

SOCIOLOGY SOCI 211B

SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY

T Th 10:05-11:25

Professor Michael R. Smith
Leacock 841
michael.smith@mcgill.ca
Office hours: by appointment

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INTRODUCTION

This course provides an elementary review of research methods. Its purpose is to equip you to read and criticize social scientific material presented in other courses. It should also better enable you to evaluate claims that appear in mass media, including claims related to debates over the relative desirability of alternative public policies.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS

Current circumstances mean that the course has to be taught remotely. It will, therefore, be a less standard lecture course than it is usually. It will be delivered as follows.

- In previous years I have distributed detailed notes after each lecture. This year the complete set of slides will be made available on MyCourses before the course starts. Some will be edited somewhat as the course progresses. I will post the revised PowerPoints on MyCourses in a separate directory at some point after each class.
- The classes will be delivered via Zoom. The sign-in link will be distributed before the first day of classes.
- I shall start each class (except the first) soliciting questions and comments on the previous class's content. After that we will go through the PowerPoint slides. Your comments and questions will be solicited throughout the presentation of slides and constitute part of the course requirements. They will count for 10% of your final grade.
- The exception to the rule above is for students in a time zone that makes class participation difficult. Those students should contact me and provide information on their time zone problem; we will arrange an alternative form of participation.
- The classes will be recorded.
- The list of course components and the approximate dates that they will be discussed is given below. I would emphasize the word *approximate*. The amount of time required to cover material tends to vary in unpredictable ways. It follows that we may either get to material scheduled for a particular date earlier or later than planned. Material scheduled for an earlier date may continue to be a subject for discussion at later classes. Note also that within the PowerPoint slides you will see references to many of the assigned readings. The PowerPoints, then, provide you with information on the date by which a reading should be completed.

- You will also be required to produce a written analysis of an article. Information on this is provided below.
- I have previously taught this course using a textbook - the Canadian edition of a text by Earl Babbie edited until recently by Babbie and Benaquisto and, since 2018, by Babbie and Roberts. That textbook may still be used by other instructors. Because: i) the text includes a fair amount of material that I do not cover; ii) does not include a fair amount of material I do cover; and iii) is very expensive, I have decided to teach the course using a (rather short) list of readings previously made available in a course pack. Those readings are complementary to the notes that will be made available before the course begins. The University has switched responsibility for course pack content to the Library. I assume that information on access to the material will be provided to you and me at some point.
- While I have not assigned the textbook you may nonetheless find it useful. If you wish to purchase it you can do so easily through the publisher or any other online retailer. In addition, I have put on reserve in the Library the editions of it that they hold. You may also find second hand copies of the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th editions on sale from people who have already taken SOCI 211. I refer to the relevant chapters of each of these three editions of the textbook in the course sections below. The roman numerals refer to the edition number in which the chapters can be found.
- A question that is often asked about the final examination is: *Will it be cumulative?* Because different parts of the course are related to each other and because the examination format necessarily allows you access to all the course notes, the answer to this question is *yes*.
- Your grade will be based on the following:
 - A midterm comprised of two essay questions worth 25% of your grade. It will be distributed on Monday 8th of February at 2:00 p.m. and will be due back 48 hours later.
 - A final comprised of three essay questions worth 55% of your final grade to be distributed on a date determined by the University's final examination schedule. The duration of the examination will also be determined by University policy at the time. As mentioned above, this examination will be cumulative; that is, answers to its question may draw on material from any part of the course.
 - An exercise to be submitted on March 12th worth 10% of your final grade. You will be asked to respond to questions on the following article - Alexander C. Sutton, "The composition of success: Competition and the creative self in contemporary art music." *Qualitative Sociology* 43: 489-513 (2020). You can access it from the library at: <https://link-springer-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/article/10.1007/s11133-020-09465-w>
 - Participation, as described above, worth 10% of your final grade.
- The list of classes and the PowerPoints to which relevant readings are attached are as follows.

1. Concepts and theories (January 8th-12th)

Peter Braham, "Alienation", Chapter 1 in *Key Concepts in Sociology*, London: Sage, 2013, <https://sk.sagepub.com/books/download/key-concepts-in-sociology/n1.pdf>
 II, 41-55; III 41-57; IV 35-51

2. Structuring research 1 (January 14th-January 19th)

Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963: pp.5-22.

II, Chapter 8; III, Chapter 7; IV, Chapter 7.

3. Structuring research 2 (January 21st-January 26th)

Havidán Rodríguez, Joseph Trainor, and Enrico Quarantelli, "Rising to the challenges of a catastrophe: The emergent and prosocial behavior following Hurricane Katrina." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 604, 2006: pp.82-101.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/25097782.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A578ba96b9b33d54f35a918f4436f0d43>

II, III, and IV, Chapter 4

4. Specifying variables (January 28th - February 4th)

W. Laurence Neuman and Karen Robson, *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Don Mills, Ontario: Pearson, Chapter 6.

II, III, and IV, Chapter 5.

5. Selecting cases to describe populations (February 9th-February 16th)

Statistics Canada, "Probability sampling".

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/edu/power-pouvoir/ch13/prob/5214899-eng.htm>

II, Chapter 7; III, and IV, Chapter 6.

6. Gathering and analyzing data using qualitative methods (February 18th-23rd)

Spencer Moore, Mark Daniel, Laura Linnon, Marci Campbell, Salli Benedict, and Andrea Mier, "After Hurricane Floyd passed: Investigating the social determinants of disaster preparedness and recovery." *Family and Community Health* 27 (2004), pp. 204-216.

[file:///C:/Users/msmith13/Downloads/After_Hurricane_Floyd_Passed__Investigating_the.7%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/msmith13/Downloads/After_Hurricane_Floyd_Passed__Investigating_the.7%20(2).pdf)

II, Chapters 11, 12, and 14; III and IV, Chapters 10, 11 and 13.

7. Gathering data using surveys (February 25th-March 9th)

Norman Bradburn and Seymour Sudman, *Improving Interview Method and Questionnaire Design*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Chapter 5.

II, Chapter 9; III and IV, Chapter 8

8. Quantitative data analysis (February 11th-March 23rd)

Earl Babbie and Lucia Benaquisto, *Fundamentals of Social Research* (3rd Canadian edition), Toronto: Nelson, 2014, Chapter 15.

II, Chapters 15 and 16; III and IV, Chapters 14, 15, and 16.

9. Unobtrusive/Nonreactive research (March 25th-March 30th)

Eugene Webb, Donald T. Campbell, Richard D. Schwartz, and Lee Sechrest, *Unobtrusive Measures: Nonreactive Research in the Social Sciences*. Chicago: Rand McNally, Ch.2

II, Chapter 10, III and IV, Chapter 9.

10. Evaluation research (April 1st-April 6th)

Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, *Encouraging Work and Supporting Communities: Final Results of the Community Employment Innovation Project*, Ottawa: SRDC, Chapter 7.

II, Chapter 13; III and IV, Chapter 12.

11. Ethics of Research

Laud Humphries, *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places* (2nd edition), New York: Routledge, 2017, Chapter 2. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9781315130682>

II and III, Chapter 1; IV, Chapter 3.

SENATE POLICIES

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009 - see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ also the section in this document on Assignments and evaluation.)

Conformément à la Charte de droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (y dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

L'Université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).