

SOC 415: Applied Research Internship Course
Course Syllabus, WIN 2020 (96541)
University of Alberta

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Office Hours: R 2:00-4:00pm and by appointment

Course Meeting: T 1-062 (Sociology Boardroom) & Rutherford S 205A, T 2:00-4:50pm

Required Course Reading:

This course relies on electronic readings available through the library and other places. These are listed within the course schedule with provided links. For any reading that does not include a link, please see the shared [Google Drive](#).

Supporting Resources:

Dalgaard, Peter. 2008. *Introductory Statistics with R*. Springer. Available online via the University of Alberta library system: [*Dalgaard Link*](#).

Diez, David M., Christopher D. Barr, and Mine Cetinkaya-Rundel. 2019. *OpenIntro Statistics, 4rd Edition*. Available online at: openintro.org/book/os.

Diez, Grolemund, Garrett and Hadley Wickham. 2019 *R for Data Science*. Available online at: r4ds.had.co.nz.

Prerequisite:

SOC 315 or consent of instructor.

Technology Requirements:

Many meeting sessions will require independent work on the research project. We encourage you to bring personal laptops to each meeting. Please let us know if you do not have access to a laptop and we can make other arrangements. In addition, this semester's course project requires working with statistical data and collaborating on report writing. We will be using Google Docs, Excel, and the statistical programs, [R](#) and [RStudio](#). We will discuss how to download and set-up these programs early in the semester.

Policy about course outlines can be found in [Course Requirements, Evaluation Procedures, and Grading](#) of the University Calendar.

Course Description

Through the Applied Research Internship course, students will work as a team to conduct research for a local nonprofit, business, social service organization, or government agency. Although conducting supervised research activities for the organization will make up the largest component of the course, students will also participate in weekly seminar meetings and professionalization activities. These will include developing skill-based CVs/resumes, researching potential job opportunities, and meeting with social scientists working outside academia to discuss their employment pathways and the nature of their work. Seminar discussions will also be dedicated to discussing the challenges, opportunities, and promises of applied social science research for contemporary society.

Course Goals & Objectives

Through this course, students will:

1. Develop professional skills and competencies as applied social science researchers, including:
 - (a) Enhancing research and data analysis skills by applying them to a research project conducted in partnership with a local community-based organization.
 - (b) Developing team-work skills through participation in a team-based research project.
 - (c) Advancing written and oral communication skills through report writing and the delivery of research presentations to key stakeholders.
 2. Learn about housing and nonprofit issues in Canada and Edmonton.
 3. Clarify the skills and competencies developed through training in the social sciences.
 4. Explore professional opportunities in the social sciences.
 5. Understand the issues, challenges, and possibilities of applied social science research in contemporary society.
 6. Establish connections with the larger community through participation in a research partnership.
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Nature of the Course

This course is not structured like a typical undergraduate class. We will be *working as a team* to conduct social research for a local organization. A core objective of the course is to create an environment that simulates the professional environments in which applied social researchers work. Thus, the course demands high levels of participation, professionalism, and collegiality. The course is not lecture-based. We will meet weekly to work on the project and to engage in discussions and workshops relevant to the course objectives. Seminars and workshops will require prior preparation and completing out-of-class assignments. It is expected that team-members come to each seminar fully prepared.

WIN 2020 Course Project

For the Winter 2020 semester, we will be partnering with Capital Region Housing (CRH), the largest provider of social and affordable housing in the Edmonton area. CRH manages over 4500 Community Housing units, 600 Near Market units, and 3000 rent subsidies. They are also developing new affordable housing properties, such as the recently approved Londonderry Development in the Kilkenny neighbourhood. As part of their commitment to becoming more than a landlord, and recognizing that a home is more than four walls and roof, CRH is seeking more ways to support their tenants. See crhc.ca for more information on the organization.

As part of the research project responsibilities, students will review literature on service provision across housing nonprofits, analyze CRH client data, contribute to a larger report, and participate in presentations for CRH staff and the broader community. This semester's project will study the delivery of and access to front line customer services at CRH. This project will therefore provide a greater understanding of how, when, and where clients access CRH services, which will then allow CRH to better serve the populations in need of housing assistance.

Course Policies

Be respectful. Be honest. Be kind.

Contacting Me:

I highly recommend bringing any questions to class with you. However, if you have a question that can be answered with a couple sentences and this question has not already been answered on the syllabus or course website, you may contact me through email. If your question requires a more detailed or lengthy response, I suggest that you raise the question in class, attend my office hours, or make an appointment to meet with me. Please be aware that I check email from 9:00-5:00 on weekdays but not on weekends.

Email Etiquette:

Remember that email communication for all courses should be formal and professional. Make sure to use proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Absences:

Your participation in weekly meetings, workshops, and discussions is essential. The success of the project depends on your professionalism and dedication. If you are going to be absent for a meeting session, please contact me.

Accessibility Resources:

Students who require accommodations in this course due to a disability affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning, mental, or physical health are advised to discuss their needs with [Student Accessibility Resources](#), SUB 1-80, 492 · 3381 (phone) or 492 · 7269 (TTY). Students registered with Accessibility Resources who will be using accommodations in the classroom or writing exams through Accessibility Resources are required to provide a "Letter of Introduction."

Electronic Recording of Lectures:

As per the University Calendar: *Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as apart of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).*

Academic Integrity:

Per GFC 24.3(2): *The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.* All students should consult the [academic integrity website](#).

Basic Needs Security:

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or if you lack a safe and stable place to live, and you believe this may affect your performance in this course, please contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) or the [Dean of Students](#) for support. The [Campus Food Bank](#) also offers multiple programs to help with food insecurity. Additionally, please talk to me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I might possess.

Children in Class:

All exclusively breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as necessary. For older children and babies, I understand that minor illnesses and unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in tough situations. Although this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable. However, please do not let this disrupt the learning of other students. In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that you can easily step outside if your little one needs special attention.

Treaty 6 Territory:

The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.

Learning and Working Environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty, and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behavior that undermines that environment.

Course Requirements, Assessment, & Grading

Grade Breakdown:

Your grade in this course will be based upon four components, each worth a part of the grade:

1. Nonprofit Memos: 20%
2. Research Project: 40%
3. Participation: 20%
4. Cover Letter and Resume: 20%

Grading Policy:

Four components constitute your grade for this course: memos, research project, participation, and resume. If you are having issues keeping up with course work for any reason, notify me as soon as you start to have a problem. We will be more likely to come to an acceptable arrangement if we can attack the problem sooner rather than later. [Counseling and Clinical Services](#) are also available.

Component 1: Nonprofit Service Provider Memos (20%)

You will be required to write two memos related to nonprofits and service provision in Edmonton. They should be concise summaries of the material being reviewed, geared to a general audience. Pretend that you are writing for a work supervisor who wants to know as much about the issue as possible but does not want to read more than a few pages. Each memo will be graded on the thoroughness of its content and the clarity of writing. Collectively, your memos will then be used to prepare sections of our final report.

- Nonprofit Service Provision in the Housing Sector (10%)

Based on required readings write a two page memo that summarizes important issues related to housing issues and nonprofit service provision. This memo is due on *January 21, 2020*.

- Capital Region Housing Profile (10%)

After reviewing the Capital Region Housing (CRH) website and hearing a presentation about (CRH), its role in Edmonton, and the services it provides, write a two page memo that outlines important information about Capital Region Housing, including its size, vision and mandate, number of employees, services, and future goals. This memo is due on *January 28, 2020*.

Component 2: Research Project with Capital Region Housing (40%)

Throughout the semester we will be working together as a group on a large research project for Capital Region Housing. Your responsibilities for this project will include writing a data brief, contributing to the final report, and contributing to the final presentation.

- **Data Brief (15%)**

You will be required to produce a 3-4 page data brief discussing our preliminary data findings. The data brief will include an overview of the project data and a set of short summary findings. A draft version of your data brief is due on *March 3, 2020*. The final revised version is due on *March 17, 2020*.

- **Contribution to Final Report (15%)**

One of your main responsibilities in this course is working together to produce a Final Report for Capital Region Housing. Throughout the semester, you will be responsible for writing sections of the report, conducting specific analyses, editing drafts, and creating charts, tables, and infographics.

- **Contribution to Final Presentation (10%)**

In addition to submitting a final report at the end of the semester, we will also present key findings to Capital Region Housing staff (Date TBA). This represents the second major deliverable of our project. Thus, another priority in this course is working together to produce a final presentation. You will be responsible for creating parts of the presentation, as well as editing, practicing, and delivering it.

Component 3: Participation (20%)

The course is structured around regularly scheduled work sessions, professionalization workshops, and seminar discussions. Your participation in these activities is critical to the success of the project, and it will be graded. You should be mentally and physically present, and participate in each work session, workshop, and seminar. This includes speaking up in class, asking and answering questions, and working collaboratively as a group. As members of a research team, you are expected to be respectful and courteous. Disruptive and disrespectful behavior, such as talking out of turn, listening to music, using electronic devices for non-class purposes, sleeping through class, and leaving early without first notifying the instructor, will negatively affect your grade.

Component 4: Resume and Cover Letter (20%)

In addition to a strong research focus, this course also emphasizes professionalization skills, including how to develop a cover letter and resume.

- Cover Letter (10%)

At the end of the semester you will be asked to "apply" for a job from a choice of two fictitious job ads. Along with your resume, you will need to submit a cover letter that describes your background and qualifications for that specific job. This cover letter should highlight your research skills with an emphasis on those learned in this course. The cover letter is due on *April 17, 2020*.

- Draft and Revised Resume (10%)

One professionalization workshop will be dedicated to writing effective resumes. At the time of that workshop, you will be required to bring in a copy of your resume. When you "apply" to a fictitious job at the end of the semester, you will be required to submit a revised resume that has been enhanced based on your participation in this course. The two drafts of your resume will be compared with a grade assigned to revision. The draft version of your resume is due on *February 11, 2020*. The final revised version is due on *April 17, 2020*.

Grade Conversion Scale:

Descriptor	Percentage Grade	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value
Excellent	96 - 100	A+	4.0
	91 - 95	A	4.0
	86 - 90	A-	3.7
Good	81 - 85	B+	3.3
	76 - 80	B	3.0
	71 - 75	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	66 - 70	C+	2.3
	62 - 65	C	2.0
	58 - 61	C-	1.7
Poor	54 - 57	D+	1.3
Minimal Pass	50 - 53	D	1.0
Failure	0 - 49	F	0.0

Course Schedule & Readings (TENTATIVE)

Week 1

Tues. (Jan. 7th): Introductions and course overview

- Introduction to course and syllabus review
- Social policy and welfare state discussion
- Review of previous SOC 415 projects
- Discussion of deliverables for SOC 415 WIN 2020 project

Required Reading:

- Bickman, Leonard and Debra J. Rog. 2009. "Applied Research Design: A Practical Approach." Ch. 1 in L. Bickman and D.J. Rog (eds.), *SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods*. SAGE. [*Link*](#)
- SOC 403 Final Report – *An Analysis of Capital Region Housing Client Profiles and Services*, April 2018. *Review and skim.*
- SOC 415 Final Report – *Applicants for Capital Region Housing Services, 2011-18: A Profile and Analysis*, April 2019. *Review and skim.*

Week 2

Tues. (Jan. 14th): Housing nonprofit organizations and service provision

- Background research
- Discussion of housing nonprofits and service provision

Required Reading:

- Suttor, Greg. 2016. "Canadian Social Housing: Policy Evolution and Program Periods."
- *Canada's National Housing Strategy 2017 - A Place to Call Home*. [*Link*](#)
- Housing Partnership Canada. 2018. "Research Bulletin: Skillsets and Core Competencies to Facilitate Business Transformation in the Non-Profit Community Housing Sector." [*Link*](#)
- Richardson, Joanna. 2010. "Setting the Context: The Need for a Customer-focused Approach in Social Housing." Ch. 1, pp. 2-15 in J. Richardson (ed.), *Housing and the Customer: Understanding Needs and Delivering Services*. Chartered Institute of Housing Practice Studies in collaboration with the Housing Studies Association.

Shared Reading:

(Students will be assigned one of the following chapters to read and report back to the class on)

- Brown, Time, Joanna Richardson, and Nicola Yates. 2010. "Customer Voice: The Changing Context for Listening to and Involving Service Users" Ch. 2, pp. 16-31 in J. Richardson (ed.), *Housing and the Customer: Understanding Needs and Delivering Services*. Chartered Institute of Housing Practice Studies in collaboration with the Housing Studies Association.

- Bloxson, John and Joanna Richardson. 2010. "Who is the Customer?" Ch. 4, pp. 50-67 in J. Richardson (ed.), *Housing and the Customer: Understanding Needs and Delivering Services*. Chartered Institute of Housing Practice Studies in collaboration with the Housing Studies Association.
- Perry, John. 2010. "What do Customers Want?" Ch. 5, pp. 68-86 in J. Richardson (ed.), *Housing and the Customer: Understanding Needs and Delivering Services*. Chartered Institute of Housing Practice Studies in collaboration with the Housing Studies Association.

Week 3

Tues. (Jan. 21st): Housing nonprofit organizations and service provision

- Background research and discussion
- Overview of CRH and opportunity to meet community partners
- Draft survey and interview protocol

Guest Speakers:

- Esther de Vos, Director, Policy, Research, and Education, Capital Region Housing

Required Reading:

- CRH Strategic Plan
- Capital Region Housing (CRH). "A Vision for Affordable Housing in Alberta." [*Link*](#)
- Fowler, Floyd J. and Debra J. Rog. 2009. "Design and Evaluation of Survey Questions." Ch. 12 in L. Bickman and D.J. Rog (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods*. SAGE. [*Link*](#)

Assignment:

- Memo #1: Background research on housing nonprofit organizations

Week 4

Tues. (Jan. 28th): Research Ethics workshop

Guest Speakers:

- University of Alberta Research Ethics Office

Required Reading:

- Fisher, Celia B. and Andrew E. Anushko. 2008. Ch. 8 in P. Alasuutari, L. Bickman, and J. Brannen (eds.), *SAGE Handbook of Social Research Methods*. SAGE. [*Link*](#)
- Trainaou, Anna. 2014. "The Centrality of Ethics in Qualitative Research." In P. Leavy (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Oxford University Press. [*Link*](#)
- Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2). 2018. *Introduction and Chapters 1-2*. [*Link*](#)

Assignment:

- Memo #2: CRH overview

Week 5

Tues. (Feb. 4th): Work session

- Conducting interviews

Required Reading:

- Kvale, Steinar. 2007. "Conducting an Interview." In *Doing Interviews*. SAGE. [*Link*](#)
 - Brickman, Svend. 2014. "Unstructured and Semi-Structured Interviewing." In P. Leavy (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Oxford University Press. [*Link*](#)
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Week 6

Tues. (Feb. 11th): Resume workshop

- Constructing resumes
- Conducting interviews

Guest Speakers:

- University of Alberta Career Services

Required Reading:

- Zevallos, Zuleyka. 2019. "Creating a CV and Resume for Applied Sociology Jobs." *Sociology at Work*. [*Link*](#) (Focus on resume part.)
- University of Alberta Career Resources. [*Link*](#) (Just browse the website and materials a bit.)

Assignment:

- Draft Resume
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Week 7

Tues. (Feb. 18th): Reading Week – No Classes

Week 8

Tues. (Feb. 25th): Work session

- Analyzing survey and interview data

Required Reading:

- Presenting findings using tables and graphs
 - Saldaña, Johnny. 2014. "Coding and Analysis Strategies." In P. Leavy (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Oxford University Press. [*Link*](#)
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Week 9

Tues. (March 3rd): Life in graduate school workshop

- Data analysis and writing

Guest Speakers:

- TBA

Required Reading:

- Huynh, Niewm and Matthew Stiegemeyer. 2017. "Is Graduate School the Right Choice for You?" *University Affairs*. [*Link*](#)

Assignment:

- Draft Brief Draft
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Week 10

Tues (March 10th): Work session

- Data analysis and writing
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Week 11

Tues. (March. 17th): Employment pathways workshop

- Data analysis and writing

Guest Speakers:

- TBA

Required Reading:

- Hecht, Jamie. 2016. "Preparing for a 21st Century Job Hunt with a BA in Sociology." *ASA Footnotes*. [*Link*](#)
- Browse *Sociology at Work* website. sociologyatwork.org

Assignment:

- Revised Draft Brief

Week 12

Tues. (March 24th): Work session

- Final report and presentation
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Week 13

Tues. (March 31st): Work session

- Final report and presentation
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Week 14

Tues. (April 7th): Work session

- Final report and presentation
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Finals Week

Cover Letter and Resume Due Date: Friday, April 17, 2020

CRH Presentation Date: TBA

****Please Note:** The course agenda is subject to change based on unanticipated demands of the research project.

SOC 415: Course Schedule WIN 2020

Week (Mon. - Sun.)	Topics	Project Steps	Guest Speakers	Readings	Assignments
Week 1 01.06 - 01.12	Introductions; Syllabus and expectations	Social policy and welfare state discussion; Review previous projects; Discuss deliverables		Bickman and Rog (2009); Reports for SOC 415 in previous years	
Week 2 01.13 - 01.19	Housing non-profits and service provision	Background research and discussion		Suttor (2016); HPC (2018); Richardson (2010); Additional selections	
Week 3 01.20 - 01.26	Housing non-profits and service provision	Draft survey and interview protocol	Capital Region Housing Presentation	CRH Strategic Plan and other materials; Fowler (2009)	Memo #1 Background
Week 4 01.27 - 02.02	Research ethics workshop	Finalize survey and interview protocol	UofA Research Ethics Office	Fisher and Anushko (2008); Trainaou (2014); TCPS 2 (2018)	Memo #2 CRH Overview
Week 5 02.03 - 02.09	Work session	Conducting interviews		Kvale (2007); Brickman (2014)	
Week 6 02.10 - 02.16	Resume workshop	Conducting interviews	UofA Career Services	Zevallos (2019); UofA Career Resources	Draft Resume
READING WEEK - NO CLASS					
Week 7 02.17 - 02.23					
Week 8 02.24 - 03.01	Work session	Analyzing survey and interview data		Presenting findings using tables and graphs; Saldana (2014)	
Week 9 03.02 - 03.08	Life in graduate school workshop	Analyzing survey and interview data	TBA	Huynh and Stregemeyer (2017)	Data Brief Draft
Week 10 03.09 - 03.15	Work session	Data analysis and writing			Report Sections
Week 11 03.16 - 03.22	Employment pathways workshop	Data analysis and writing	TBA	Hecht (2016); Sociology at Work	Revised Data Brief
Week 12 03.23 - 03.29	Work session	Final report and presentation			Revised Report Sections
Week 13 03.30 - 04.05	Work session	Final report and presentation			Submit Report Draft
Week 14 04.06 - 14.12	Work session	Final report and presentation			Submit Final Report
Finals Weeks 04.13 - 04.25	Finals Week -- Cover Letter and Revised Resume Submission (due April 17, 2020)				