



**The University of Western Ontario**  
**SOCIOLOGY 2206A 003**  
**Research Methods in Sociology**  
**Fall 2018**

**Wednesdays 10:30am to 1:30pm**  
**Room: SSC-3028**

**Instructor:** Megan MacCormac

Office Hours: By appointment

Office: SSC 5209

Department of Sociology

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**Teaching Assistant (TA):** TBA

Office Hours:

Office:

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## **Course Description**

An introduction to the research process and ethical dilemmas faced by sociologists, as well as a survey of the essential procedures used to collect sociological data, e.g. sampling, questionnaire design, and observational field research techniques.

(3 hours, 0.5 course)

## **Prerequisite(s)**

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.

## **Antirequisite(s)**

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

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.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- understand the process of identifying original research problems and create original research questions
- understand and describe the importance of research ethics in the research process
- explain the relationship between theory and methods
- identify key issues in sampling and measuring concepts
- describe the techniques and processes social scientists use when conducting research
- code data using MAXQDA qualitative software
- identify and recognize basic commands of using SPSS quantitative software
- describe and analyze the advantages and challenges that different research methods and approaches pose to social science researchers
- propose and justify the design of a research study

## Required Text(s)

Babbie, E. R., & Roberts, L. W. (2018). *Fundamentals of social research* (Fourth Canadian ed.). Toronto: Nelson Education.

Copies of the required textbook can be purchased at the campus bookstore or through other means. Older editions may be used, however, please note that assignments, lectures, and examinations for this course will be based on the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the book.

In addition to the textbook, throughout the course, there will be articles posted on OWL or distributed in class which are to be read in addition to the readings from the primary text. The textbook readings and articles are all testable materials.

## Technology requirements

There will be several forms of technology used in the classroom in order to enhance the classroom learning environment.

### **Students are NOT required to purchase any software in order to take this course**

Students will use both SPSS and MAXQDA software in this course in order to complete their assignments. The MAXQDA license will be given to you **free** of charge to use on your personal laptop and is available for MAC or PC laptops. You will receive the license code on the first day of class. The MAXQDA license is to be used only for the completion of your course assignments in sociology 2206a 003 and not for larger research projects you might be working on.

SPSS software is available by going to most computer labs on campus. No prior knowledge of using either piece of software is necessary as I will walk you through using both in class. It is strongly

recommended that you have a copy of Excel and Word programs in order to work through the in-class demonstrations and to complete your assignments.

## Interactive learning

We will be using the software **iCLICKER** each class as part of your participation grade. The software is free for you to use and turns an electronic device into a ‘virtual clicker’ in order for you to participate in the lecture in real time. In the first class, I will go over how to use the software. It is necessary for you to bring an electronic device to use each class in order to participate using the software. Electronic devices can be an iOS, android, or web browser device such as a laptop computer.

## Method of Evaluation:

| Assignment  | Percentage  |
|---|-------------|
| <b>Class participation and activities</b>                         | <b>15%</b>  |
| <b>Assignment #1: Questionnaire</b><br><b>Due: November 7</b>     | <b>10%</b>  |
| <b>Assignment #2: Interview Coding</b><br><b>Due: November 21</b> | <b>15%</b>  |
| <b>Mid-term examination</b><br><b>In Class October 24</b>         | <b>25%</b>  |
| <b>Final Paper</b>  | <b>35%</b>  |
| <b>Part One- Topic Selection: Due October 3</b>                   | 5%          |
| <b>Part Two- Literature Review: Due October 31</b>                | 10%         |
| <b>Part Three- Final Paper: December 5</b>                        | 15%         |
| <b>Part Four-Group Presentation: December 5</b>                   | 5%          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>100%</b> |

## Evaluation Breakdown

### Class Participation and activities 15%

Understanding the processes involved in conducting social research requires students to work with new concepts and develop their skills through practice. Accordingly, class attendance is **mandatory** and active participation is a necessary step in the process of learning about research methods. Students are expected to complete all readings before class, arrive on time and to attend each class. There will be

several classes where we work through example questions in class and therefore you will need to be present and actively participate in the classroom activities. Class participation grades are awarded for quality contributions to the class, and **NOT** for frequent short answers. All students should be courteous to one another and allow for others to ask questions.

### **Mid-term examination 25%**

The materials for which you are responsible for the mid-term examination will be announced in class. Students should expect a mixture of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions. Students will be tested on both lectures and course readings. It is therefore advantageous for you to keep on track with your reading schedule and to not skip readings to read at a later date. More details about the mid-term examination will be given in class closer to the date. A short mid-term examination review will take place in class the week before the exam.

### **Assignments**

There will be two small assignments due throughout the semester and one final paper. The two small assignments equal 25% of your final grade and the final assignment is 35% of your final grade. The final paper has four parts to it and will be completed in groups. Groups will receive the same grade for the final assignment unless unequal division of labor issues occur and are brought to the instructor's attention. All group members must be in class for the final presentation. More detailed descriptions of the assignments will be posted to OWL closer to the date when the assignment is given out.

If at any time you are unclear as to what is expected for each assignment or task, please consult this syllabus, check OWL for the detailed assignment instruction sheets, ask questions in class, or contact the instructor or teaching assistant for further clarification. If a student misses the midterm exam or assignment deadlines, it is their responsibility to contact the instructor and academic counselling.

### **How to Contact Me**

The best way to contact me is via email at [mmaccor2@uwo.ca](mailto:mmaccor2@uwo.ca). You must use your Western University issued email address when contacting me. Please include SOC 2206 in the body of your email or subject line.

### **How to access important information**

This course will make use of OWL in order to post course content, assignment instructions, upload assignments etc. It is imperative that you check OWL for updates and reminders regularly in order for you to be up-to-date on what is happening in the course.

## **Important Policies**

### **Respect in the learning environment**

It is expected that students will be respectful of the learning environment. This includes the physical classroom space as well as virtually through email and electronic correspondence. Electronic devices are not to be used for text messaging, gaming, emailing or other unrelated distractions. Students may be asked to leave the lecture room if their actions are disruptive to others.

## **Policies for Assignment Deadlines: Deadlines and Grading**

Assignments are due at the beginning of the lecture. You must **always** hand in two copies of your work unless otherwise instructed. A hard paper copy of your assignment must be handed to the instructor at the start of class the day the assignment is due. In addition to handing in the hard copy version, an electronic word document must also be uploaded to OWL before the start of class. All assignments are subject to be checked for plagiarism using turnitin plagiarism software.

Late assignments will be penalized by **10%** each day. The date and time that a late assignment is submitted electronically on OWL will be used in calculating the penalized percentage. This means if an assignment achieved a grade of 80% and was late for two days, the student would receive a grade of 60% on their assignment. After five days the assignment will receive a grade of zero. This system is in place in order for your assignments to be handed back in a timely manner.

Questions regarding the grading of an assignment should only be brought to the course instructor. Students will need to wait 24 hours from the time a grade is released to discuss any grade issue with the instructor.

## **Citation style**

All assignments should be completed using APA format for citations. For more information on how to cite your work using APA format see the owl purdue website

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/10/>

## **Exams**

Students are not to bring their electronic devices, books, or papers to the examination room. Only pen and pencil are necessary for exams.

## **A Note on Plagiarism**

It is expected that students in this course will complete their own work and properly cite where they are accessing outside information from. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. As such, cheating and plagiarism will not be permitted at any time. Please see the Western academic calendar on the plagiarism policies at Western.

## ***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](http://www.turnitin.com)).

## **Policies on Examinations**

Students are not to bring their electronic devices, books, or papers to the examination room. Only pen and pencil are necessary for exams. Multiple choice and true/ false questions will be completed by scantron, and as a result, will 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, however, 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 and set to airplane mode.

## **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](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](http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html)

## **Accessibility Options**

If you are a student with a documented disability please make appropriate arrangements for your future success in this course by contacting the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) department at Western. 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](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html)

Once you have contacted the centre, please contact the instructor of this course to further discuss how appropriate accommodations can be made.

## **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](http://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](http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html)) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

## Weekly Readings and Topics to be covered

(Please note that this schedule is subject to change. Students will be given advanced warning of any changes to the weekly schedule)

| Week  | Lesson  | Readings  | Assignments Due                                 |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Week 1</b><br><b>September 12<sup>th</sup></b> | Introduction to the course and the foundations of social research         | Textbook: Chapter 1   |   |
| <b>Week 2</b><br><b>September 19</b>              | Science and theory and Research Ethics                                    | Textbook: Chapter 2 and Chapter 3<br><br>OWL: Hirschi pdf                         |   |
| <b>Week 3</b><br><b>September 26</b>              | Research Design   | Textbook: Chapter 4<br><br>OWL: Mills article<br><br>OWL: Selecting a Problem pdf | *Form Groups for Research Proposal Project      |
| <b>Week 4</b><br><b>October 3</b>                 | Conceptualization, Operationalization, Measurement, and Sampling          | Textbook: Chapter 5 and Chapter 6<br><br>OWL: Gibbs pdf                           | Research Proposal Part One: Topic Selection Due |
| <b>Week 5</b><br><b>October 10</b>                | <b>Fall Reading Week</b><br><br><b>No classes no readings</b>             |   |   |
| <b>Week 6</b><br><b>October 17</b>                | Basic Social Statistics and Experiments                                   | Textbook: Chapter 7 and Chapter 16  |   |
| <b>Week 7</b><br><b>October 24</b>                | <b>Midterm Examination</b><br><br><b>No additional readings this week</b> |   |   |

| <b>Week</b>                    | <b>Lesson</b>                              | <b>Readings</b>  | <b>Assignments Due</b>                        |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Week 8<br/>October 31</b>   | Survey Research and Asking Questions       | Textbook: Chapter 8<br>OWL: Constructing Questions pdf | Final Paper Part Two: Literature Review Due   |
| <b>Week 9<br/>November 7</b>   | Interviewing                               | Textbook: Chapter 11<br>OWL: Thompson pdf              | Assignment #1 Due: Questionnaire Problem Set  |
| <b>Week 10<br/>November 14</b> | Field Research                             | Textbook: Chapter 10<br>OWL: Adler and Adler pdf       |   |
| <b>Week 11<br/>November 21</b> | Non-Reactive Research                      | Textbook: Chapter 9                                    | Assignment #2 Due: Interview coding           |
| <b>Week 12<br/>November 28</b> | Qualitative and Quantitative Data Analysis | Textbook: Chapter 13 and Chapter 14                    |   |
| <b>Week 13<br/>December 5</b>  | Presentations                              | No readings  | Research Proposal Part Three: Final Paper Due |