



Western University
SOCIOLOGY 2206A-650
Research Methods in Sociology
Fall 2021
Taught Online (Asynchronously)

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Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to the tools which scientists use to conduct research on society and produce knowledge – in other words, how to *be* sociologists. Many of the fundamental issues of research will be covered in this course, including the scientific method and research process, ethical dilemmas that may arise, and some of the procedures used to collect and analyze data, i.e., quantitative and qualitative approaches to social research. During the course, students will learn how to carry out a scientific investigation from the formulation of hypotheses, to the selection of an appropriate methodology, to the implementation of a study. Enhancing students' ability to critically examine sociological research is an important part of this course.

Prerequisite(s): You must have completed *one of the following* to take this course:

- 1.0 units of Sociology courses at the 1000 level
- Indigenous Studies 1020E
- Women's Studies 1020E
- Enrolment in the Honors Specialization in Human Resource Management, Honors Specialization in Public Administration, or Specialization in Public Administration.

Note: This course is mandatory for students registered in Year 2 of an Honors Specialization offered through the Department of Sociology.

Antirequisites: Social Work 2206A/B, Health Sciences 2801A/B, or Political Science 3324F/G.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand what sociological research is and how sociological questions can be answered
2. Be able to formulate sociologically relevant research questions and evaluate research designs
3. Know the basic elements of different of methodological approaches and understand their merits and limitations
4. Appreciate the challenges and complexity of sociological research
5. Understand the ethical considerations involved in doing human subjects research
6. Develop skills for reading and critically thinking about empirical research

Required Text(s):

Carr, Deborah, Elizabeth Heger Boyle, Benjamin Cornwell, Shelley Correll, Robert Crosnoe, Jeremy Freese and Mary C. Waters. *The Art and Science of Social Research*. W.W. Norton. ISBN: 9780393644791

Where to get the text book:

You have two options, both from the UWO bookstore.

- Option 1: The first is to order a hard copy from the UWO bookstore. You can order through their website and they will ship the book directly to you.
- Option 2: The second option is to buy digital access to the book through the UWO bookstore.
- Note: These two options are comparable. The e-book is less expensive than the print copy. Choose the one that works for you.

Method of Evaluation

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Online Quiz (September 29) | 15% |
| Assignment #1 (October 4) | 5% |
| Online Midterm Exam (October 21) | 25% |
| Research Proposal (December 8) | 25% |
| Online Final Exam (TBA) | 30% |

Evaluation Breakdown

Online Quiz (15%) - Wednesday, September 29

This quiz is worth 15% of your total grade and test materials from Sept 8 to 26. This quiz consists of multiple-choice questions only. This quiz is in an open-book format. It will be

available at 8:00am on Wednesday, September 29 via Tests & Quizzes on OWL until 11:55pm on the same day. Each of you, regardless of your accommodation status, will be given 2 hours to complete it.

Assignment #1 (5%) – Monday, October 4 Due by 4:00pm

In this course, you will be paired up with two other students and complete a research proposal. This assignment is designed to get your research ideas started and going. See details in the instruction sheet available on OWL.

Online Midterm Exam (25%) - Thursday, October 21

This online midterm exam is worth 25% of your total grade and covers materials from September 8 to October 10 (both the textbook chapters and lectures). This exam consists of multiple-choice questions only. This exam is in an open-book format. It will be available at 8:00am on Thursday, October 21 via Tests & Quizzes on OWL until 11:55pm on the same day. Each of you, regardless of your accommodation status, will be given 4 full hours to complete it.

Research Proposal (25%) – Wednesday, December 8 Due by 11:59pm

Based on Assignment #1, you will complete a research proposal by going through a series of steps that will help you to understand the key process of conducting a sociological or criminological study. The requirement for this written assignment is listed as follows:

- Introduction & Research Rationale (1 page)
- Social Importance (1 page)
- Literature Review (2.5 pages)
- Research Design (1.5 pages)

Important Reminders

- Length: **6 pages** max., double spaced
- Late assignments will be docked 5% per day, unless you provide legitimate reasons for late submission
- One submission per group via the Assignment Tab on OWL.

**Detailed instruction of this group research proposal will be provided on OWL.

Final Exam (December Exam Period) – 30%

The final exam is worth 30% of your total grade. It will be **cumulative** from the beginning of this course. However, 20% of the questions will target on information before the midterm and 80% will cover information after the midterm. This exam will consist of multiple-choice questions only. Specifics of this exam will be released once the office of registrar releases the date for the final exam. You can expect the same format as the midterm exam (e.g., open-book, asynchronous access).

How to get important information:

OWL (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) will be used to post course information, content, and instructions regarding deadlines, expectations, requirements, etc. You should check OWL regularly to ensure that you are kept up to date on new and revised course content. During the course, I may post or email additional content and/or materials that may aid in your learning and understanding of course topics.

Course Reading & Schedule

| Week | Dates | Topics | Readings |
|--|----------------|---|----------------|
| <i>Part I: The Fundamentals of Research</i> | | | |
| 1 | Sept 8-12 | Introduction to the Course Theory & Social Research | Chapter 1, 2 |
| 2 | Sept 13-19 | Theory & Social Research (Continued) Designing a Study | Chapter 1, 2 |
| 3 | Sept 20-26 | Conceptualization, Operationalization & Measurement | Chapter 4 |
| <i>Part II: Modes of Observation</i> | | | |
| 4 | Sept 27- Oct 3 | Experimental & Survey Research How to Write Good Survey Questions **Online Quiz (September 29) | Chapter 7,8 |
| 5 | Oct 4-10 | Sampling **Assignment 1 Due on Oct 4 by 4:00pm | Chapter 6 |
| 6 | Oct 11-17 | How to Conduct Literature Review | None |
| 7 | Oct 18-24 | Online Midterm Exam (October 21) | Chapter 11 |
| 8 | Oct 25-31 | Ethnography In-depth Interviewing & Focus Groups | Chapter 10, 11 |
| 9 | Nov 1-7 | Fall Reading Week (No Class) | None |

| Week | Dates | Topics | Readings |
|---|--------------|---|------------|
| 10 | Nov 8-14 | Materials-Based Methods | Chapter 12 |
| 11 | Nov 15-21 | Ethics in Social Research | Chapter 3 |
| Part III: Understanding Research Results | | | |
| 12 | Nov 22-28 | Quantitative Data Analysis | Chapter 13 |
| 13 | Nov 29-Dec 5 | Qualitative Data Analysis | Chapter 17 |
| 14 | Dec 6-8 | Work on Research Proposal **Research Proposal Due on Dec 8 by 11:59pm | None |

Important Policies

A Note on Plagiarism

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Use of Recording Devices and Course Content

Course instructors own and retain the intellectual property rights of their teaching materials. These rights extend to materials used in online settings and digital learning management systems like Owl or Zoom. Students do not have our permission to make audio or video recordings of lectures, take pictures of lecture material, or distribute any course content for nefarious purposes (E.g. for sale or to cheat on exams). It is the decision of the instructor as to how and when teaching materials can be shared or used. **Unless explicitly noted**

otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of pre-recorded lectures or other course materials. Nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.

Policies on Examinations

You may not use any electronic devices during examinations. Computer marked multiple-choice tests/exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating

Academic Consideration for Missed Work

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a self-reported absence form online provided that the absence is **48 hours or less** and the other conditions specified in the [Senate policy](#) are met. Two important exceptions to this rule: SRAs will not be allowed for final examinations or assessments worth more than 30% of a given course. Students whose absences are expected to last **longer than 48 hours**, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a [Student Medical Certificate](#) (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds).

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.

https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/academic_consideration.html

Accessibility Options

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site:

www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Mental Health

Students with **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a list of options of how to get help.