

**CARLETON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY & ANTHROPOLOGY
SOCI 5809W: THE LOGIC OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS (Winter Term 2023)**

Method of delivery: In-person seminar

Meeting times: Mondays, 2:35 – 5:25 pm

Meeting location: Room A715, Loeb Building

CONTACT INFORMATION

Course Instructor

Michael Mopas, PhD

Office: Loeb Building D787

Phone: 613.520.2600 ext. 2990 (it is easier to get a hold of me via email)

Office hours: Tuesdays, 9:00 – 11:00 am or by appointment

Email: michael_mopas@carleton.ca (please allow 24 to 48 hours for a reply)

ABOUT THE COURSE

Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this course is to provide students with experience in critical reflection on the research process. There is a strong emphasis on the practicalities of research—the many decisions taken when doing research and the various issues involved in supporting and justifying those decisions. The justifications for many research decisions are situated in significant on-going debates concerning the appropriate ontology, epistemology, and research practice for the social sciences. Attending to such debates is important for the conduct of good research.

A central objective of the course is to help students connect with these broader debates, while keeping a practical focus on the ‘doing’ of research. The course will help you design your theses (and research papers) if they involve empirical research. The course will also help you explain in your theses/research papers why you made the particular research choices that you did, and, as a result, what your data can and cannot tell you. Thus, the focus of the course is on ‘methodology’ understood as the interface between research strategies (i.e., research ‘methods’), substantive theory, and philosophies of knowledge (i.e., the how’s and why’s of research). We investigate the workings of this interface in three contexts: 1) debates in the literature about research aims and appropriate methodologies for the social sciences; 2) examples demonstrating specific aspects of sociological research practices; and 3) the intended research projects of students in the class.

A second, related aim of the course to provide an opportunity for master’s students in Sociology to discuss issues and get mentorship in relation to graduate school, in general, and to your progress through your degrees and beyond. We can address any practical issues such as finding a supervisor, deciding whether to choose thesis, research paper or coursework options, and so on.

Approach to Teaching and Learning (i.e., my teaching philosophy)

I am a firm believer that good teachers ‘facilitate’ learning. Good teachers not only communicate information and knowledge to their students, but also enable and encourage students to become responsible for their own learning. As such, it is my job to get you excited about this course by facilitating interesting discussions, assigning thought-provoking reading material, and giving challenging (but fair) assignments, so that you can become actively involved in your own learning experience.

Course structure

The course is divided into three sections outlined below. The duration of each section is tentatively set but may be adjusted depending on course numbers. The content of the course will be determined, in part, by the research interests of students in the class. For example, in section 2, for your group projects and presentations, you will choose the particular research approaches that you are most interested in.

Section 1 (weeks 2 to 6) is a short excursion into debates about and approaches to sociological, and more broadly social science, research practice. The readings will be self-consciously ‘methodological’: that is, they aim to illustrate an area of methodological debate, or the methodological strengths of an established or emerging research tradition. Whenever possible, we will explore readings which highlight how a particular research approach is used in practice.

Section 2 (weeks 7 to 8/9) will involve critical reflection on research design and practices. Presentations in this section of the course will be based on working groups focused on particular research approaches and strategies.

Section 3 (weeks 9/10 to 12) will focus on the research projects of the students in the class. Using the format of a ‘design spine’, the primary activity will be the creation and presentation of a thesis research design by each student. The organization of the presentations in this section of the course will depend on the numbers enrolled.

N.B. Throughout the course, current and past sociology graduate students may be invited to speak to the class about their experience with doing research of different types and at various stages of the research process.

Expectations of students

In order to get the most out of this seminar, students must come to class prepared to learn. This means completing the required readings in advance, listening respectfully when others are talking, raising your hand when you want to speak, and speaking in turn. Important announcements will normally be made at the beginning of class so please arrive on time. Also, because each class is three hours in length, you will miss a significant amount of material if you depart early or are absent, so please plan to attend regularly and for the full duration of the period. If, for whatever reason, you are unable to attend a seminar, it is YOUR responsibility for any course material (e.g., lecture notes, handouts, audio-visual presentations, etc.) you may have missed.

Student contributions

In addition to the general expectations noted above, each student will have four special responsibilities:

1. **Readings:** students are expected to do the readings each week. For each class, you need to come up with a question based on any of the readings (one question total per class) and post the question on CuLearn (using the 'forums' created for each week) in advance of the class. In each class, I will ask some of the students to share their questions.
2. **Group presentation:** In Section 2, students will work in groups of three or four to critically reflect on a research strategy that is of interest to them. Each work group will be responsible for presenting to the class a critical review of the strengths and weaknesses of the research strategy they have considered. I will provide you with two core readings for your topic of choice, and you will be responsible for locating one additional relevant reading.
3. **Individual presentation:** In Section 3, students will present a proposed research design for a sociology thesis in their area of interest. The format for the presentations will be determined when the exact number in the class is known. It is likely that the individual presentations in this section will be in a poster format, with the class divided into three groups – a *presenting* group, a *discussant* group, and an *interested audience* group. **N.B.** You will do a research design for a thesis, whether or not you plan to do the thesis option. You will learn the most about research this way.
4. **Discussant:** Each student will act as a discussant for one of your colleague's projects during Section 3.

COURSE MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Required Readings

The readings listed on the course schedule (see below) will be made available by the course instructor on the first day of class.

Online Resources

A Brightspace website has been created for this course. Access to the website is password protected and restricted to students registered in this class. The website will be used by the instructor as an additional means of distributing course material and information (e.g., lecture notes, class announcements, class marks, links to course-related Internet sites, etc.). A discussion board has been created to provide students with an additional forum for discussing various course-related issues.

NOTE: Students will be expected to check the website on a weekly-basis and are encouraged to actively participate in the online discussions.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Students are expected to have all readings completed and to come to class prepared to discuss the topics covered. Please keep on top of the readings (i.e., don't leave them to the last minute) and ask questions if any material is unclear.

SECTION 1: DEBATES IN SOCIOLOGICAL (AND SOCIAL SCIENCE) RESEARCH

Week 1 (January 9): Course introduction

Required readings: None.

Week 2 (January 16): Post-positivist research – a new convergence?

Required readings:

Flyvbjerg, B. (2001) *Making Social Science Matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapters 1-3.

Hawkesworth, M. (2006) *Feminist Inquiry: From Political Conviction to Methodological Innovation*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, Chapter 1.

Week 3 (January 23): Values, power and politics – their place in research

Required readings:

Flyvbjerg, B. (2001) *Making Social Science Matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 5.

Hawkesworth, M. (2006) *Feminist Inquiry: From Political Conviction to Methodological Innovation*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, Chapters 3 and 5.

Week 4 (January 30): Strategies for moving forward

Required readings:

Flyvbjerg, B. (2001) *Making Social Science Matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapters 6, 9 and 10.

Week 5 (February 6): Beyond dualism in social research practice

Required readings:

Brannan, J. (2005) 'Mixed methods: The entry of qualitative and quantitative approaches into the research process' in *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8(3): 173-184.

Onwuegbuzie, A.J. and N. Leech (2005) 'On becoming a pragmatic researcher: The importance of combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies' in *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8(5): 375-387.

Schulenberg, J. (2007) 'Analyzing police decision-making: Assessing the application of a mixed method/mixed model research design' in *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 10(2): 99-119.

Week 6 (February 13): Self and other in research: Reflexivity and accountability

Required readings:

Doucet, A. and N. Mauthner (2003) 'Reflexive accounts and accounts of reflexivity in qualitative research' in *Sociology*, 37(3): 413-431.

Fawcett, B. and J. Hearn (2004) 'Researching others: Epistemology, experience, standpoints and participation' in *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 7(3): 201-218.

Findlay, L. (2003) 'The reflexive journey: Mapping multiple routes' in L. Findlay and B. Gough (eds.), *Reflexivity: A practical guide for researchers in health and social sciences*. London: Blackwell, pp. 3-20.

Week 7 (February 20): Reading Week

No classes this week.

SECTION 2: GETTING MORE SPECIFIC ABOUT RESEARCH PRACTICE

Week 8 (February 27): Group A presentation

Required readings: TBA

Week 9 (March 6): Group B presentation

Required readings: TBA

Week 10 (March 13): Group C presentation and design spine workshop

Required readings: TBA

POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR SECTION 2:

More on reflexivity
Methodology of intersectional analysis
More on mixed methods
Interviewing strategies and issues
Participatory action research
Grounded theory
Secondary data analysis
Activist research
Access to information requests

Critical discourse analysis
Ethnography
Narrative analysis
Focus groups
Visual methods
Content analysis
Internet as a research tool
Archive and documents
Autoethnography

SECTION 3: DESIGNING YOUR OWN RESEARCH

Week 11 (March 20): Design spine presentations (Group A presenters, group B discussants)

Week 12 (March 27): Design spine presentations (Group B presenters, group C discussants)

Week 13 (April 3): Design spine presentations (Group C presenters, group A discussants)

COURSE ASSESSMENT

Due dates and grade values for each assignment are as follows:

Assignments	Grade	Due Date
Participation	20%	N/A
Discussion paper	30%	February 27, 2023
Research design paper	50%	April 27, 2023

Participation – 20% of final grade

Discussion and dialogue are integral to student learning. Students are expected to have carefully read all of the assigned materials prior to each seminar and prepared to actively participate in class discussion. The mark you receive will be based on attendance and the overall quality (not the quantity) of your participation (e.g., how well you have understood the readings, the ability to critically engage with the materials and relate them to the overall themes of the course, etc.). The quality of your discussion questions that you submit each week, as well as your individual and group presentations and your role as discussant, will also be assessed and considered when assigning a final participation grade.

Discussion paper (8-10 pages, double-spaced) – 30% of final grade

The main objective of this paper is to provide students an opportunity to critically reflect on the specific approach to research that is the focus of their group presentation, and to connect issues/questions about that approach with the readings from Section 1. More explicit instructions for the discussion paper will be posted/distributed in class.

Research design paper (12-14 pages, double spaced) – 50% of final grade

Students will be expected to write a research design paper based on work prepared for Section 3 of this course. More explicit instructions for the research design paper will be posted/distributed in class. Please submit an electronic copy of your final research paper before 11:59 pm on April 27, 2023, via Brightspace.

COURSE POLICIES REGARDING ASSIGNMENTS

Submitting assignments and late penalties

All assignments must be handed in at the beginning of class on the due date. Subject to the extension policy outlined below, there will be a 2% per day deduction from assignments submitted late. The late penalty applies equally to Saturday and Sunday. That is, a paper due on Tuesday that is handed in on Wednesday (1 day late) will be subject to a 2% deduction. The same paper handed in on the following Monday (6 days late) will be subject to a 12% deduction.

Extension Policy

Students must request an extension PRIOR to the due date of an assignment. To receive an extension for an assignment, a student must provide written documentation of his or her inability to complete the assignment on time. Written documentation will generally take the form of a doctor's note. For non-medical notes, the instructor will accept a note from the Registrar's Office (or similar University official), social worker, clergy member, lawyer, etc. Once the student has provided the instructor with adequate documentation of their inability to complete the assignment on time, the student and the instructor will negotiate a new due date for the assignment. Assignments submitted after the negotiated deadline will be subject to the late penalty outlined above.

NOTE: Except in emergency situations, no requests for extensions will be considered the week prior to the assignment's due date.

GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

Every student enrolled in this course is responsible for reading the following policies. It contains everything you need to know about the rules, requirements and regulations set out for this course.

Office Hours

My office hours are posted on my office door (787D Loeb Building). You are welcome to drop by during office hours or you may make an appointment if you feel you need extra time or cannot make the time I have allotted.

If my door is open, you are welcome to see me even if it is not during my office hours. If my door is shut, please do NOT knock unless it is an emergency. Please do NOT drop by right before the class as I'm usually doing last-minute preparations.

E-Mail and Phone Messages

I will do my best to respond to your e-mails as quickly as possible. However, please allow at least 24 to 48 hours for a reply. If it is an emergency and you need to get a hold of the instructor immediately, please call me at my office (613.520.2600 x 2990). If you phone me and leave me a message, please remember to leave a number at which I can reach you and tell me when the best time is to do so. Please identify yourself when you phone with your FULL FIRST and LAST NAME.

In all cases, please be patient. I do my very best to respond in a timely fashion, but sometimes it is just not possible.

Diversity and Inclusion

In this course, you are expected to learn from your texts, your teacher, and from one another. This requires striving towards understanding each other but it does not imply striving towards finding agreement. Our class will be racially, religiously, politically, culturally, generationally, and economically diverse. We will be of different gender identifications and sexual orientations and our lived experiences and reactions to the course material will reflect this diversity. Sharing our perspectives and interpretations on the course material will enhance everyone's learning experience and you are encouraged to openly express any disagreements with the authors you will read, with your fellow classmates, or with the Professor in the different participation fora that are available for this course. However, you are expected to conduct yourself in such a way that shows the utmost respect to others who may – or may not – share your views. Derogatory comments and hateful behavior towards others (and their views) will not be tolerated.

REGULATIONS COMMON TO ALL COURSES AT CARLETON UNIVERSITY

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar Regulations, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52
F = Below 50	WDN = Withdrawn from the course		DEF = Deferred

Academic Regulations, Accommodations, Plagiarism, Etc.

University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know can be found on the university's website, here: <https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/>

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

For students with disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation

arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

*The deadline for contacting the Paul Menton Centre regarding accommodation for December examinations (Fall) is **November 11, 2022** and for April examinations (Winter) is **March 15, 2023**.

For pregnancy: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form ([click here](#)).

For religious obligations: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

For survivors of sexual violence: As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

For student activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Student Mental Health

As a University student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency resources (on and off campus): <https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

Carleton resources:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off campus resources:

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

Plagiarism

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course’s instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course.

Pandemic Measures

It is important to remember that COVID is still present in Ottawa. The situation can change at any time and the risks of new variants and outbreaks are very real. There are [a number of actions you can take](#) to lower your risk and the risk you pose to those around you including being vaccinated, wearing a mask, staying home when you’re sick, washing your hands and maintaining proper respiratory and cough etiquette.

Feeling sick? Remaining vigilant and not attending work or school when sick or with symptoms is critically important. If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms do not come to class or campus. If you feel ill or exhibit symptoms while on campus or in class,

please leave campus immediately. In all situations, you should follow Carleton's [symptom reporting protocols](#).

Masks: Masks are no longer mandatory in university buildings and facilities. However, we continue to recommend masking when indoors, particularly if physical distancing cannot be maintained. We are aware that personal preferences regarding optional mask use will vary greatly, and we ask that we all show consideration and care for each other during this transition.

Vaccines: While proof of vaccination is no longer required to access campus or participate in in-person Carleton activities, it may become necessary for the University to bring back proof of vaccination requirements on short notice if the situation and public health advice changes. Students are strongly encouraged to get a full course of vaccination, including booster doses as soon as they are eligible and submit their booster dose information in [cuScreen](#) as soon as possible. Please note that Carleton cannot guarantee that it will be able to offer virtual or hybrid learning options for those who are unable to attend the campus.

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow requirements and guidelines regarding health and safety which may change from time to time. For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and health and safety requirements please see the [University's COVID-19 website](#) and review the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact covidinfo@carleton.ca.

Winter 2023 Dates and Deadlines

January 2, 2023	Deadline for course outlines to be made available to students registered in full winter and early winter term courses.
January 4, 2023	University reopens.
January 9, 2023	Winter term begins. Full winter and early winter classes begin.
January 20-22, 27-29, 2023	Full fall and late fall term deferred final examinations will be held.
January 31, 2023	Last day to withdraw from full winter courses with a full fee adjustment. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
February 17, 2023	April examination schedule available online.
February 20, 2023	Statutory holiday. University closed.
February 20-24, 2023	Winter break, no classes.
March 15, 2023	Last day for academic withdrawal from full winter, late winter, and fall/winter courses. Last day to request Formal Examination Accommodation Forms for April full winter, late winter, and fall/winter final examinations to the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities. Note that it may not be possible to fulfil accommodation requests received after the specified deadlines.
March 29, 2023	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of

	the final grade, in full winter term or fall/winter undergraduate courses, before the official April final examination period (see examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar).
April 7, 2023	Statutory holiday. University closed.
April 12, 2023	Winter term ends. Last day of full winter, late winter, and fall/winter classes. Classes follow a Friday schedule (full winter and late winter courses). Last day for final take-home examinations to be assigned, with the exception of those conforming to the examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for full winter and late winter courses.
April 13-14, 2023	No classes or examinations take place.
April 15-27, 2023	Final examinations in full winter, late winter, and fall/winter courses will be held. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
April 27, 2023	All final take-home examinations are due on this day, with the exception of those conforming to the examination regulations in the Academic Regulations of the University section of the Undergraduate Calendar/General Regulations of the Graduate Calendar.
May 19-31, 2023	Full winter, late winter, and fall/winter deferred final examinations will be held.