

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE
COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE CMCL 313 L03
INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

FALL 2012

INSTRUCTOR : Dr. Adolfo E. Peters
OFFICE : SS 307 (Shared Office)
E-MAIL : aepeters@ucalgary.ca
CLASS TIME : Saturday 8:00 am -11:30 pm
CLASS DATES : Sep 15, 22, 29; Oct 6, 13, 20, 27; Nov 3, 17, 24; Dec 1
OFFICE HOURS : Friday 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course covers an area that is distinctively known as *interdisciplinary research* (IDR). Interdisciplinary research can be one of the most productive and inspiring of human pursuits—one that provides a format for conversations and connections that lead to new knowledge (Committee on Facilitating Interdisciplinary Research, 2004).

The course will focus on:

- ✓ the role research plays in knowledge development,
- ✓ the regulations and ethics in conducting research,
- ✓ the link between social theory and research,
- ✓ the logics of qualitative and quantitative research,
- ✓ the advantages of triangulation in research
- ✓ the different types of research projects,
- ✓ the basics of data analysis,
- ✓ the uses and misuses of social research

The course will help students to:

- ✓ gain an understanding of the nature of social research and decisions employed in conducting it,
- ✓ understand the logics of interdisciplinary research,
- ✓ gain some experience in developing and conducting research projects of their own,
- ✓ critically examine the research of others,
- ✓ analyze and interpret research findings and assess their soundness

The course is structured within approximately 13 weeks in a very compressed structure. In order to cover effectively all the materials presented, lectures will be followed by in-class exercises in which, the topics introduced in the lectures, as well as in the assigned readings and other course material, will be further debated through group discussions. Your participation in lectures and especially in the different exercises is important both to your self-improvement and your partial and final grades.

Additional Information

The instructor reserves the right to introduce changes to the course outline and to the schedule of readings as the term progresses. All changes will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.

Please e-mail the instructor for urgent/emergency concerns only. Substantive issues should be addressed in person, either in class, office hours, or making an appointment with the instructor. Therefore, do not expect the instructor to respond to e-mails unless there is a matter of urgency.

Lecture notes, readings, and assignments will always be posted on Blackboard, so be sure to log on at least twice a week to check for messages and course documents.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Cell phones, pagers, internet surfing, watching videos, playing computer games, checking E-mail (and/or facebook, twitter, etc.), text messaging, and listening to music are disruptive to other students in class. Please be courteous to your classmates and Instructor and turn off all such devices before the class starts. Laptop computers, I-Pads and other tablets are to be used exclusively for the purposes of taking notes during class and previous permission from the Instructor.

Textbooks and Readings:

Required Textbook: NO

Recommended Readings: Please see the Schedule of Lectures, Readings and Assignments for readings that can be consulted for references on specific research topics. Lectures will include information derived/adapted from these readings.

Supplemental Book: Students are advised to read well in advance the following book that will be part of the written Reading Control:

Whyte, W. F. (1993). *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum* (4th ed.). Chicago: Chicago University Press

Assignments and Evaluation

This is a highly participatory and "hands on" course. There will be no formal partial or final examinations; instead you will work over the length of the course in the following assignments: ONE Group Research Project; ONE Group Research Dossier prior to conduct the field work; ONE individual in-class written Book Reading Control on methodological and ethical issues; and ONE individual Exercise Report on Observation Strategies. Also, you will complete and participate in a series of in-class exercises.

COMPOSITION OF FINAL GRADE

<u>Component</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Weight (%)</u>
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Methodological & Ethical Analysis of a Case Study (Whyte) – Reading Control	Oct 13	20
Observation Strategies – Field Exercise Report	Nov 3	20
Research Dossier	Nov 17	10
Research Project Final Report	Dec 1	30
Research Project In-Class Presentation	Dec 1	10
In-Class Exercises	On-going	10
<u>Total</u>		<u>100</u>

Note: Students must complete all components of this course to receive a passing grade.

The description of each one of the above course evaluation components is as follows:

Group Research Project

The major assignment for this course will be a ***Qualitative Research Project on Homelessness in Calgary***. The Research Project has obtained course-based ethics approval from the Faculty of Arts research ethics committee. Students will work in groups (4 members per team) to design and conduct their research.

At the end of the term, teams will produce a final Research Project Report summarizing each one of the stages of their research project and, most importantly, will present and defend orally the results of their research. The Research Project Final Report will be due on **December 1** and it will count for **30%** of the final grade. The oral presentation and defense component of the research will be due on **Dec 1**; this component of the research project will count for **10%** of the final grade.

It is the student's responsibility to organize and equally contribute to all team work. All members of a team are assigned a team grade except in situations where individual team members have not contributed equally to the research efforts in which case the instructor will evaluate the individual student's work. It will be at the instructor's discretion to attend to situations (and possible penalties) where some team members are not fully attending to their team responsibilities.

Since the research project in total will count for **40%** of the final grade it will be important that students allocate time wisely and give significant attention to the project to ensure that they do well in the course.

Book Reading Control

Students will be required to complete an in-class written Reading Control on Methodological and Ethical Issues concerning a classic Participant Observation Study: William. F. Whyte (1994). *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*). This written book reading control will take place in –class on **Oct 13th**, this assignment will count for **20%** of the total grade.

Review questions for this Reading Control will be posted on Blackboard one week before the due date.

Observation Strategies – Field Exercise

Students will conduct a field exercise around an important social or cultural activity. Guidelines for this field exercise will be discussed in class as the term progresses. The report of this exercise will be due on **Nov 3rd**, this assignment will count for 20% of the total grade.

Research Dossier

At various stages throughout the course you will be required to: conceptualize your research question, conduct a literature review on your topic, complete a research ethics form and other research forms, design your research plan, etc. All these will be included in a Research Dossier which will allow the teams to apply for and obtain approval for their project from the instructor, and conduct their field work. The Research Dossier will be due on **Nov 17th**; this assignment will count for 10% of the final grade.

In-class exercises

You are encouraged to participate as fully as possible in-class exercises which will include various activities: discussions, completion of some research activities (e.g., survey research - team player approach, research check list, etc.), films/videos, guest lectures and research panels. This on-going activity will count for 10% of the total grade.

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. When students are unable to submit assignments in class, they should make arrangements to hand in their assignments directly to the instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO

Policy for Late Assignments

Please be fully aware of the following policies regarding late completion of course assignments:

- ✓ Due dates for all assignments are not negotiable.
- ✓ Assignments must be handed in to the Instructor on the date they are due.
- ✓ Assignments will not be accepted electronically under any circumstance.
- ✓ Group Research Project submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of 5 points for each day late.
- ✓ Students who fail to make the in-class presentation of their Research Project will automatically lose the 10% assigned to this part of the total evaluation.
- ✓ Reports for the observation exercise submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of 3 points for each day late.
- ✓ Given the structure of the course, *there will not be make-up assignments or make-up exercises.*

You must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to complete the group research project activities, to hand in your assignments, or to participate in the in-class-exercises. All requests for deferral of an assignment or any other class work due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferred assignments may be granted in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. If you have missed an assignment for a legitimate reason that is notified to the Instructor before the deadline of the assignment, you will be granted an extension to hand in the assignment as close to the original date as possible but no later than one week after the due date. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferred assignment or absence to an in-class exercise. Deferred assignments and permissions will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.** For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization.

If you need help with your writing, you may contact the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading System

Grades are entered as raw scores (percentages) into the grading system. Your final letter grade is computed based on the weighted sum of your raw scores.

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture:

(Revised, effective September 2008)

Letter Grade	Grading Scale
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99

B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources. All assignments must be properly documented employing the *APA Citation Format* (posted on Blackboard). For some other examples about how to use this format you can see:

<http://www.easybib.com/reference/guide/apa>

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa>

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor Taylor Digital Family Library, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link;

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

Students' Union

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

Student Ombudsman

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see

The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site:
<http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics>

or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/cfreb>

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

A detailed schedule of lectures, readings and assignments will be posted on Blackboard. I will endeavour to have a summary of my lecture notes (Power Point slides) posted after each lecture. Please do not ask me to post lectures notes in advance, logistically this is not feasible.