



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 3306B-001
Investigating the Social World: Quantitative Research

Winter 2017

Wednesday 9:30-12:30 SSC 1032

Instructor: Professor Anders Holm

Teaching Assistant: Glenda Babe

Office Hours: by appointment only
Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5327

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Course Description:

The goal of this course is to provide you with a sophisticated understanding of both evaluating and conducting quantitative social science research. This course takes a hands-on approach to learning—the best way to learn research methods is to do research. One important area in which you will have the opportunity to enhance your skills is the analysis of data using statistical software.

Prerequisite(s):

Enrolment in Honors Specialization or Honors Double Major in the Department of Sociology with a minimum grade of 60% in both Sociology 2205A/B and 2206A/B. Extra Information: 3 hours, 0.5 course.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The 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.

Antirequisite(s):

The former Sociology 3302A/B

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify, analyze and evaluate a variety of theoretical perspectives in Sociology, and assess the conceptual differences among them.
- Apply theory and sociological research to interpret social events and practices
- Read, synthesize and evaluate theoretical arguments and published research from a critical perspective.
- Understand and demonstrate the competent use of different quantitative and research methodologies.
- Interpret the results of multivariate quantitative data analyses

- Write theoretically-informed papers that make a sustained, evidence-based, sociological argument, and present ideas and sociological concepts clearly.
- Demonstrate effective oral communication skills and the ability to discuss ideas clearly and articulately.

Mandatory for third-year Sociology students in an Honors Specialization. In this course students will learn to evaluate quantitative sociological research and gain hands-on experience carrying out and writing up a research project that investigates current social issues. Topics include: posing a research question, developing concepts and measures, and analyzing quantitative survey data.

Required Text(s):

Aneshensel, C.S. (2013). Theory-based data analysis for the social sciences. Sage. Required supplementary readings: Occasionally additional readings will be assigned throughout in addition to textbook chapters. All of these readings will be posted on the course website. More information will be provided in class.

Students should be familiar with proper essay writing techniques. The following style manual is useful: Johnson, William A., Richard Retting, Gregory Scott and Stephen Garrison. 2010. The Sociology Student Writer' Manual. Prentice-Hall.

Statistical Computing: The statistical computing for the course will be done using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and STATA. SPSS and STATA is available on computers located in the Social Science computing lab. There is some lab time set aside during class hours, but you will most likely need to spend a significant amount of your own time in the lab.

Method of Evaluation:

There will be one midterm, student presentation and a final exam.

Evaluation Breakdown:

Midterm test 30%

Student presentation 30%

Final Examination April Exam Period 40%

How to Contact Me:

aholm@uwo.ca

519 661-2111 ext 85515

Important Policies

Policies for Assignment Deadlines:

Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day (including weekends) except in the case of extreme and serious documented circumstances, discussed with me in advance and following the same procedures describe above related to missed exams. Please note that computer problems are not an excused circumstance. You are expected to follow good computer practices, including backing up your work.

Missed Exams

Make-up exams will be granted with approved documentation only. If you miss an exam date or the due date for an assignment due to illness or for any other unforeseen reason, you must provide notification of and documentation for the reasons for your circumstances to your Academic Counselor within 48 hours. If your problem is medical in nature, you should be seen by your doctor on the date of the exam or on the date the assignment is due. If your Academic Counselor agrees that your reasons are legitimate and are supported by your medical doctor's documentation, you will be allowed to write a makeup exam or hand in your assignment at a later date.

Compassionate Grounds: Serious Illness of a Family Member: Inform your instructor as soon as possible and submit a medical certificate from the family member's physician to your home faculty's Academic Counselling office. In Case of a Death: Inform your instructor as soon as possible and submit a copy of the newspaper notice, death certificate or documentation provided by the funeral director to your home faculty's Academic Counselling office.

Class Attendance Requirements (for 3000 and 4000-level courses)

With the exception of legitimate medical / personal excuses (documentation required to be submitted) students are expected to attend at least 80% of the class meetings for this course. A passing grade in the course cannot be obtained without meeting this attendance requirement.

Note: You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites. 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. 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.

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 (www.turnitin.com).

Policies on Examinations

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or 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 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: 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 and Readings:

Week	Date	Topic Assignment	Assigned Reading
1	11 th Jan.	Introduction & Theory based data analysis	Aneshensel, C1 & 2
2	18 th Jan.	Associations and relationships	Aneshensel C3
3	25 th Jan.	Causal inference	Aneshensel C4
4	1 st Feb.	Multiple linear regression	Aneshensel C5
5	8 th Feb.	Sample weights	Aneshensel C6
6	15 th Feb.	Spuriousness and statically control	Aneshensel C7
7	22 th Feb.	Mid term	
8	1 st March	Alternative explanations	Aneshensel C8
9	8 th March	Statistical mediation	Aneshensel C9
10	15 th March	Statistical explanation in time, antecedent and consequent variables Student presentations	Aneshensel C10
11	22 th March	Mechanisms and moderating variables Student presentations	Aneshensel C11
12	29 th March	Logistic regression Student presentations	Aneshensel C12
13	5 th April	Q & A	

****Final Exam Date to be set by Registrar's office. All dates are approximations and may be adjusted.**