Course Description

This course is designed to introduce you to the methodological tools deployed by sociologists to conduct empirically grounded and theoretically engaged research. The course will cover the basic elements of research design, the role of theory in empirical research, the construction of sociological arguments, the ethics involved with human subjects research, and the analysis, interpretation, and presentation of data and results. Methodologically, this course will introduce you to the use of ethnography, interviews, surveys, experiments, comparative/historical methods, and social networks analysis.

Prerequisite(s): You must have completed one of the following in order to take this course:

- units of Sociology courses at the 1000 level
- Indigenous Studies 1020E
- Women’s Studies 1020E
- Enrolment in the Honors Specialization in Human Resource Management, Honors Specialization in Public Administration, or Specialization in Public Administration.

Note: This course is mandatory for students registered in Year 2 of an Honors Specialization offered through the Department of Sociology. 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.

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

Learning Outcomes

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

1. Understand what sociological research is and how sociological questions can be answered
2. Be able to formulate sociologically relevant research questions and evaluate research designs
3. Know the basic elements of different of methodological approaches and understand their merits and limitations
4. Appreciate the challenges and complexity of sociological research
5. Understand the ethical considerations involved in doing human subjects research
6. Develop skills for reading and critically thinking about empirical research

Method of Evaluation

Your final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

- Weekly quizzes: 10% (The top 8 of 10 quizzes will count towards your mark)
- Two research assignments: 10% total, 5% each
- Midterm exam: 35%
- Final exam: 45%

Evaluation breakdown

1. **10 quizzes:** There will be ten short quizzes on the course material that you will complete independently on the course website. They are designed to make sure you are keeping up with the key concepts of the course, and for you to track your learning. The quiz for the week’s material will be posted on Monday morning and you can complete it at any time during the week, before 11:59 on Sunday night. Of the 10 quizzes, your top 8 marks will be included in the mark. There are no make-up options since two of the quizzes will not count towards your mark. This means that self-reported absences and accommodations are not given for quizzes.

2. **Two research assignments:** The exciting part of doing sociology is conducting your own research. During the course of the term, students will complete two research assignments. These assignments are designed to give you practice using the concepts from the course and to get your going with your own research ideas. You have a choice of which two you’d like to complete, of five possible assignments. They are in weeks 4, 5, 6, 10 and 11. The two assignments that you choose are due at the end of the week when we study that topic. Since you have a choice of which two you’d like to complete (out of five), there are no excuses for not having completed two during the course of the term. Do not leave them until the last minute. Each assignment should be submitted on OWL under ASSIGNMENTS.

3. **Midterm exam:** This exam will be completed online during a two-hour period between October 21 at 9am and October 23 at 11:59pm. The exam will be mixed format, including a range of types of questions (multiple choice, short answer, longer answers). You may start the exam anytime during the period and once you start, you will have 4 hours to complete the exam. The flexibility in timing is designed so that you can take it at a time that works for you. Once you open the exam, you must complete it within 4 hours. This will cover all the material that we’ve covered until this point.

4. **Final Exam:** This will take place online during the exam period at the end of the term. This will be cumulative, covering all the material from the whole semester. The exam will be mixed format, including a range of types of questions (multiple choice, short answer, longer answers). You may start the exam anytime during the period and once you start, you will have 5 hours to complete the exam. The flexibility in timing is designed so that you can take it at a time that works for you. Once you open the exam, you must complete it within 5 hours. This exam will be cumulative, covering all the material from the whole semester.
Universal Instructional Design principles guide the format of assessments

The assessments in this course employ the principles of Universal Instructional Design, which means that they are designed to be accessible for all students with a range of accommodations.

- The midterm exam is expected to take no more than 1.5 hours to complete. All students will be allotted 4 hours. Consequently, most students who typically require extra time accommodation will not need any special arrangement for this assessment.
- The quizzes are designed to take no more than 5 minutes. Each quiz has 5 multiple choice questions. All students will be allotted 30 minutes to complete the quiz once you start. Consequently, most students who typically require extra time accommodation will not need any special arrangement for this assessment.
- The final exam is expected to take no more than 2 hours to complete. All students will be allotted 5 hours. Consequently, most students who typically require extra time accommodation will not need any special arrangement for this assessment.

How to Contact Me

FORUMS on OWL: Please post questions about the course logistics or course content on the course website under FORUMS. Emails, which address questions on the course logistics/contents, will not be responded.

Email: Email should be used to communicate highly personal and confidential matters:

How to get important course information:

The OVERVIEW page on OWL provides important course information. From this page, you can see course announcements and a guide to the material for each week.

FORUMS on OWL: For questions about the logistics of the course or course content, see the course website under FORUMS. This is where questions and answers are posted. Do not email me with these types of questions – They go on the course website for everyone to see.

Regular Q&A sessions on Zoom in OWL: We will have regular Q&A sessions to check in about different themes and topics. Timing and topic details to be announced on the course website once the term begins.
Required Text
There is one required book for this course:

Where to get the text book:
You have two options, both from the UWO bookstore.
- Option 1: The first is to order a hard copy from the UWO bookstore. You can order through their website and they will ship the book directly to you.
- Option 2: The second option is to buy digital access to the book through the UWO bookstore.
- Note: These two options are comparable. The e-book is less expensive than the print copy. Choose the one that works for you.

Overview of Course Schedule
For our course, the week will begin on Monday morning at 9am. The week will end at Sunday night at 11:59pm. The one exception is Week 1, where we start class on Tuesday September 8, rather than the Monday which is Labour Day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Quiz to be completed this week</th>
<th>Research Assignment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>September 8-13</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>September 14-20</td>
<td>Linking Sociological Theory and Empirical Research</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>September 21-27</td>
<td>From Concepts to Models</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>September 28-Oct 4</td>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>*Due Oct 4, 11:59pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>October 5-11</td>
<td>Survey Research</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>*Due October 11, 11:59pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>October 12-18</td>
<td>Experimental Research</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>*Due October 18, 11:59pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>October 21-23</td>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>October 26-Nov 1</td>
<td>Ethnography</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>November 2-8</td>
<td>Fall Break. No Class</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>November 9-15</td>
<td>In-Depth Interviews</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>November 16-22</td>
<td>Materials-Based Methods</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>*Due Nov 22, 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>November 23-29</td>
<td>Social Networks Analysis</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>*Due Nov 29, 11:59pm</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 30-Dec 6</td>
<td>Research Ethics</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam Period</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td></td>
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Course Schedule and Readings

**Week 1: Introduction, Course Goals, Course Plan**

Textbook: Preface: pages xxi-xxv

Textbook: Chapter 1: pages 3-31

**Week 2: Linking Sociological Theory and Empirical Research**

Textbook: Chapter 2: Research Foundations: pages 33-65

**Week 3: From Concepts to Models: Hypotheses, Operationalization, and Measurement**

Textbook: Chapter 4: pages 101-131

Validity and reliability: Parts of Textbook in Chapter 5: pages 133-136

**Week 4: Sampling**

Textbook: Chapter 6 pages 156-191

**Weeks 5: Survey Research**

Textbook: Chapter 7: pages 192-233

**Week 6: Experimental Research**

Textbook: Chapter 8: pages 234-271

**Week 7: Midterm exam**

**Week 8: Ethnography**

Textbook: Chapter 10: pages 302-339

**Week 9 In-Depth Interviewing**

Textbook: Chapter 11: pages 340-375

**Week 10 Materials-Based Methods**

Textbook: Chapter 12: pages 376-421

**Week 11 Social Network Analysis**

Textbook: Chapter 13: pages 422-459

**Week 12: Research Ethics**

Textbook Chapter 3: Pages 67-99
Important Policies

Policies for Examinations

The midterm and final exams are designed to make sure that all students can complete the exam during the scheduled time. If a student cannot complete the exam during that time, then the weight of the midterm will be added to the weight of the final exam. To get accommodation, the student needs to tell the professor about the accommodation within 48 hours of the end of the week scheduled for the exam.

Academic accommodation will NOT be granted automatically on request. In cases where there is no approved justification for the absence, the student will receive a grade of zero on the exam. You must demonstrate by documentation that there are compelling medical or compassionate grounds before academic accommodation will be considered. For personal illness, if you should consult Student Health Services regarding your illness or personal problem, you should request a Student Medical Certificate from the physician. If you were seen by an off-campus doctor, obtain a certificate from his/her office at the time of your visit. The off-campus medical certificate form must be used and can be found at: [http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/docs/procedures/medicalNote.pdf](http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/docs/procedures/medicalNote.pdf). Notes stating “For Medical Reasons” are not considered sufficient.

For any other circumstance, if you are not sure what documentation to provide, ask your Academic Counselor. If your documentation is judged sufficient, the academic counselor will issue a Recommendation for a Special Examination. Once you have this form, contact your instructor as soon as possible to make arrangements. Even if approved from your home faculty Academic Counselor, there is no guarantee that you will be allowed to write the makeup final exam. You need permission from your home Faculty Counselor, your instructor, and the Department Chair. Failure to follow this procedure may result in an examination grade of zero. You must ensure that the Special Examination form has been signed by the instructor and Department Chair and that the form is returned to the Academic Counseling Office for approval without delay. Make-up final examinations, if permitted, will be written within one month of the end of the exam period.

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 ([https://www.turnitin.com/](https://www.turnitin.com/)).

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:
https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html.

**Academic Consideration for Missed Work**

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a Self-Reported Absence (SRA) form online provided that the absence is 48 hours or less and the other conditions specified in the Senate policy are met. Two important exceptions to this rule: SRAs will NOT be allowed for final examinations or assessments worth more than 30% of a given course. Students whose absences are expected to last longer than 48 hours, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a Student Medical Certificate (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds) to your Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.

www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf

**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/academics/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:
https://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 (www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.