COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES
As human beings, we are generally curious about the world around. Acting on this curiosity often leads us to ask questions about the way things are and whether or not they could be different. It is this intellectual curiosity that guides research in social science disciplines. Despite existing disciplinary traditions around what constitutes ‘good research’, global studies researchers are not bound by any specific methods due to the interdisciplinary outlook of this field of study. But whether one uses quantitative, qualitative, experimental or mixed methods, all researchers are expected to identify clearly defined research questions followed by a rigorous research design that works best for the particular puzzle being examined. Overall, this course will introduce graduate students to the philosophical, theoretical and practical underpinnings of social research. Key themes to be discussed throughout the semester include ontological and epistemological approaches to knowledge/research, writing a literature review, developing a theoretical/conceptual framework, research design (data collection and analysis), and research ethics. Throughout the semester, students should be ready to discuss their proposed MA research or future projects.

At the end of the semester, students should be able to
1. Know the major philosophical and paradigmatic debates on social science research.
2. Distinguish between different research methods in order to determine what works best for their chosen topic.
3. Understand the ethical issues to be expected in social science research.
4. Conduct a literature review after clearly mapping out concepts that are vital to the research question(s) being asked.
5. Develop a rigorous research design to properly frame a particular study.
6. Write a complete research proposal and use that as a basis to conduct independent research from beginning to end.
7. Enhance their interpersonal communication and leadership skills through group activities and individual presentations.
8. Acquire useful skills in critical thinking and academic writing.

REQUIREMENT & EVALUATION
Grades for this course will not be based on a pre-determined criteria or curve. The final mark/grade that students receive is this class will be a direct reflection of their input throughout the term. Unless under special circumstances, which require written explanation, students are required to complete all components of the course in order to receive a passing grade. Assignments and tests will be assigned percentages with a corresponding letter grade. The distribution of the marks will be as follows:
1. Seminar Participation 20% due Monday **February 4** (4:00 p.m.)
2. Literature Review 15% due Monday **March 18** (in class)
3. Research Day Presentation 15% due Monday **April 1** (4:00 p.m.)
4. Research Proposal (+Demo Ethics OR Dataset Exercise) 40% due Wednesday **April 3** (TBD)
5. Poster Presentation 10% due **Wednesday April 3** (TBD)

**Abstract is due on January 31**

**GRADING SCHEME/SCALE:**
All components of this course will receive letter grades which, for purposes of calculating your course average, will be translated into numerical equivalents using the approved scale from the UNBC graduate calendar: [http://www.unbc.ca/calendar/graduate/regulations](http://www.unbc.ca/calendar/graduate/regulations) From the scale below, passing grade is B- for all courses taken towards a graduate degree. Courses in which achievement is less than B- are assigned a letter grade of “F”.

**Grading Scale: Graduate Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical Mark (%)</th>
<th>Grade Value</th>
<th>Grade Point (Definition)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.33 (Excellent standing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89.9</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84.9</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79.9</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.33 (Good standing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76.9</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72.9</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REQUIRED READINGS**
The books listed below are required for this course. Although they are available through the Library and placed on reserve (R) for this course, students are highly encouraged to purchase and make the first two a permanent addition to their library. They can be bought new or used on Amazon and other online shopping outlets. Weekly readings will be a selection of chapters from these books and journal articles, which are accessible from the Library electronic database or via Google Scholar. Only three chapters will be drawn upon from the third book. It is the primary responsibility of students to access and read all required texts for each week.


**RECOMMENDED READING**
In addition to the required texts, students are also encouraged to read some of the chapters in these books – particularly those that relate to a specific topic of interest to their intended research agenda. Most of them are available through the Library or inter-library loan.

Global & International Studies


**OTHER NOTES**
- Late essays will be subject to a 5% penalty per day, including weekends.
- Students who have concerns with accessing required readings online should contact Kealin McCabe (the Librarian) at Kealin.McCabe@unbc.ca

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES & SERVICES**
All students should familiarize themselves with the Academic Regulations and Policies of the UNBC: [http://www.unbc.ca/calendar/undergraduate/general/regulations.html](http://www.unbc.ca/calendar/undergraduate/general/regulations.html)
This includes an important reminder about exam policy conduct (#s 39-43) and academic offences, such as plagiarism (45).

Other important notes:

**Respectful classroom**
This has several aspects. One is that all opinions are welcome and recognized as valuable. Another is that texting, being on Facebook, having a cell phone on etc. is disrespectful to the rest of the class and therefore is not permitted. Leaving the room during lecture or discussion time is also disrespectful and should only occur with prior permission. Being prepared for class discussion by keeping up with the reading and doing the assignments is not only beneficial for your own learning but also respectful to your peers with whom you will be working.

**Blackboard/Learn**
This course has a Blackboard shell. Students should familiarize themselves with Blackboard. PowerPoint slides and other course materials will be posted to the course site. The site will also be used to provide individual feedback on students’ in-class participation, group work, and written assignments.

**Deferrals & Grade Appeals**
Upon request of a deferral, the student and the instructor will make arrangements for the timely completion of assignments and examinations. All students have the natural and reasonable right to appeal grades given during the term, the final grade of a course, and other academic policies and decisions of the University. The Senate Committee on Academic Appeals is the final adjudicator in
such matters. All formal appeals must be made through the Registrar, in writing and with necessary documentation, within 15 working days of the receipt of the decision in question. See regulations 50-54 for more details.

E-mail Protocol
Although a convenient medium of communication, E-mail should be kept to a minimum. Students are encouraged to ask questions in class or visit me in my office hours. When sending email to the instructor (nathan.andrews@unbc.ca), the student should include the course title and the student's name in the subject line. Unidentified email will not be opened. Furthermore, it is the policy of the university to communicate only through UNBC email (i.e. students should use their university accounts to contact the instructor).

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism
Academic integrity comprises the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (http://www.academicintegrity.org/icai/home.php). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Students are expected to understand the rules and regulations regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism. If you are at all unsure, consult the University Calendar. At this level, the minimum punishment for plagiarism will be an F in the assignment. For more details on these offences and potential outcomes, see http://www.unbc.ca/calendar/undergraduate/regulations (sections 45-47).

Extensions
Extensions on assignments are not permitted, except in case of illness or due to serious extenuating circumstance. In the event of illness or serious extenuating circumstance, the student must inform the instructor before the due date, and documentary evidence of the illness or serious extenuating circumstance must be provided to the instructor. In addition, the student must also provide the instructor with a draft of his or her assignment at the time of the illness or serious circumstance that indicates that substantial progress has already been made towards a final product.

Disability & Accommodations
The mandate of the Access Resource Centre (ARC) is to assist in reducing the physical, attitudinal and systemic barriers faced by students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who would like to receive access and academic accommodations through the ARC need to self-identify and register with the centre. For more information, visit this website: http://www.unbc.ca/access-resource-centre
Students can also email ARC at arc@unbc.ca or visit the office located in the Teaching and Learning Building Room: 10-1048. Students who require other special accommodation due to some form of disability, illness or family emergency should come and discuss possible arrangements with me.

Academic Success Centre
The Academic Success Centre site provides you with access to:
- Free online tutoring
- Downloadable handouts for writing, study skills, math, and presentation skills
- Access to self-assessment sites for learning styles, grammar, math, etc.
- Information about face-to-face tutoring and how to book an appointment
• Special programs and workshops offered through the Centre

ASC services are provided in part by your student services fees - so take advantage of these services and programs. Annually, over one-third of the UNBC student population benefits from accessing ASC programs. Centre staff work with students who wish to improve their skill set to achieve greater success in their studies. Source: www.unbc.ca/academic-success-centre

Week 1: January 7
Introduction
*Introduction & Welcome
*Discussion of Course Outline, Expectations, Requirements, etc.
*Reflections on Background Reading

Week 2: January 14
Major Debates I: Positivism, Interpretation & Anti-foundationalism

Further Reading

Week 3: January 21
Major Debates II: Methodological Individualism or Pluralism?


Further Reading

• Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz. “A tale of two cultures: Contrasting quantitative and qualitative research.” *Political Analysis* 14, no. 3 (2006): 227-249.


• Staller, Karen M. “Epistemological boot camp: The politics of science and what every qualitative researcher needs to know to survive in the academy.” *Qualitative Social Work* 12, no. 4 (2013): 395-413.


**Week 4: January 28**

**Frameworks, Concepts & the Literature Review**

• Presentation by Kealin McCabe (UNBC Librarian) @ 8:30am**


• MacFarlane, Anne, and Mary O’Reilly-de Brün. “Using a theory-driven conceptual framework in qualitative health research.” *Qualitative Health Research* 22, no. 5 (2012): 607-618.

Further Reading


Week 5: February 4  
Literature Review Due @ 4:00 p.m.
The Nitty-Gritty of Research Design


Further Reading


Week 6: February 11
Case Studies


Further Reading


*February 18-22 – Reading Week: No Classes ☺
Week 7: February 25
Quantitative Methods: Survey Research


Further Reading


Week 8: March 4
Qualitative Methods


Further Reading


• Kidd, Pamela S., and Mark B. Parshall. “Getting the focus and the group: enhancing analytical rigor in focus group research.” *Qualitative health research* 10, no. 3 (2000): 293-308.


**Week 9: March 11**  
**Knowledge, Agency & Interpretive/Reflectivist Research**


**Further Reading**


**Week 10: March 18**  
**Research Day**

- Student research presentations.

- No readings for this week.

**Week 11: March 25**  
**On Positionality, Anonymity & Research Ethics**


- Sabar, Galia, and Naama Sabar Ben-Yehoshua. “I’ll sue you if you publish my wife’s interview’: Ethical dilemmas in qualitative research based on life stories.” *Qualitative Research* 17, no. 4 (2017): 408-423.
Further Reading


Week 12: April 1  Research Proposal + Demo Ethics OR Dataset Exercise Due @4:00 p.m.

Data Interpretation & Analysis


EVALUATION GUIDELINES

1. Seminar Participation (20%)
Participation constitutes a significant portion of the final grade. Students are therefore expected to be engaged in discussions at all times. Such engagement requires students to have read required texts prior and taken notes on pertinent issues the readings address. The final mark for this component of the course will be based on both attendance and active participation. Yet, mere seminar attendance will not guarantee students any more than 30% of the mark. Students cannot be evaluated if they do not attend seminars. During the first half of each class, each student will have an initial 5-10 minutes to reflect on the week’s readings and provide the class with a list of questions and concepts that require further discussion. Another round of discussion will ensue in the second half of the class where students will further reflect on the connection between the required readings and their individual research projects.

2. Literature Review (15%)
Following the discussions to be had on concept formulation and mapping, students will need to complete a literature review with a focus on two or more key concepts to be explored in their MA research. Students will be expected to provide working definitions for the concepts they intend to explore and also use the conceptualization to develop a working hypothesis or proposition (i.e. argument) for their research. The paper must not exceed 10 pages (typed and double-spaced 12pt Times New Roman font), excluding list of references. There is no limit on how many scholarly articles should be used. However, the essay will be assessed on how well it engages with the existing knowledge on the topic. To avoid doubt, students will be expected to use the Chicago Manual of Style for their citations. For a quick guide on both author-date and footnote version, see [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)
3. Research Day Presentation (15%)
For this week's class, students will be given 12-15 minutes to present their research project. This exercise is planned to occur a week before the written proposal is due in order to help students gain relevant feedback from fellow students and instructor to improve their project. It is advised that students should have their research proposal nearly ready before the research day, as this will enable them answer any questions that may arise from the presentation. An added objective of this assignment is to make students comfortable with public speaking and the usage of PowerPoint and other audio-visuals. As such, students will be assessed on both the content of the presentation, their presentation style and delivery.

4. Research Proposal + Demo Ethics Application OR Dataset Exercise (40%)
Students will be required to build on several assignments, class presentations and discussions throughout the semester to develop a fully-fledged research proposal similar to what is required before the commencement of the MA thesis or research project. The complete proposal must be 15-20 pages (typed and double-spaced 12pt Times New Roman font), excluding list of references. Students should use the Chicago Manual of Style for this assignment (see link above). An excellent research proposal will have the following elements:
• A concise title that helps to identify the study’s focus.
• An interesting introduction that explores the puzzle that drives the inquiry.
• A justification for the study’s scope and objectives.
• Review of the literature within which existing research on the topic can be found, including the gap(s) to be filled by the proposed research.
• Research questions and/or hypotheses to be explored.
• How answers to the research questions will be sought (i.e. research design and methods).
• Significance of the study to knowledge and/or policy and limitations.
• Proposed timeline for the research from start, to fieldwork (if needed), to final submission.
• A list references, especially those used in the proposal itself.

***Demo Ethics Application
All research involving human beings (as is the case for most social science and health research) require ethics approval from the UNBC Research Ethics Board (REB). As such, this additional component of the proposal is meant to help prepare students for some of the questions and ethical considerations they will need to think about and answer when submitting their own application for review. To complete this assignment, students will first have to visit the UNBC Research website and familiarize themselves with the requirements to apply for ethics approval: https://www.unbc.ca/research/forms#Research%20Ethics%20Humans Students should scroll down to “Research Ethics & Safety: Human Subjects” and complete the “REB New Application” document. The REB application form is 16 pages long but most of the fields can be easily filled out by repeating relevant sections of the research proposal to be submitted. This is only a demo so students should only fill out sections they deem relevant to their proposed research. There will be no need to cite any sources for this exercise.

***Dataset Exercise
For the dataset exercise (meant for those not intending to involve human subjects in their research), students should identify one or more datasets or databases (whether national, regional or global) that will be most useful for the specific topic being examined (such as foreign direct investment, macroeconomic policy’s impact on development, governance and accountability measurements, gender parity, etc.). There are many databases, including those by the World Bank and other international organizations. The onus is on the student to justify why for the specific project any chosen sets of data help to best solve the puzzle as opposed to other data or methods. In a maximum of five pages, the assignment should reflect on 1) the legitimacy of the publisher, 2) the primary sources for the data, 3) the verifiability of the methods used in collating the data, 4) the kind(s) of statistical information the data convey, 5) the targeted end-users of the data, 6) how it will be used in the student’s own research, and 7) the quality of the data and any identified limitations. It is recommended that available scholarly and non-scholarly publications that have examined such datasets be consulted and cited, if possible.

5. Poster Presentation (10%)
The end phase of most research projects is dissemination. As such, students will be required to develop ideas for their research into a coherent poster for presentation at the UNBC Research Week, tentatively scheduled for April 2-4. Posters are unique in that they are able to capture and convey the core ideas/concepts of one’s work as well as key findings (if available) using fewer words/text, photos and info-graphics. Students will be required to liaise with the lead organizer of this event (email: vera.andrews@unbc.ca), submit their information, develop the poster and present the poster on the day assigned. Here is the link for the submission of abstracts by January 31: https://www.unbc.ca/research/research-week-presenter-registration Based on the expression of need, the instructor/department can provide some financial assistance to print the poster(s). More details will be provided in class closer to the event.

RECOMMENDED ARTICLES ON OTHER RELEVANT TOPICS

Mixed Methods Approaches

Agent-Structure Dichotomy


**Historical, Textual & Discourse Analysis**


**Feminist Approaches to Research**


Critical Epistemologies in Social Research

- Harris, Catherine, Lucy Jackson, Lucy Mayblin, Aneta Piekut, and Gill Valentine. "'Big Brother welcomes you': exploring innovative methods for research with children and young people outside of the home and school environments." *Qualitative Research* 15, no. 5 (2015): 583-599.

OTHER RESOURCES, WEBSITES, ETC.

- Academic Success Centre: [https://www.unbc.ca/academic-success-centre](https://www.unbc.ca/academic-success-centre)
- Other Support Services: [https://www.unbc.ca/northern-advancement-program/services](https://www.unbc.ca/northern-advancement-program/services)
- Online Writing Resources: [https://www.unbc.ca/academic-success-centre/online-writing-resources](https://www.unbc.ca/academic-success-centre/online-writing-resources)
- How to write a literature review: [http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/literature-review/](http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/literature-review/)
- For an example of a literature review I wrote based on my MA research some years ago, see [https://www.academia.edu/202805/Foreign_aid_and_development_in_Africa_What_the_literature_says_and_what_the_reality_is](https://www.academia.edu/202805/Foreign_aid_and_development_in_Africa_What_the_literature_says_and_what_the_reality_is)
- For an overarching guide to research, which covers every aspect of a research proposal, see [http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/purpose](http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/purpose)
- Creating a Research Poster (Note: ASC website has a useful template to follow): [https://www.unbc.ca/sites/default/files/assets/academic_success_centre/other_support/research_posters_151211.pdf](https://www.unbc.ca/sites/default/files/assets/academic_success_centre/other_support/research_posters_151211.pdf) Go to ASC for more help with this assignment, if needed.