



**The University of Western Ontario**  
**SOCIOLOGY 9003**  
**Research Design**  
**Fall 2019**  
**Mondays, 9:30-12:30**

**Instructor: Dr. Andrea Willson**

Office Hours: By appointment  
Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5423  
Email: willson@uwo.ca

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## **Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to provide an understanding of research design. This consists of understanding the preliminary considerations that go into selecting a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research design. These include knowing the definition for these different approaches, considering philosophical worldviews, reviewing the literature, understanding the use of theory, anticipating ethical issues, and developing writing strategies. We will discuss the process of research as it relates to each approach. This process includes specifying a purpose statement and developing research questions and/or hypotheses as well as the methods and procedures for quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods studies.

## **Learning Outcomes**

- \* Apply theory and sociological research to interpret social events and practices.
- \* Demonstrate a competent understanding of the use of different quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and designs.
- \* Demonstrate competence in the research process by applying an existing body of knowledge in the critical analysis of a new question or of a specific problem or issue in a new context.
- \* Conceptualize and design original research for the generation of new knowledge, applications, or understanding that makes a sustained, evidence-based, sociological argument and presents ideas and concepts clearly.
- \* Demonstrate effective oral communication and presentation skills, and the ability to discuss ideas clearly and articulately.

## **Course Material(s)**

### **Text**

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Additional materials, including

videos and sample research proposals and tools, are available at:  
<https://edge.sagepub.com/creswellrd5e>

All other readings are available electronically from Western Libraries, the course OWL website, or will be provided in class.

There are also many resources available for writing. Clear, professional writing is one of the most important aspects of producing high quality research. A good resource for effective writing and the unique requirements of writing for social science research is:

Northey, Margot, and Lorne Tepperman. 2009. *Making Sense: A Student's Guide to Research and Writing*. 4th Edition. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.

Finally, make sure you are familiar with: Canadian Sociology Association's *Code of Ethics*.  
<http://www.csa-scs.ca/code-of-ethics>

## Methods of Evaluation\*

Participation	25%	
Assignment 1	15%	(October 11)
Assignment 2	15%	(November 11)
Research proposal:	45%	(December 9)

\*Detailed instructions on all assignments will be provided in class. Brief descriptions follow.

### Participation

Class periods will be organized around a mix of lecture, student-led discussion, and exercises related to your proposals. I have purposefully kept the weekly reading assignment lighter than many graduate courses because it is critical that everyone read all the assigned readings each week and come to class ready to actively participate—to engage the readings, ask questions and relate the material to your own projects. The more you participate, the more you will get from the class and the more interesting it will be for all of us.

Participation is a large proportion of your grade because it includes three components:

1) Participation in discussion of course readings each week. Everyone is expected to complete all the required readings each week prior to class and be fully prepared for discussion of those readings.

2) One week during the term, you will be 'on call' for one of the empirical articles assigned for that week. You will bring 2-3 clarification and/or discussion questions for that article. The questions/comments should be focused on the class topic for that week. *When you are on-call for an article, you should turn in a typed page with the citation for the article you were on-call for, and 2-3 bullet-pointed questions, concerns or issues of critique.* Further information will be provided on the course website.

3) Most weeks a portion of our class period will involve a practical component during which you will apply the course material to your research topic in a variety of ways. Some weeks you will prepare this in advance to bring to class for discussion and some weeks we will work on this together as a class. Details will be provided in advance of each class.

### Assignment 1

This assignment is designed to get you started on your research project. The first step in the process is identifying a research area that is of interest to you. You will propose a research question and briefly review literature related to the topic.

### Assignment 2

You will identify two scholarly articles on your research topic that use the methodology you are not planning to use in your research proposal (e.g., if you plan to use qualitative methods, you will identify two articles using quantitative methods) and provide a written evaluation of the research design.

### Research Proposal

In the final paper for the course you will build on the work you have been doing all semester to develop a research proposal to answer your research question.

## **Important Policies**

### *Policies for Assignment Deadlines*

To receive full credit, all assignments must be submitted on the date they are due. Accommodation will not be granted automatically, and if you must submit an assignment late in the case of medical illness or the death of a family member, it is your responsibility to contact me in advance to make alternate arrangements.

### *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 the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted 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>).

### ***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: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/appeals\\_discipline/index.html](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/appeals_discipline/index.html)

### ***Accommodation***

Only in exceptional circumstances may a student be provided special accommodation in the completion of a course requirement (i.e., exams, papers). To request a one-time accommodation (brief illness, family emergency), the student should inform the professor when they are able so accommodation can be made. Accommodation for an ongoing disability may be requested through Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at Western. SSD is a confidential service, working with students and their programs, normally their graduate chair, to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. The following website provides further information

[http://grad.uwo.ca/current\\_students/regulations/14.html](http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/14.html) Students are encouraged to consult the program graduate chair (Professor Kim Shuey) if they would like to discuss whether this option would be appropriate for their situation.

### ***Completion of Course Requirements***

Course requirements must be completed by the end of the term in which the course is offered (Fall-December 31; Winter-April 30, Summer-August 31). Only in exceptional circumstances may a student take additional time to complete the course requirements. In such a case, the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to request permission to carry the incomplete. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the Sociology graduate program office. More details regarding incompletes are outlined in the Graduate Handbook:

[http://www.sociology.uwo.ca/graduate\\_handbook/course\\_information.html](http://www.sociology.uwo.ca/graduate_handbook/course_information.html)

### ***Mental Health***

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness Western for a complete list of options to obtain help: [http://uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/](http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/)

### ***Health and Wellness***

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. The [Wellness Education Centre](#) (lower level UCC) assists students in finding mental health and other related resources best suited to their needs: <http://se.uwo.ca/wec.html> Western's School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies' [Living Well](#) website provides tips for thriving at grad school and other helpful information: [http://grad.uwo.ca/current\\_students/living\\_well/index.html](http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/living_well/index.html)

Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in [Western's Campus Recreation Centre](http://www.westernmustangs.ca/index.aspx?path=ims#): <http://www.westernmustangs.ca/index.aspx?path=ims#> Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Also, we encourage you to check out the Faculty of Music web page <http://www.music.uwo.ca/>, and our own McIntosh Gallery <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>.

### ***Standards of Professional Behaviour***

It is the responsibility of all members of the Department of Sociology to adhere to and promote standards of professional behaviour that support an effective learning environment. These include:

- **respect for others** both in and out of the classroom through words and actions (be professional, fair, and respectful in interactions with people on-line and in-person; understand and respect differences among classmates and colleagues; avoid disrupting the learning environment; respect others' expectations of confidentiality and privacy)
- **active engagement in learning** and commitment to quality (being prepared for classes; participating and listening actively to other; using technology and social media appropriately, striving to do your best). [Take responsibility for your own learning by: relating course content and projects to your own professional interests; monitoring your own understanding; seeking clarification and assistance when necessary.](#)
- **personal integrity** (following through on commitments; doing own work)
- Students should also be aware of the **UWO Student Code of Conduct** found at <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>

### **Course Schedule**

Provided in class