

L A K E H E A D U N I V E R S I T Y
FACULTY OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES (ORILLIA)

Dr. Paul R. Carr

Inquiry 4010 FAO

Fall 2011

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(NOTE: All communication for this course will take place within the WebCT portal)

Classroom:
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[NOTE: THE FOURTH-YEAR INQUIRY COURSE IS A KEY ELEMENT TO THE INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES DEGREE AND EXPERIENCE. ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE SOME VARIANCE IN THE APPROACH TAKEN TO TEACH THIS COURSE IN THE VARIOUS SECTIONS, THE INSTRUCTORS HAVE WORKED TOGETHER TO COORDINATE THE CONTENT, OUTCOMES AND EVALUATIONS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A COMMON, BROAD AND INTERDISCIPLINARY FOCUS FOR ALL STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR SECTION. FOR 2011-2012 THE INSTRUCTORS FOR THE FOURTH-YEAR INQUIRY COURSES (4010 & 4030) ARE PAUL R. CARR, ROSARIO TURVEY, DOUG WEST AND MICHAEL STEVENSON.]

1. Course Description

The fourth-year Inquiry courses are designed to be culminating experiences in the Honours Arts and Science program. Adding to what you have learned in first year Inquiry course as well as in many other courses during the last few years, these courses seek to refine your questioning, critical thinking, and research abilities, enabling you to apply them to areas of your own academic interest.

The first course fourth-year course--INQUIRY 4010--will focus on strategies for discovering effective research questions, research ethics, theoretical approaches to research, methods for exploring various textual, qualitative and quantitative methods, and critical thinking skills for analyzing and evaluating results.

Through individual assignments, class discussion, and group projects, various fluencies and aptitudes will be advanced, including scientific fluency, critical literacy, critical numeracy, and cultural awareness.

In Inquiry 4010, students will develop research strategies, and work towards a research proposal. The research proposal will be finalized in the Winter term (in Inquiry 4030), which will set students on a trajectory leading to a completed research project.

2. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced conceptual and practical understanding of their research topic diverse perspectives and disciplines;
- Articulate general and specific levels of knowledge;
- Identify viable research issues, and ask relevant questions;
- Critically synthesize, and be able to evaluate existing research;
- Explain, and elaborate on, at diverse methodologies;
- Organize data, and develop findings;
- Compose oral and written ideas persuasively, with specific support for claims and clear effective prose;
- [For the 4030 Inquiry course students will implement their research proposals, undertaking research, analyzing the results, and presenting their projects in a coherent, critical and relevant paper/report.]

3. Required Texts

Strand, Kerry J. & Weiss, Gregory L. (2005). *Experiencing social research: A reader*. Boston: Pearson Education.

ISBN: 0-205-40448-8

Neuman, Lawrence W. & Robson, K. (2012). *Basics of social research: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Toronto: Pearson Education.

ISBN: 978-0-205-76740-3

[NOTE: THESE TWO TEXTS WILL BE USED FOR BOTH 4010 AND 4030, AND WILL BE HELPFUL IN DEVELOPING RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND UNDERTAKING RESEARCH. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT THE NEUMAN & ROBSON TEXT HAS BEEN SPECIFICALLY WRITTEN FOR A CANADIAN AUDIENCE.]

4. Evaluation

Participation and Reflections (throughout the course, and as stipulated in the schedule re: reflections)	20%
A - Presentation of a research study in Strand & Weiss book (Group Project)(Presentation & Paper)	20%
B - Research Project(Group Project) (Presentation & Paper)	30%
C - Draft Individual Research Proposal	30%

100%

(NOTE: All written assignments are to be submitted through WebCT)

[NOTE: FOR THE WINTER SEMESTER IN 4030, STUDENTS WILL: REVIEW THEIR DRAFT PROPOSALS WILL BE REVIEWED WITH THEIR PROFESSORS; ENHANCE THE LITERATURE REVIEWS; SUBMIT AN ETHICS APPROVAL FORM; COMPLETE THE REFINING OF AN APPROPRIATE METHODOLOGY; DRAFT APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS, QUERIES, METHODS OF OBSERVATION/PARTICIPATION AND/OR OTHER METHODS; UNDERTAKE THE RESEARCH, FOLLOWED BY ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS.]

5. Assignment Details

Participation and Reflections (20%)

This is a seminar course, so your full involvement is required, including active listening and engaged discussion. If you aren't prepared, it's difficult to participate. If you don't attend, it's impossible to participate, and difficult to show how well prepared you are. If you don't participate, you miss the opportunity to direct the discussion toward aspects that you find particularly significant, try out your own ideas, engage with others, or receive valuable feedback from the rest of the class. Quality of participation is essential, as is respect for the ideas of others in the class.

One of the best ways to generate new ideas is to write regularly about what you read. You will be expected to reflect on the assigned readings, questioning puzzling statements, connecting with other things you have learned before, applying theory to, or theorizing about, everyday practice, and evaluating your own ideas and those of others. You will also use the readings and reflections to keep track of, and develop, your ideas for your proposed research.

Your reflections should address key concepts or details that you have read (or heard in class), and note what is particularly interesting or potentially useful, or utterly perplexing about what you have encountered. In general, your reflections should contain any insights, critiques, and analyses you may have, particularly if they relate to your own unfolding ideas. These reflections will take place through WebCT, and students will be required to submit a posting of roughly 200 words as well as engaging others in discussion and debate.

Reflections will be written for weeks 3 through 8 on the material covered, including on student presentations. The WebCT discussions should include dialog between students outside of the initial message.

A - Presentation of a research study in Strand & Weiss book (Group Project)(Presentation) 20% (Weeks 4-8)

The Strand and Weiss book is assembled in such a way as to provide students with real, peer-reviewed, published and compelling research studies, followed by an interview with the authors of the studies, and some questions to ponder. The intention here is to have us engage in research by studying controversial and contemporary studies of interest, assessing how important/significant they are, where they might have been improved, and what the ideological, conceptual and methodological approaches/issues are, while simultaneously discussing how we might better conceptualize our own research projects.

Working in groups of two, students will prepare 25-30 minute presentation on their selected chapter, providing an overview of the text as well as the interview of the authors of the particular study, and then assessing the relevance of the methodology employed, the significance of the findings, the potential ethical issues and concerns, any limitations, and other concerns. The presentation should include a two-page overview analysis to be shared with others students and the professor.

The following chapters will be open for student presentations (note that the first three chapters of the text—not listed below—will be covered by the instructor.)

Experimental Research

- The impact of social structure on mate selection: An empirical evaluation of an active-learning exercise
- The effect of enforcement on merchant compliance with the minimum legal drinking age

Survey Research

- Spankers and nonspankers: Where they get information on spanking
- Predictors of fear of criminal victimization at school among adolescents

Nonreactive Research: Content Analysis, Accretion Measures, and Using Existing Statistics

- Race, gender, and status: A content analysis of print advertisements in four popular magazines
- Graffiti on the Great Plains: A social reaction to the Red River Valley Flood of 1997
- Capital punishment and deterrence: Examining the effect of executions on Murder in Texas

Field Research

- Neither real Americans nor real Asians? Multigeneration Asian ethnics navigating the terrain of authenticity
- Exceptions to the rule: Upwardly mobile white and Mexican American high school girls
- The glass phallus: Pub(lic) masculinity and drinking in rural New Zealand

Historical and Comparative Research

- "Button-down terror": The metamorphosis of the hate movement
- Ties that bind: Correlates of adolescents' civic commitments in seven countries

[NOTE: WE WILL ALSO BE USING TE NEUMAN & ROBSON TEXT TO FURTHER FLESH OUT AND EXAMINE RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES WHILE DISCUSSING THE ABOVE RESEARCH STUDIES.]

B - Research Project (Group Project) (Presentation [10%] & Paper [20%]) 30% - Presentations in Week 10; Paper due in Week 11

By the end of October, you should have a good idea of **what** you are going to research, **why** you are going to research it, **what** literature is most relevant to your research and **what** your research questions are. Now it is time to think about the '**hows**' of research; hence the purpose of this assignment is to expose you to the various research methods available to you.

In groups of two to four, as per the criteria outlined below, you will undertake a research project, culminating in a class presentation and a written report. Presentations should be limited to 15-20 minutes.

Below is a list of general methods that may generate data and/or assist interpretation of data. Note that each 'method' is not exclusive, and that they often overlap and/or are used in conjunction with each other.

- Participant Observation
- Structured Observation
- Surveys
- Questionnaires
- Structured interviewing
- Group interviewing
- Non-structured, non-directed interviewing
- Document analysis (e.g. diaries, minutes)
- Material analysis (e.g. stone alignments and associated artifacts of fish weirs; architectural design of historical buildings)
- Scientific analysis
- Textual or discourse analysis (e.g. of literature, advertisements, political speeches, tv shows, etc.)
- Institutional Ethnography (as associated with Dorothy Smith)
- Participatory action research
- Semiotic analysis (e.g. the study of changing hair styles and their meaning)
- Content analysis
- Narrative analysis
- Autobiography/use of the self as instrument of data collection/ reflexivity
- Biography or History
- Analysis of official statistics (e.g. Stats Canada data, log books of fur trade posts)
- Sampling
- Statistical data analysis
- Sociological intervention (as associated with Alain Touraine)
- Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (e.g. NVivo, Nudist)
- Computer-assisted quantitative data analysis (e.g. SPSS)

A good starting point for this assignment is the course texts, but you are required to look beyond these for your sources of information.

RESEARCH PROJECT ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Designing a semi-structured interview protocol, and interviewing 4-8 participants (two for each of the members of the group);
- 2) Designing a survey questionnaire, and administering it to at least 8-16 participants (four for each member of the group);
- 3) Developing a conceptual framework for analyzing the data;
- 4) Data analysis;

- 5) Drafting a concise (maximum 8-page) report on the research project, which should include the following components:
- a. Issue and elaboration of research question
 - b. Background
 - c. Context
 - d. Methodology
 - e. Findings
 - f. Critical analysis
 - g. Discussion
 - h. Reflection
 - i. References (NOTE: In order to contextualize and position the research, at least five peer-reviewed references are required)
 - j. Survey instruments (in the appendix)

The following questions will help guide students as they develop their research projects. This is not an exhaustive list but it does cover a number of important considerations and areas of interest.

RESOURCE FOR CRITIQUING RESEARCH

Identifying a topic

1. What is it you want to know?

Setting the context

2. What is the problem?
3. What is known about the problem?
4. What evidence do you have to support your claim that this is a problem?
5. What is the relationship of your study to the problem you outline?
6. What research to-date has been carried out on your study topic?
7. How does this research inform us?
8. What is wrong with this research?
9. What is missing (gaps) in this research?
10. What effect will this study have on the problem? Why is this study important (significance)?
11. How might this study be used by decisionmakers, educators, stakeholders and the broader public?

Focus

12. What do you intend to study? (One of the challenges in doing scientific research lies in problem-identification. Keep re-formulating the research problem until you are able to state it in one sentence. Capture what is unique and germane about the concept succinctly before proceeding forward).
13. List your specific objectives or sub-questions. (These should be derived from your perspective, and not be based necessarily on the research conducted by others).

Perspective

14. What is the phenomenon you are studying?
15. From what angle do you intend to explore this phenomenon?
16. Do you need to declare your biases and ideological starting-point? Is justification required to buttress why such a perspective has been adopted?

Consider

17. What are the various elements/dimensions/processes associated with it?
18. What has been written about these things?
19. What is right with these sources?
20. What is wrong with them?
21. What is missing from them?
22. What is the best way to arrange/describe these elements/dimensions/processes so that you can answer your research question?
23. What (sub-)questions emerge from this perspective?

Method

24. How are you going to answer your research question(s)?
25. Why are you choosing these methods/ this approach?
26. How and why are you selecting participants/sites?
27. How are you going to analyze your data?
28. How will the data be presented?

Another tool that will be helpful in guiding group and individual research is the following:

Critical Reading Framework

Author: _____
Title: _____
Publishing Information: _____
Subject: _____
Main Argument: _____
Main Primary Sources: _____
Methods employed or discussed: _____
Key Conceptual Issues Addressed: _____
Theoretical Inspiration: _____
How/Where it fits in development of field: _____
Critiques (positive): _____
Critiques (negative): _____
Questions Raised and for Discussion: _____

In the presentation and the paper, you should discuss the benefits and limitations of the methods used, documenting how the group functioned as an ensemble (Is it more difficult to do research with others or

more rewarding? How do the ideas of others influence our thinking and analysis? How does our epistemology affect how we understand and construct knowledge?). You should also consider how you may have changed or altered your thinking throughout the research (Did you learn something new? Did your own views influence the outcome of the research and/or the analysis?). Also critique the research: What can we take away from it? How can we improve it? Do we now feel that the subject at hand is more nuanced and complex than we originally thought? Importantly, we would also need to know how the research that you've conducted meshes with the academic literature (Does it complement or contradict what others have found? Does it provide new insight?)

The paper will be submitted through WebCT, and should not be longer than 8 pages, plus references and other materials.

[NOTE: Next semester, in Inquiry 4030, you will further refine the methods most appropriate for the research project you have selected. In addition, you will more fully outline a conceptual framework for your research project, and document it through an ethics review process. It is expected that exposure to a range of research methods in the first semester will assist students in developing and undertaking their individual research projects in the second semester. In addition to qualitative and quantitative methods employed in this activity, students will be exposed to discourse analysis, participant observation and other research methodologies.]

C - Draft Proposal, including Research Questions, Objectives, Methodology, Literature Review, Ethical Issues (30%) - DUE – WEEK 12

This draft proposal should consist of the following:

- i) Proposed title for the research
- ii) Proposed research question
- iii) Proposed objectives of the research
- iv) Key definitions
- v) Proposed methodology
- vi) Literature review
- vii) Potential ethical issues

This assignment involves broadening your understanding of what has already been done in relation to your research questions. You will also have opportunities to explore some of the theoretical orientations and research methods others have used in your research area. Having knowledge of the range of methods and concepts used will assist you in preparing this draft proposal as well as all of the work to be done next term.

Using your research questions to guide you, prepare a review of the scholarly literature. You should review at least 15 articles from scholarly journals, books and relevant reports. This review must be oriented specifically toward your research question(s), including both general and specific sources that will be helpful as a collective background to your project. Discuss specific issues that the above articles (from more than one discipline) have already examined, organizing them either in chronological or thematic order so as to summarize what is and what is not already known in this field. In other words, what are the gaps in the research, the areas in which there is a demonstrable need to pursue investigation? What are the most current perspectives on the topic? You should also discuss the methods and/or theoretical approaches in the articles

you review. Highlight any limitations and/or omissions in the research. Indicate how your own study might use some of these methods, concepts, or theoretical orientations but also how you will differ and develop the field further. All research must be properly documented using either APA, ASA or MLA formats or some other accepted format (be consistent).

[NOTE: A LITERATURE REVIEW IS NOT AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY.]

Required length: roughly 8-10 pages plus a one-page bibliography. Use essay format, double-spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins. The paper is to be submitted through WebCT.

[NOTE: STUDENTS WILL REVIEW THEIR DRAFT PROPOSALS WITH THEIR PROFESSORS IN JANUARY. SIMILARLY, STUDENTS' LITERATURE REVIEWS WILL CONTINUE TO BE ENHANCED AND REFINED, PROVIDING FURTHER BACKGROUND, CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THEIR STUDIES.]

6. Course Policies

1. It is your responsibility to attend classes and workshops. Regular absences will seriously affect your grades in this course. (Please contact one of us if you are experiencing medical or other difficulties.)
2. Assignments should be submitted through WebCT by the required. Extensions/deferrals will only be granted in documented cases of serious illness or under extenuating circumstances and only if arranged **before** the due date. Please note that excessive workload does **not** constitute an extenuating circumstance. Deferrals will not be granted on the basis of vacation/travel plans or job-related obligations. Late assignments will be penalized 2% per day including weekends. After 10 days, no late assignments will be accepted.
3. Except for group projects, submissions for grades must represent independent work. Highly similar (or identical) assignments will be graded at zero. An assignment may not be submitted for credit in more than one course without the written permission of all instructors involved.
4. Plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offense and carries penalties varying from failure in an assignment to expulsion from the university. Students are encouraged to review Section IX of the University Regulations regarding academic dishonesty. All offenders will be reported to the Department Chair and Dean in Orillia.
5. All borrowed sources (for words as well as ideas) must be acknowledged using either the MLA (Modern Language Association), APA (American Psychological Association), ASA (American Sociological Association) or some other recognized academic style formats. (For consistency, use only one format.) Assistance with formats may be found online at <http://library.lakeheadu.ca/wp/?pg=376>
6. Internet articles are only permitted from academically viable websites (listed in library journal indexes) that are accompanied by the author's name and a reference list of works cited. Such sources must be cited in your own reference page and must include not only the date of publication and the

website url, but also the date of your own access to the site. Although interesting, please do not use Wikipedia as a scholarly reference.

- In order to facilitate a respectful, constructive and conducive learning environment, students are asked to turn off all electronic devices during class time.

7. Course Schedule

WEEK	CONTENT/READINGS (*)	ACTIVITIES
1	SW-1; NR-1	
2	SW-2; NR-2	Discussion of mixed methods research re: democracy and education
3	SW-3; NR-3	<i>WebCT</i> reflection on practicum re: interviewing
4	SW-4; NR-9	→ Presentations for Assignment A + <i>WebCT</i> reflection
5	SW-5; NR-8	→ Presentations for Assignment A
6	SW-6; NR-10,14	→ Presentations for Assignment A + <i>WebCT</i> reflection
7	SW-7; NR-13	→ Presentations for Assignment B + <i>WebCT</i> reflection
8	SW-8; NR-4,5	→ Presentations for Assignment B
9	NR-6-7	
10		→ Presentations for Assignment C + <i>WebCT</i> reflection on presentations
11	NR-6,7	→ Paper for Assignment B due
12	Review and discussion of next steps re: 4030	→ Paper for Assignment C due

(*) We will be employing a range of techniques and strategies, including lectures, short videos, small-group discussions, class discussions, practica, and presentations as well as electronic discussions. The ultimate objective is to prepare students to be able to effectively undertake their own research projects in the second semester.

SW=Strand & Weiss text

NR=Neuman & Robson text

SW Table of Contents

- Experiencing Social Research: Choices, Challenges, Constraints, and Compromises
- Why Do Social Research?
- Research Design, Sampling, and Measurement
- Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches
- Survey Research
- Nonreactive Research: Content Analysis, Accretion Measures, and Using Existing Statistics
- Field Research
- Historical and Comparative Research

NR Table of Contents

1. Doing Social Research
2. Theory and Social Research
3. Ethics in Social Research
4. Reviewing the Scholarly Literature and Planning a Study
5. Designing a Study
6. Qualitative and Quantitative Measurement
7. Qualitative and Quantitative Sampling
8. Survey Research
9. Experimental Research
10. Nonreactive Quantitative Research and Secondary Analysis
11. Analysis of Quantitative Data
12. Qualitative Interviewing
13. Field Research
14. Nonreactive Qualitative Research
15. Analysis of Qualitative Data
16. Combining Methods in Social Science Research