



BHS 240 Research Methods Fall 2010

Instructor: Joel Thiessen, Ph.D. Candidate

CONTACTING THE COURSE INSTRUCTOR(S)

Class Time: TUE/THU 4:00pm-5:15pm
Office Hours: TUE/THR 2:30-3:45pm or by appointment
Joel Thiessen Email: jathiessen@ambrose.edu

Location: A2210
Office: L2092
Office Phone: 410-2000 ext.2979

Lab Time: MON 2:30pm-3:45pm
Ryan Matchullis Office Hours: By appointment

Location: A2131
Email: ryan.match@gmail.com

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 (or on reserve)

ON RESERVE

American Psychological Association. 2010. *Mastering APA Style: Instructor's Resource Guide. 6th Edition.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Johnson, William A., Jr., et al. 2010. *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual. 6th Edition.* Boston, MA: Pearson.

Course package of readings.

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 and Reading
<i>September 9</i>	Course Introduction
<i>September 13 - LAB</i>	<i>*PORTFOLIO LAB (Fern Buszowski)</i>
<i>September 14</i>	Why Know about Social Science Research? (Ch.1)
<i>September 16</i>	What is Social Science Research? (Ch.2: p.19-34)
<i>September 20 - LAB</i>	<i>*LIBRARY VISIT LAB</i>
<i>September 21</i>	What is Social Science Research? (Ch.2: p.34-45)
<i>September 23</i>	Finding and Refining the Topic (Ch.3: p.46-60)
<i>September 27 - LAB</i>	<i>*LITERATURE REVIEW LAB (Ch. 3: p.60-69)</i>
<i>September 28</i>	Ethics (Neuman and Robson Article)
<i>September 30</i>	Sampling: Choosing Who or What to Study (Ch.4)
<i>October 4 - LAB</i>	<i>*ETHICS LAB</i>
<i>October 5</i>	Social Survey (Ch.5: p.97-115)
<i>October 7</i>	Social Survey (Ch.5: p.115-129)
<i>October 11 - LAB</i>	<i>*NO LAB (Thanksgiving)</i>
<i>October 12</i>	Experimental Research (Ch.6: p.130-145)
<i>October 14</i>	Experimental Research (Ch.6: p.145-154)
<i>October 18 - LAB</i>	<i>*SOCIAL SURVEY LAB</i>
<i>October 19</i>	Midterm Exam
<i>October 21</i>	<i>*NO CLASS (Program Day)</i>
<i>October 25 - LAB</i>	<i>*NO LAB</i>
<i>October 26</i>	Research Proposal (Creswell Article)
<i>October 28</i>	<i>*NO CLASS (Professor out of town)</i>
<i>November 1 - LAB</i>	<i>*NO LAB</i>
<i>November 2</i>	Interviews (Miller and Crabtree Article)
<i>November 4</i>	Field Research (Ch.7: p.155-165)
<i>November 8 - LAB</i>	<i>*INTERVIEW LAB</i>
<i>November 9</i>	Field Research (Ch.7: p.165-179)
<i>November 11</i>	<i>*NO CLASSES (Remembrance Day)</i>
<i>November 15 - LAB</i>	<i>*PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION LAB</i>
<i>November 16</i>	Indirect or Nonreactive Methods (Ch.8)
<i>November 18</i>	Case Study (Yin Article)
<i>November 22 - LAB</i>	<i>*CONTENT ANALYSIS LAB</i>
<i>November 23</i>	Mixed Methods (Jick Article)
<i>November 25</i>	Grounded Theory (Charmaz Article)
<i>November 29 - LAB</i>	<i>* NO LAB</i>
<i>November 30</i>	What are the Results? (Ch.9: p.205-223)
<i>December 2</i>	What are the Results (Ch.9: p.223-238)
<i>December 6 – LAB</i>	<i>*INTERPRETING QUANTITATIVE DATA RESEARCH LAB</i>
<i>December 7</i>	The Research Report: The End and the Beginning (Ch.10: p.239-244)
<i>December 9</i>	The Research Report: The End and the Beginning (Ch.10: p.245-261)

LEARNING AND CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

In the Behavioural Science Department we believe that learning is an active and interactive process, a joint venture between student and teacher and between student and student (i.e., learning is not just “downloading” information from teacher to student). Therefore, it is expected that professors will come to each class well read and prepared to engage students on the topic at hand, giving students the utmost attention and respect. In turn, it is expected that students will take an active role in the learning process. This includes: (a) regular class attendance, (b) reading course material in advance of class, (c) showing up to class on time, and (d) attentively and proactively being “present” at class (i.e., not on the internet, not texting, not conversing with the person beside you). Committing to this type of "active learning" significantly increases the learning experience for both teacher and student, and reflects the Christian ethos of excellence and respect that lies at the heart of the Ambrose educational experience.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Midterm Exam (<u>October 19</u>)	15%
Lab Assignments (<u>Throughout the semester</u>)	49%
Research Proposal (<u>December 3</u>)	21%
Final Exam (<u>December 17</u>)	<u>15%</u>
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

1) Midterm Exam (15%) – October 19

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

2) Lab Assignments (49%)

Ryan Matchullis is the lab instructor for this course. Labs are compulsory for all students. Absences from labs will result in a 3% 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.

3) Research Proposal (21%) – December 3 at 11:55pm on Moodle*

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 (and on reserve). 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.

***Formatting and Submission:** Your research proposal should be double spaced, with 1” (2.54cm) margins on all sides, 12 point font, and ASA or APA formatting. This assignment should be submitted on Moodle as a Microsoft Word Document attachment no later than 11:55 PM on the due date. Late assignments will lose 10% per day. Failure to submit all assignments will result in a failing final grade.

4) Final Exam (15%) – December 17, 9:00am-12:00pm, A2210

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

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

- Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.
- It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.
- Course changes, including adding or dropping a course, may be made during the Registration Revision period, as outlined in the Calendar of Events. All course changes must be recorded on a Registration form, available from the Office of the Registrar. Due to circumstances such as class size, prerequisites or academic policy, the submission of a Registration form does not guarantee that a course will be added or removed from a student’s registration. Students may change the designation of any class from credit to audit up to the date specified in the Calendar of Events, although students are not entitled to a tuition adjustment or refund after the Registration Revision period.
- Last day to enter course without permission and/or voluntarily withdraw from course without financial penalty is September 17. Last day to voluntarily withdraw from course or change to audit without academic penalty is November 12.
- Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. Students intending to withdraw from some or all of their courses must submit a completed Registration form to the Registrar’s office. The dates by which students may voluntarily withdraw from a course without penalty are listed in the Calendar of Events. A grade of ‘W’ will be recorded on the student’s transcript for any withdrawals from courses made after the end of the Registration Revision period and before the Withdrawal Deadline (also listed in the Calendar of Events). ‘W’ grades are not included in grade point average calculations. A limit on the number of courses from

which Academic a student is permitted to withdraw may be imposed. Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

- Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a “Course Extension” from the Registrar’s Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by the appropriate deadline (as listed in the Academic Calendar <http://www.ambrose.edu/publications/academiccalendar>). Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control.”
- Final grades will be available on the student portals. Printed grade sheets are no longer mailed out.
- An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.
- We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar and the Student Handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean.
- Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else’s ideas, words, or work as one’s own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person’s ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from Ambrose. Students are expected to be familiar with the policy statements in the current academic calendar and the student handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student’s permanent record.

	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 <i>And so on....</i>	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