BHS 240 Research Methods
Fall 2009

Instructor: Joel Thiessen, Ph.D.

CONTACTING THE COURSE INSTRUCTOR(S)

Class/Lab Times: MON/WED/FRI 2:30pm-3:45pm   **Location:** A2131
Joel Thiessen Office Hours: WED/FRI 12:45-2:15pm   **Office:** L2092
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Kristen Desjarlais DeKlerk Email: kdesjarlais@ambrose.edu
Kristen Desjarlais DeKlerk Office Hours: By Appointment

REQUIRED TEXT

Del Balso, Michael, and Alan Lewis. 2008. *First Steps: A Guide to Social Research. 4th Edition.*
    Toronto, ON: Thomson Canada Limited.

Course Package of Readings

ON RESERVE

Johnson, William A., Jr., et al. *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual, 5th Ed.* Upper Saddle River, NJ:
    Pearson.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the concepts and processes of quantitative and qualitative research.
Research processes include problem definition, designing a study, selection and development of theory,
literature review, data collection, interpretation and analysis of data, and writing the research report.
Students will develop research skills through the practical application of material covered in class, in the
text readings, and in weekly labs.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Gain an understanding of the logic and many stages of social research.

2. Become acquainted with research design and a variety of quantitative and qualitative research
    methods.

3. Apply quantitative and qualitative techniques through "hands on" exercises

4. Draft a research proposal that accounts for theory and method

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic
September 9	Course Introduction
September 11	Why Know about Social Science Research? (Ch.1)
September 14 - LAB	*What is Social Science Research? (Ch.2: p.19-34)
September 16	What is Social Science Research? (Ch.2: p.34-45)
September 18	*No Class (Professor Out of Town)*
September 21 - LAB	*Library Visit Lab
September 23	Finding and Refining the Topic (Ch.3: p.46-60)
September 25	Finding and Refining the Topic (Ch.3: p.60-69)
September 28 - LAB	*Literature Review Lab
September 30	*No Classes (Program Day)*
October 2	Ethics (Neuman and Robson Article)
October 5 - LAB	*Ethics Lab
October 7	Sampling: Choosing Who or What to Study (Ch.4)
October 9	Social Survey (Ch.5: p.97-115)
October 12 - LAB	*No Lab (Thanksgiving)*
October 14	Social Survey (Ch.5: p.115-129)
October 16	Experimental Research (Ch.6: p.145-154)
October 19 - LAB	*Social Survey Lab
October 21	Experimental Research (Ch.6: p.130-145)
October 23	**Exam #1**
October 26 - LAB	*No Lab*
October 28	Field Research (Ch.7: p.155-165)
October 30	Field Research (Ch.7: p.165-179)
November 2 - LAB	*Participant Observation Lab
November 4	Interviews (Miller and Crabtree Article)
November 6	Research Proposal (Creswell Article)
November 9 - LAB	*Interview Lab
November 11	*No Classes (Remembrance Day)*
November 13	Indirect or Nonreactive Methods (Ch.8)
November 16 - LAB	*No Lab*
November 18	Case Study (Yin Article)
November 20	Mixed Methods (Jick Article)
November 23 - LAB	*Content Analysis Lab
November 25	Grounded Theory (Charmaz Article)
November 27	What are the Results? (Ch.9: p.205-223)
November 30 - LAB	*Correlational Research Lab
December 2	What are the Results (Ch.9: p.223-238)
December 4	The Research Report: The End and the Beginning (Ch.10: p.239-244)
December 7 - LAB	*No Lab*
December 9	The Research Report: The End and the Beginning (Ch.10: p.245-261)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Exam #1 (**October 21**)	15%
Exam #2 (**December 16**)	15%
Lab Assignments (**Throughout Semester)**	49%
Research Proposal (**December 3**)	21%
Total	*100%*

*All assignments should be double spaced, with 1" (2.54cm) margins on all sides, 12 point font, and ASA formatting (see Johnson book on reserve). Assignments should be submitted via the "Moodle" course webpage as a Microsoft Word Document attachment no later than 11:59 MST on the due date. Late assignments will lose 5% per day. Failure to submit all assignments will result in a failing final grade.

1) Exam #1 (15%) – October 21

70 multiple choice questions based on class readings and lectures (Chapters 1-6 and Supplemental Readings).

2) Exam #2 (15%) – December 16, 9:00-12:00, A1085

70 multiple choice questions based on class readings and lectures (Chapters 7-10 and Supplemental Readings).

3) Lab Assignments (49%)

Kristen Desjarlais DeKlerk is the lab instructor for this course. Labs are compulsory for all students. Absences from labs will result in a 2.5% reduction per missed lab in the final grade. Details and expectations for each lab assignment will be handed out during each lab gathering, with assignments typically due at the following lab class. Each lab assignment is worth 7% of your final grade.

4) Research Proposal (21%) – December 3

Students will prepare an 8 page research proposal (excluding title page and bibliography) of a hypothetical study you might conduct based on your exposure to various research designs during the course of this term. Based on the type of study proposed, students should follow the corresponding research proposal template found in the Creswell article in the course package. Students will be graded for grammar and writing and social scientific content. Therefore, ensure that your proposal is well-written, clearly and logically organized, and explicitly draws on lecture notes, course readings, and external resources. This means that all theories and methods should be clearly defined and explained prior to using them as an explanatory and analytical tool, and all statements must be supported with empirical and rational evidence.

GRADING ASSIGNMENTS

The available letter grades and percentages for course grades are as follows. A detailed chart of what constitutes an 'A,' 'B,' or 'C,' etc. is also included below:

A	96% and above	(GPA – 4.0)	C	63 - 67%	(GPA – 2.0)
A	91 - 95%	(GPA – 4.0)	C-	60 - 62%	(GPA – 1.7)
A-	86 - 90%	(GPA – 3.7)	D+	56 - 59%	(GPA – 1.3)
B+	82 - 85%	(GPA – 3.3)	D	50 - 55%	(GPA – 1.0)
B	75 - 81%	(GPA – 3.0)	F	Below 50%	
B-	72 - 74%	(GPA – 2.7)			
C+	68 - 71%	(GPA – 2.3)			

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Participation and success in this course requires that students are actively engaged by carefully reading the required material before class, and attentively attending each class. If you are having trouble with any of the assignments or the course material, it is your responsibility to ask questions in class, to visit the professor during office hours, or to email.
- Students are allowed and encouraged to use their computers in the classroom for taking notes, however the internet is **not** to be used during class.
- Intellectual honesty is very important. Cheating or plagiarism on any assignment is regarded as an extremely serious academic offence and may result in expulsion from the university.
- Last day to enter course without permission and/or voluntarily withdraw from course without financial penalty is September 26. Last day to voluntarily withdraw from course or change to audit without academic penalty is November 21.

	Articulation of sociological thinking that is clear, precise, and well-reasoned (i.e. accurate use of paradigms in analysis)	Correctly employs key sociological paradigms, theories, concepts, and research	Clear demonstration of important implications and consequences	Logical and coherent argument that flows from beginning to end	Grammar and spelling
A	Consistently achieved	Consistently achieved – paradigms, theories, concepts, and research are used accurately and in relevant ways	Can clearly state how the chosen topic bears on the development of sociological thought Incorporates a balance of sociological description and sociological analysis	Clearly states central thesis and purpose of paper Good knowledge of topic with considerable originality of thought Carefully selected details which support general statements and central thesis	No spelling, grammar, or other writing errors. Words, sentences, and paragraphs flow smoothly
B	Mostly achieved	Mostly achieved - paradigms, theories, concepts, and research are used fairly accurately.	Some idea of how chosen topic bears on the development of sociological thought Some elements of sociological description or analysis	Clear central thesis Adequate engagement with topic, but some originality Appropriate details most of the time. Adequate synthesis evident	Some spelling, grammar, and writing errors Some awkward transitions between words, sentences, and paragraphs
C	Inconsistently achieved *And so on….*	Inconsistently achieved - paradigms, theories, concepts, and research are often used inaccurately	Little connection made to the development of sociological thought No balance between sociological description and analysis	Adequately limited central thesis Adequate knowledge; ideas are conventional Details may be repetitious. Little synthesis evident	Several spelling, grammar, and writing errors Several awkward transitions between words, sentences, and paragraphs