH ESSAYS WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED. TWO PERCENT A DAY WILL BE DEDUCTED FOR EVERY DAY AN ASSIGNMENT OR ESSAY IS LATE.

In evaluating the examination papers and essays the emphasis will be on understanding and analysis, rather than the recitation. Avoid memorizing sentences, in particular when it is not clear to you what the sentences mean. Papers indicating memorization will receive a grade zero. As for analysis, your learning strategy should be to understand the relationships among facts, not the facts alone. Another important point is illustration; after discussion and analysis give examples from current or historical developments in society. This will show that you understand the concepts and theories and are able to apply them to society as tools for analysis.

A grade of zero will be granted for absence during examinations, unless the student produces a medical certificate confirming serious illness and writes the substitute exam within one week of recovery.

Examination Procedures

All examinations must be written in the section of the course in which the student is officially registered.

A grade of Zero will be granted for absence during examination, unless the student produces a medical certificate confirming serious illness and writes the substitute exam within one week of recovery.

Academic Misconduct

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 behavior/Disorderly conduct.** This includes any behavior 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 (for example, texts or lecture notes) constitutes academic

misconduct. It is not necessary for the instructor to prove that the information has been used by the student.

Tape-Recording in the Classroom

In order to ensure free and open discussion of controversial ideas by the students, tape-recording of the proceedings is not permitted in class. Exceptions, however, will be made for students who are visually impaired or are unable to write due to physical disability.

Procedure Changes

In order to deal with the day-to-day management of the course, new procedures or revisions to procedures may be implemented from time to time throughout the semester. Such procedures and revisions will be announced in class for two consecutive sessions before they are implemented. It is the responsibility of each student to keep informed of such developments.

All matters that are not covered by this course outline are governed by official college policies and procedures.

6. Grading System

(No changes are to be made to this section, unless the Approved Course Description has been forwarded through EDCO for approval.)

Standard Grading System (GPA)

Percentage	Grade	Description	Grade Point Equivalency
95-100	A+		9
90-94	A		8
85-89	A-		7
80-84	B+		6
75-79	B		5
70-74	B-		4
65-69	C+		3
60-64	C		2
50-59	D		1
0-49	F	Minimum level has not been achieved.	0

Temporary Grades

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy at camosun.ca or information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

Temporary Grade	Description
I	<i>Incomplete:</i> A temporary grade assigned when the requirements of a course have not yet been completed due to hardship or extenuating circumstances, such as illness or death in the family.
IP	<i>In progress:</i> A temporary grade assigned for courses that are designed to have an anticipated enrollment that extends beyond one term. No more than two IP grades will be assigned for the same course.

CW	<i>Compulsory Withdrawal:</i> A temporary grade assigned by a Dean when an instructor, after documenting the prescriptive strategies applied and consulting with peers, deems that a student is unsafe to self or others and must be removed from the lab, practicum, worksite, or field placement.
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Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy E-1.5 at camosun.ca for information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

7. Recommended Materials or Services to Assist Students to Succeed Throughout the Course

Students are encouraged to utilize support services available at the Writing Centre to prepare for their essay exams.

LEARNING SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

There are a variety of services available for students to assist them throughout their learning. This information is available in the College calendar, at Student Services or the College web site at camosun.ca.

STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY

There is a Student Conduct Policy **which includes plagiarism**. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, at Student Services and on the College web site in the Policy Section.