

**DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
GGR 271H1S—SOCIAL RESEARCH METHODS
WINTER 2015 – Monday 11:00-1:00pm, NF 003**

Instructor:

Dr. Uma Acharya
Office: Sydney Smith Hall, Room: Sidney Smith, 5038
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00-3:00pm
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Course Description:

This is a practical course on scholarly and field methods designed to enable students to carry out their own research projects. The emphasis is on qualitative and interpretive research methods. Topics covered include the philosophy of qualitative research, interviewing, questionnaire design, sampling approaches, content analysis of written and graphic material, data coding, and focus groups. The course also focuses on the ethics of carrying out primary research.

A Few Ground Rules:

1. **Email use:** Please use e-mail judiciously. If you are having a problem in the course, first e-mail the head TA (who's name and email address will be provided in the first week of class). Please do not ask questions over e-mail that cannot be answered with one or two sentences. If you have longer questions, I appreciate if you ask during my office hours or immediately after the lecture.
2. **Late Assignments:** Assignments must be handed in at the beginning of the class on the due date. Five (5) percentage points (of assignment grade) will be deducted for each day (weekdays and weekend days each count as one day) on all late assignments. Assignments will not be accepted later than seven days after the due date. A hard copy of assignment should be handed in at the beginning of the class on due date as instructed in the assignment instructions. If you miss the start of class deadline, a 5% late penalty will be assigned to anything submitted before 5:00pm the next day. For late assignments, the hard copy should be submitted through the Drop Box in the Geography Main Office, SSH 5047 (open M-F, 9:00am-5:00pm). Submitted papers are time stamped at the end of each business day, normally 5pm. You should arrive by 4:45pm to ensure your paper gets into the box before the time stamps are added.

Extensions *may* be granted when students present the Course Instructor with a compelling reason for their inability to meet the deadline with satisfactory documentation (e.g., a signed UofT medical certificate or college registrar letter for non-medical emergencies). A technical or computer glitch will not be accepted as a valid reason for an extension.

3. **Blackboard:** This course has a Blackboard site where course materials such as course outline, lecture notes, assignments, grades, any required readings from journal articles that are not in the textbook, and announcements will be posted. Please make sure that you check the Blackboard (the Portal) regularly.

Teaching Assistants: Each student is required to sign up with a TA who will guide you throughout the term by providing individual consultation and small group discussions. A sign-up sheet will be available during the lecture hours in the first and second week. You are encouraged to contact your TA for any course related questions once you have signed up with her/him. Each TA is assigned with a limited number of students. The contact information of the TAs is as follows:

Text Book:

Bryman, Alan, Teevan, James and Bell, Edward. 2012. *Social Research Methods: Third Canadian Edition*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

- Hard copy: Available at the University of Toronto bookstore.
- E-copy: follow the link: <http://www.coursesmart.com/social-research-methods-third-canadian-edition/bryman-bell-teevan/dp/9780199000371>

Evaluation:

<i>Evaluation Components</i>	<i>Marks,%</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Assignment -1	25	February 9
Mid-Term Exam	20	February 23
Assignment - 2	25	March 30
Final Exam	30	TBA
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>	

Detailed Lecture Schedule (topics covered, and required readings):

Week 1 - January 5: Course Introduction

- Introduction to social research, qualitative methods, quantitative methods, research ethics

Reading: Bryman, Teevan and Bell, 2012 - Chapter 1

Week 2 – January 12: Data Sources

- Brief History of Social Science Research
- Primary and Secondary Data
- Academic and Popular Sources
- History and ethics of university research

Reading: Bryman, Teevan and Bell, 2012 – Chapter 7

Assignment 1 hand out and explanation

Week 3 – January 19: The research design process

- Selecting a topic; developing a research question, selecting a design; structuring a research project
- Characteristics of high quality research: Validity, Precision, Reliability, Accuracy
- Experimental design: experimental; cross-sectional; longitudinal

Reading: Bryman, Teevan and Bell, 2012 – Chapter 2 and Chapter 8

Week 4 – January 26: Sampling Theory and Practice

- Sampling methods: simple random sample; Stratified random sample; non-probability sampling
- Response rates and handling non-response

Reading: Bryman, Teevan and Bell, 2012 – Chapter 12

Week 5 – February 2: Data collection techniques-Questionnaire and Interviews

- Questionnaire/Interview based research
 - Structured, semi structured, unstructured

Reading: Bryman, Teevan and Bell, 2012 – Chapter 4 and Chapter 5

Week 6 – February 9: Interviewing in Practice

- Open and close ended questions
- Focus groups
- Questionnaire design
- Pilot testing

Reading: Bryman, Teevan and Bell, 2012 – Chapter 10

- **Assignment 1 due**

READING WEEK (February 16-20)

Week 7: February 23

Mid Term Exam

Week 8 - March 2: Case Studies

- Selecting and using case studies
- **Assignment 2 hand out and explanation**

Reading: Bryman, Teevan and Bell, 2012 – pp. 38-40;

Week 9 - March 9: Ethnographic/observational methods

- Participant action research and digital Storytelling
- Participatory Rural Appraisal

Reading:- Bryman, Teevan and Bell, 2012 – Chapter 9
- Articles by Chambers, 1994, posted on Blackboard

Week 10 - March 16: Content and textual analysis

- Interpretation of media and art
- Historical data analysis

Reading: Bryman, Teevan and Bell, 2012 – Chapter 16

Week 11 - March 23: Triangulation and Research Ethics

- Research ethics
- University research ethics protocol
- Research in the workplace
- Triangulation

Readings: Bryman, Teevan and Bell, 2012 –Triangulation- pp281-282, ethics- Chapter 11

Week 12 – March 30: Course Wrap Up

- Great research disasters: lessons learned from unsuccessful research projects
- Course Wrap Up
- Exam review

- **Assignment 2 due**

Date TBD – Final Exam

GGR271: Tentative weekly schedule (summary table):

Week	Date	Topic/Theme	Readings	Remarks
1	January 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction, • Definition of some terms • Qualitative/Quantitative methods • Fundamentals of social research 	Textbook (Bryman, Bell and Teevan 2012), Chapter-1	
2	January 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief History of Social Science Research • Primary and Secondary Data • Academic and Popular Sources • History and ethics of university research 	Chapter 7	Handout Assignment-1
3	January 19	Qualitative Research Design	Chapter 8	
4	January 26	Sampling theory and practice	Chapter 12	
5	February 2	Data Collection techniques	Chapter 4 and 5	
6	February 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing in qualitative research • <u>Mid- term review</u> 	Chapter 10	Assign 1 Due (beginning of class)
	February 16	Family Day (Reading Week till 20 Feb.)	Reading Week	
7	February 23	Mid-term exam-worth 20%		Hand out Assignment-2
8	March 2	Case studies	Textbook – pp. 38-40	
9	March 9	Ethnographic/observational methods Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)	-Chapter 9 - Articles on blackboard	
10	March 16	Content and textual analysis	Chapter 16	
11	March 23	Triangulation, Research Ethics	-Textbook pp281-282 -Chapter 11 and	
12	March 30	Course wrap up and exam review		Assign 2 Due (beginning of class)
	April 8-30	Exam period		

Course Policies and Some Important Information:

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is an academic offense at the University of Toronto. Plagiarism is quoting (or paraphrasing) the work of an author (including the work of fellow students) without proper use of citation. Quotation marks are required when using an author's words. Students also should not be submitting any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought, without first discussing with the instructor. Please consult the "Rules and Regulations" section of the Arts and Science Calendar (http://www.artsandscience.utoronto.ca/ofr/calendar/Rules_&_Regulations.html) for further information and check the 'How not to plagiarize' website at: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>.

Lecture Attendance: Attendance at lectures is highly expected. Students are responsible for work missed as a result of absence; the Course Instructor will not re-teach material covered in the lectures. Make friends in the class.

Missed Term Tests: Students who miss the term test will be assigned a mark of zero for the test or assignment unless they can document a compelling reason for missing it. Students in that position must submit a written request to the Course Instructor with appropriate documentation as soon as possible with a medical certificate found on <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/>.

For non-medical documentation, please refer to the link for the required documentation <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/petitions/process#documentation>.

Term work remark request: Requests to remark the term work should be made initially to the respective TA in the course no later than two weeks after it was returned. If you are not satisfied that your concerns have been addressed by the TA, you may appeal to the course Instructor. All requests for remark must include a short written explanation of why you believe the mark was inappropriate. For follow up appeals to the instructor, include all previous communications in the matter. **Students making a request for a remarking must accept that the resulting mark will become the new mark, whether it goes up or down or remains the same.**

Accessibility Needs: The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

Accessibility accommodation: The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Accessibility Services. Inform the Course Instructor in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations,

or other similar commitments, cannot assume that they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with the instructor before the drop date.