

**Western University
SOCIOLOGY 2206B-001
Research Methods in Sociology**

**Winter 2019
Monday 1:30pm – 4:30pm (FNB 3210)**

Instructor: Eugena Kwon

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Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to the tools which social scientists use to conduct research on society and produce knowledge – in other words, *how to be sociologists*. This course will provide an introduction to the research process and ethical dilemmas faced by sociologists, as well as cover the essential procedures used to collect and analyze data. During this course, the students will learn how to carry out a scientific investigation: from the formulation of hypotheses, to the selection of appropriate methodology, and the steps involved in the implementation of a study, using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. A major focus of this course is to enhance students' ability to critically examine sociological research and also to provide exposure to different ways in which the acquired research skills can be utilized in conducting sociological research and also in our daily life.

- *This course is mandatory for students registered in Year 2 of an Honours Specialization offered through the Department of Sociology. (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.

- *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, Health Sciences 2801A/B, or Political Science 3324F/G.

Student Learning Outcomes:

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

- 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
- Understand the basic function of SPSS
- 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):

Mandatory Textbook:

Bryman A., & Bell, E. (2016). *Social Research Methods* (Fourth Canadian Edition). Oxford University Press Canada.

ISBN-13:9780199009787

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

Recommended Textbook:

Bouma, G. D., Ling, L., and Wilkinson, L. (2016). *The Research Process* (Fourth Canadian Edition). Oxford University Press Canada.

ISBN-13: 9780199018604

Method of Evaluation:

Group Assignment #1: A Page-Report + Mini-Presentation	10% (February 4)
Midterm Exam	20% (February 25)
Group Assignment #2: Research Proposal	10% (March 11)
Final Research Report	30% (April 8)
Final Exam	30% (Exam Period)

Statistical Computing:

In this course, I will introduce you to 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. Instead, I will teach you its basics in the computer lab (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 attend all lectures and are prepared to discuss the assigned material. There are no participation or attendance grades for the lectures, but failure to attend classes regularly will put you at a disadvantage (as PowerPoint Lecture Slides will NOT be posted). Much of the course is cumulative, so missing one class can cause problems for comprehending the material in the following classes. The lab tutorials are mandatory for the final research report and will be graded for the participation and attendance.

Evaluation Breakdown (detailed information will be further provided in class):

<< Group Assignments >>

The first group assignment will be worth 10% and the second group assignment will also be worth 10% of your total grade. These are collaborative assignments, and everyone in the group will receive the same grade. 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 formulating a group and choosing a research topic from the list distributed (please refer to the instruction sheet on OWL). You may choose to work alone upon request (permission from the instructor is required), **but a group of 5-6 members are highly recommended.**

- **Group Assignment #1: One-page report (Due on Feb 4) + Mini-Presentation (on assigned date)**
 - There are two components for this assignment:
 - First, each group must submit **a one-page report** with details of: a) group members (full name, student number, and email address), b) research topic of choice (from the given list), c) motivation and justification for the research topic, and d) list of at least five peer-reviewed articles which may be used as a source.
 - Second, based on your chosen research topic – each group must present **a mini-presentation (5-10 minutes)** on an assigned date. Each group must also come up with 2-3 response questions which other students in class can provide a response based on the presentation material. These questions will be used for the bonus assignment (presentation responses). Further details will be discussed in class.
- **BONUS - Presentation Responses (Due on Feb 11th):** Each student may individually submit their responses to all the response questions from each group's presentation. This is an extra component of the class and the grade from this component will count towards 5% bonus mark on their assignment #1 grade. (e.g., *If you receive a mark of 80% on your presentation review responses, you will get 4% bonus mark on your assignment #1*).

o **Group Assignment #2: Research Proposal (Due on March 11)**

- o You will produce a full research proposal consisting of: a brief introduction, research questions and hypotheses from Group Assignment #1, a detailed literature review, and a description of an appropriate research methodology that could be used to study your chosen research topic. Detailed steps which will be used to carry out your study must be comprehensively outlined in your proposal. **There is no page limit, however, students should aim for roughly 7-8 doubled-spaced pages** (references not included). Detailed instructions for the assignments will be provided in class and on OWL.

<< Final Research Report (Due on April 8th) >>

This assignment will be worth 30% of your total grade and will be an **individual** project. However, the topic and the research questions **must be the same** from the assignment #2 which were submitted in groups.

- Students are required to write a research report (similar to the elaborated format of evidence-based policy brief) **by applying the research methods** learned in this class (please follow the instructions on the document uploaded on OWL)
- There is a **mandatory lab tutorial which is held during class time** and tutorial participation/attendance will be part of the total grade for your final research report. This is mandatory for both: (i) those conducting quantitative research, and (ii) those conducting qualitative research.
- Detailed instructions for this assignment will be provided in class and also on OWL.

There is no strict page count for this assignment; however, students should aim for roughly 13-15 doubled-spaced pages (references not included). Students should cite **a minimum of eight** peer-reviewed academic sources. I have included the formatting requirements below. Marks may be deducted if you do not follow these instructions:

Times New Roman font

12-point font size

Pages should be stapled

1 inch (2.54cm) margins on all sides

Pages should be numbered in the right side of the footer starting on the first page of text, not the title page

American Sociological Association (ASA) citation style only

Paragraph spacing should be **double-spaced**

Your last name should appear on the right side of the header

MUST ATTACH A TITLE PAGE stapled at the front of the submitted assignments with full name, student number, and an email address

- **ASA citation guideline:**

http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_ASA_Style.pdf

<< Mid-Term Exam (February 25th) >>

The mid-term exam is worth 20% of your total grade and will cover **all lecture materials (and assigned textbook materials for each lecture) from January 7th to February 11th**. It will be 1.5 hours in length. This exam consists of multiple-choice questions only.

<< Final Exam (April Exam Period) >>

The final exam is worth 30% of your total grade. It will be 2 hours in length and **will be cumulative** from the beginning of this course, but with more emphasis on the materials covered after the midterm. This exam also consists of multiple-choice questions only.

Late Assignments:

There is a 5% per day late penalty. Late assignments are accepted by email (ekwon22@uwo.ca). Late assignments which is more than **5 days** late will **NOT** be accepted. If you have extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical conditions), student must see the Academic Counsellor of their department and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation: http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html

Disputed Grades:

A student who wishes to dispute the grading of an assignment must write a one-page justification for having their work reevaluated.

Questions and Contacting Me:

You can contact me by email (ekwon22@uwo.ca). When you email me, please identify the course number by putting the heading “[**Sociology 2206B**].”

If you have questions regarding the course, material, readings or assignments please try to ask during class. There will likely be other students who have the same question. I am typically available after each class for quick questions. If you have more substantive or a private question, please come to my office hours. You may also email me your questions; however, I will not respond to questions where information can be found on the course outline or questions that have already been answered during class.

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 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 on how to obtain help.

Course Reading & Schedule

Week	Date	Class content	Readings
Part 1: Foundations			
1	Jan 7	Introduction to the Course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 1: General Research Orientations 	Bryman & Bell. Ch. 1
2	Jan 14	Understanding the Research Processes & Selecting a Research Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 2: Research Designs Chapter 3: Research Ethics Quantitative vs. Qualitative Methodology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 15: Breaking down the Quantitative vs. Qualitative Divide Instructions on Group Assignments	Bryman & Bell. Ch. 2, 3 (skim), and 15 (skim) (Recommended: Bouma, Ling, and Wilkinson. Ch. 4 and 7)
3	Jan 21	Designing a Study & Formulating a Research Question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing the Scholarly Literature and Planning a Study Workshop on Strategies for Effective Literature Search (with Marg Slogan) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recommended to bring a laptop to class 	Reading posted on OWL (Recommended: Bouma, Ling, and Wilkinson. Ch. 3)
4	Jan 28	Quantitative Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 4: The Nature of Quantitative Research 	Bryman & Bell. Ch. 4
5	Feb 4	***** Group Assignment #1 Due (10%) ***** Quantitative Research (Continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 8: Sources of Data (e.g., Secondary Analysis) Research Proposal Workshop	Bryman & Bell. Ch. 8 (Skim Bryman & Bell. Ch. 5, 6, 7) (Recommended: Bryman & Bell. Ch. 18)
6	Feb 11	Qualitative Research Chapter 9: The Nature of Qualitative Research Special Workshops: Making the Most of Your Time at Western <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-4pm: Useful resources at Western (Representative from The Student Success Centre as a guest speaker) Finding Opportunities to Utilize Research Skills 	Bryman & Bell. Ch. 9
7	Feb 18	***** READING WEEK (NO CLASS) *****	
8	Feb 25	***** 1.5-hour Midterm Exam (20%) *****	

Part 2: Methodological Foundations

9	March 4	<p>Conducting Qualitative Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 10: Ethnography and Participant Observation • Chapter 11: Interviewing in Qualitative Research • Chapter 16: Content Analysis 	Bryman & Bell. Ch. 10, and 11 Ch. 16 (skim)
10	March 11	<p>***** Group Assignment #2 Due (10%) *****</p> <p>Sampling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 12: Importance of Sampling <p>Mandatory Lab Tutorial #1 (3:30-4:30pm)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPTIONAL: Lab Help Session (After Class – From 4:30-5:30pm) 	Bryman & Bell. Ch. 12 (Recommended: Bouma, Ling, and Wilkinson. Ch. 8) Lab Handout on OWL
11	March 18	<p>Methods for Analyzing the Quantitative Data Chapter 13: Quantitative Data Analysis</p> <p>Mandatory Lab Tutorial #2 (3:30-4:30pm)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPTIONAL: Lab Help Session (After Class – From 4:30-5:30pm) 	Bryman & Bell. Ch. 13 Lab Handout on OWL
12	March 25	<p>Methods for Analyzing the Qualitative Data Chapter 14: Qualitative Data Analysis</p> <p>Mandatory Lab Tutorial #3 (3:30-4:30pm)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPTIONAL: Lab Help Session (After Class – From 4:30-5:30pm) 	Bryman & Bell. Ch. 14 Lab Handout on OWL
13	April 1	<p>Reporting the Findings from the Data Analysis Chapter 17: Writing Up Social Research</p> <p>Applying Research Skills: Where can I use these skills? How can I apply what I have learned?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate School and Beyond • Working at Private Sector • Working at Public Sector <p><i>*Speakers will be invited to share their experiences!</i></p>	Bryman & Bell. Ch. 17 (Recommended: Bouma, Ling, and Wilkinson. Ch. 11-14)
14	April 8	<p>***** Final Research Report Due (30%) *****</p> <p>Final Exam Review</p>	
	Exam Period	<p>***** Final Exam (30%) *****</p>	