

**FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH  
SOC 2911 WA**

**Dr. Barbara Parker**  
[barbara.parker@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:barbara.parker@lakeheadu.ca)  
Phone: 343-8792  
Office: RB 2043

Wed/Fri 10 - 11:30am  
Room: RB 2024  
**Office Hours:** Thursday 9-10am

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Welcome to **SOC 2911 Foundations of Sociological Research**. In this course, we will explore the practice and ethics of social research. We will examine quantitative and qualitative research orientations and query the relationship between social theory and research methodology. We will learn how to construct research questions and design research that illuminates the complexity of compelling social problems and social justice concerns. We will focus on social research methods including surveys, structured interviewing, questionnaires, participant observation and qualitative interviewing.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Understand the relationship between social theory & methodology;
- Understand and appreciate the differences between inductive and deductive reasoning;
- Learn about research ethics and recognize ethical concerns when conducting research with human participants;
- Understand social research methods and their appropriateness to quantitative and qualitative orientations;
- Appreciate the skills learned and their applicability outside the classroom; and
- Learn university-level research, analytical and writing skills.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**

*Social Research Methods*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (2016), by Alan Bryman and Edward Bell

\* Available in the Bookstore: [bookstore.lakeheadu.ca](http://bookstore.lakeheadu.ca)

**HOW THE COURSE IS ORGANIZED**

This course is offered twice a week and requires a total of 3 hours class time per week. In addition, you can expect to spend a minimum of 6 hours of study time per week preparing for class lectures for a **total of 9 hours per week on this course**. Course material will scaffold each week and it is essential you attend and not miss class. You are required to independently complete the weekly readings prior to class and come prepared to discuss what you have read.

## Department of Sociology

If you have questions, at any time during this course, please visit me in my Office Hours (as listed above) or contact me through email at: [barbara.parker@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:barbara.parker@lakeheadu.ca)

Please note: I will only respond to emails sent from a Lakehead university email account. When emailing me, please put SOC 2911 in the Subject Heading. I will do my best to reply to your emails within 24 hours.

**CLASSROOM ETTIQUETTE:** As a courtesy to your peers and the instructor, please turn off or mute all phones and be advised that tablets and laptops are only to be used in the classroom for note-taking purposes.

**LEARNING ACCOMODATIONS:** Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, please visit: <http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca>

**PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:** Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with what it means to plagiarize the words or ideas of others and your responsibilities as a student at Lakehead University. From the Course Calendar:

<http://navigator.lakeheadu.ca/Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=21&chapterid=3506&loaduserredits=False>

Plagiarism shall be deemed to include:

1. Plagiarism of ideas as where an idea of an author or speaker is incorporated into the body of an assignment as though it were the writer's idea, i.e. no credit is given the person through referencing or footnoting or endnoting.
2. Plagiarism of words occurs when phrases, sentences, tables or illustrations of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a writer's own, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on the format followed) are present but referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given.
3. Plagiarism of ideas and words as where words and an idea(s) of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a written assignment as though they were the writer's own words and ideas, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on format followed) are present and no referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given.

The following rules shall govern the treatment of candidates who have been found guilty of attempting to obtain academic credit dishonestly.

(a) The minimum penalty for a candidate found guilty of plagiarism, or of cheating on any part of a course will be a zero for the work concerned.

(b) A candidate found guilty of cheating on a formal examination or a test, or of serious or repeated plagiarism, or of unofficially obtaining a copy of an examination paper before the examination is scheduled to be written, will receive zero for the course and may be expelled from the University.

If you have questions, consult the professor.

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

Participation .....	20%
Mid-term Test .....	20% (March 2 <sup>nd</sup> - In class)
Short Assignments (4x15%).....	60%

## **EVALUATION INFORMATION**

**Please note:** Your assignments must be typed in 12 font, double-spaced with 2.54 cm margins. You must have a title page with the course number/name, title of the assignment, your name, the due date, and the Instructor's name. All written work will be evaluated on (1) substance (content) or your ability to demonstrate understanding of the material; and (2) organization, presentation, grammar and clarity.

All assignments and the midterm test will be discussed in class and you will have the opportunity to ask questions about expectations. It is expected that you will reference in ASA style or the American Sociological Association Referencing style (see ASA Guide on D2L course site)

For your own protection, keep a hard copy of all work submitted for this course.

### **1. Participation – 20%**

The class participation mark will be based on your attendance, class engagement, and your completion of various in-class activities and group work.

### **2. Mid-Term Test – 20%** **March 2<sup>nd</sup>**

The Mid-term exam will cover course material through Week 1 to Week 6. Details will be provided in-class.

### **3. Short Assignments – 60%**

You are required to complete four (4) short assignments over the course of the Term. Each assignment is worth 15% for a total of 60%. Papers must be handed into the Assignments Folder on D2L, which will close at midnight on the due date.

**Assignment 1: Short Paper - Reflexivity, Politics & Power in Research**

**Due:** Wednesday Jan 31<sup>st</sup>

**Worth: 15%**

Think about an important social problem that faces our society. How do you think social location or values impact on how research is undertaken on this topic? Do you think men would construct research questions about this topic differently than women? What about people from different ethnicities or religions? Would a poor person construct research questions about this topic differently from a rich person?

Write a 2-3 page paper of whether and how gender, race, religion, and social class might affect the design of your research project.

**Assignment 2: Short Paper - Ethics: Reconsidering Milgram's Experiment**

**Due:** Wednesday February 14<sup>th</sup>

**Worth: 15%**

This short 2-3 paper requires you to consider the implications of replicating the Milgram experiment today. Stanley Milgram sought to understand rule-following behaviour in situations where following rules could lead to an innocent person's death. One of the alarming aspects of his findings was the extent to which the people in his experiment followed the rules even when they thought they were causing extreme pain to other people. Is this research outcome 'worth' the emotional turmoil to the research subjects who thought they had acted in such a way as to hurt others. Could the research into authority be conducted in a different way? Given the potential gains from the research, was it acceptable to conduct the research?

**Assignment 3: Designing a Survey**

**Due:** Wednesday March 21<sup>st</sup>

**Worth: 15%**

This assignment requires you to design a 15 question survey on a topic of your choice. First, you will need to register for a free account with Survey Monkey at [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) After you have set up your account, you will go in and design your survey 'from scratch' (do not use a template). This means that you must write your own survey questions. Once you are satisfied with the overall flow of questions and survey design, you can choose the "Print" function (lower left hand corner), which will give you the option to save your survey as a PDF file. You will hand in the PDF file (saved with your last name) of the survey by uploading it to the D2L Assignments Folder.

**Assignment 4: Short Paper: Qualitative vs Quantitative Research**

**Due:** Friday April 6<sup>th</sup>

**Worth: 15%**

## Department of Sociology

This 3-4 paper will focus on the differences and similarities between quantitative and qualitative research. It is expected that you will highlight research orientation / research design, research question, methodology, methods and any ethical considerations.

These short assignments require that you demonstrate familiarity and understanding of the course material and assigned readings. To do this, you must reference course materials in ASA referencing style.

I strongly encourage you to visit the Writing Centre, located in the Library and talk with a Writing Coach if you are having difficulty with these papers or would like a second set of eyes to review it before handing it in.

### **READINGS BY WEEK**

\* Schedule of readings may change with notice from the Instructor

#### **Week 1 - January 10 / 12**

##### **Introduction & Course Overview**

**Read:** Introduction (p. xxii-xxiv)

#### **Week 2 - Jan 17 / 19**

##### **Research Orientations: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches**

**Read:** Chapter 1 (p. 1-23)

#### **Week 3 - Jan 24 / 26**

##### **Research Design: Exploring Frameworks and Asking the Right Questions**

**Read:** Chapter 2 (p. 25-47)

#### **Week 4 - Jan 31 / Feb 2**

##### **Thinking Through Ethics**

**Read:** Chapter 3 (p. 48-64)

**Video:** Milgram Experiment

**\*Due Jan 31<sup>st</sup> - Assignment 1:** Short Paper – Reflexivity, Politics & Power in Research

**Week 5 – Feb 7 / 9**

**Quantitative Approaches to Research**

Read: Chapter 4 (p. 66-83)

**Week 6 – Feb 14 / 16**

**Exploring Survey Research: Structured Interviewing and Questionnaires**

Read: Chapter 5 (p. 84-104)

**\*Due February 14<sup>th</sup> - Assignment 2: Short Paper Ethics: Reconsidering Milgram's Experiment**

**Week 7 – Feb 21 / 23**

**No Class – Reading Week**

**Week 8 – Feb 28 / March 2**

**Review & Mid-Term**

Feb 28<sup>th</sup> - Test Review

**March 2<sup>nd</sup> - MID TERM TEST (In Class)**

**Week 9 – March 7 / 9**

**Asking Questions**

Read: Chapter 6 (p. 105-126)

**Week 10 – March 14 / 16**

**Qualitative Approaches to Research**

Read: Chapter 9 (p. 162-178)

**Week 11 – March 21 / 23**

**Ethnography and Participant Observation**

Read: Chapter 10 (p. 179-196)

**\*Due March 21<sup>st</sup> Assignment 3 – Designing a Survey**

**Week 12 – March 28 / 30**

**Interviewing in Qualitative Research**

**Read:** Chapter 11 (p. 197-225)

**\*March 30<sup>th</sup> - No Class - \*Make Up Class April 10**

**Week 13 – April 4 / 6**

**Breaking Down the Quantitative / Qualitative Divide**

**Read:** Chapter 15 (p. 296-315)

**\*Due April 6 - Assignment 4 - Short Paper: Qualitative vs Quantitative Research**