



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 2206A-001
Research Methods in Sociology
Fall 2016
Mondays 9:30am – 12:30pm (SSC 2020)

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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): At least 60% average in 1.0 Sociology course at the 1000 level or First Nations Studies 1020E or Women's Studies 1020E, or enrolment in Honors Specialization in Human Resource Management, or Honors Specialization in Public Administration, or Specialization in Public Administration.

**Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.*

Antirequisites: Social Work 2206A/B or the former 2205, Health Sciences 2801A/B or the former Health Sciences 2800.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will:

- Identify key aspects of qualitative and quantitative research and recognize the strengths and weaknesses of each.
- Distinguish between poor and well-crafted research methods in sociology
- Use SPSS to provide descriptive statistics of variables
- Design a realistic research project that incorporates all elements of the research process
- Thoughtfully analyze and evaluate published research from a methodological perspective

Required Text(s):

Neuman, L.W., & Robson, K. (2012). *Basics of Social Research* (3rd Canadian Ed.). Toronto: Pearson Canada.

You don't need to purchase any SPSS-related textbook

Statistical Computing:

In this course, I will introduce you the statistical software used by social scientists, called SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). SPSS is available on computers located in most computing labs on campus. You do not need to purchase this software or any textbook because I will teach you its basics during the lab time set aside for this course (see the timetable on page 5). It is important that you come to the lab to learn this new software.

Reading and Participation:

This course is required for the honours program in sociology. As a result, it is expected that students will come to class prepared to discuss the assigned material. There are no participation or attendance grades, but failure to attend classes regularly will put you at a disadvantage. Much of the course is cumulative, so missing one class can cause problems for comprehending the material in the following classes.

Method of Evaluation:

Group Assignment # 1	5%
Final Group Research Proposal	30%
Midterm Exam (multiple choice)	30%
Final Exam (multiple choice)	35%

Evaluation Breakdown (detailed information provided in class):

Group Assignment #1 (October 11); Group Research Proposal (December 9):

For these assignments you will apply your skills towards designing a suitable research proposal, which normally includes proper research questions, a literature review, and an outline of the study's research methodology. For Group Assignment 1 you will begin by choosing a research topic and formulating a specific research question and hypothesis. For Group Research Proposal, you will produce a full research proposal consisting of your research question and hypothesis from Group Assignment 1, a literature review, and a description of an appropriate research methodology that could be used to study your chosen topic. Comprehensive steps necessary to implement this methodology and carry out your study should be included in your proposal. Detailed instructions for the assignments will be provided in class and online.

Mid-Term Exam (October 24):

The mid-term exam is worth 30% of your total grade and covers **chapter 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9 and lecture materials (from September 12 to October 17)**. It will be 2 hours in length. This exam consists of multiple-choice questions only.

Final Exam (December Exam Period):

The final exam is worth 35% of your total grade. It will be 2 hours in length and 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 and short answer questions.

How to Contact Me:

You can contact me by email (clin64@uwo.ca). When you email me, please identify the course number and section as I am teaching multiple courses in the same semester.

How to get important information:

Sakai OWL (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) will be used to post course information, content, and important instructions regarding deadlines, expectations, requirements, etc. It is expected that you 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.

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>).

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

Policy on Laptops and other Electronics/Phones in Class:

Laptops are permitted in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, they will be told to close the lid and they will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cell phones are turned off at the beginning of class.

Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation:

http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.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 who are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

Course Schedule

Part I: The Fundamentals of Research			
1	Sept 12	Introduction to the Course (Group Formation) Theory & Social Research	Ch. 1, 2
2	Sept 19	Designing a Study	Ch. 5
3	Sept 26	Conceptualization, Operationalization & Measurement	Ch. 6
Part II: Modes of Observation			
4	Oct 3	Experimental & Survey Research How to Write Good Survey Questions	Ch. 8, 9
5	Oct 10	Thanksgiving Holiday (No Class) ** Group Assignment # 1 Due (Oct 11 by 4:00pm)	No Reading
6	Oct 17	Sampling	Ch. 7
7	Oct 24	2-hour Midterm Exam	None
8	Oct 31	Interviewing & Field Research Literature Review Workshop after the lecture	Ch. 4, 12, 13
9	Nov 7	Nonreactive Quantitative Research & Secondary Analysis	Ch. 10
10	Nov 14	Ethics in Social Research Nonreactive Qualitative Research	Ch. 3, 14
11	Nov 21	SPSS Lab (SSC 1032) 1 st Section: 9:30 – 10:30 / 2 nd Section: 10:30 – 11:30	Handout on OWL
13	Nov 28	Research Proposal Workshop (Q & A session)	None
Part III: Data Analysis			
14	Dec 5	Analysis of Quantitative & Qualitative Data *Group Research Proposal Due on <u>Friday, Dec 9 by Noon (Hard Copy Submission only)</u>	Ch. 11, 15