Course Description
In this course, students will learn to investigate the social world using a variety of qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviewing, observation, or content analysis. Students will explore the principles underlying qualitative inquiry and acquire a general understanding of the theoretical positions that underlie qualitative methodology. Through lectures, readings, guest presentations, and hands-on research activities, students will explore different ways of investigating the social world in a scientific but non-statistical way that gives voice to the people we are studying. The ultimate goal is to let students experience the ways that qualitative sociologists do research. We will therefore emphasize applied aspects of qualitative research.

Prerequisite(s)
Sociology 2205A/B and 2206A/B.

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)
Sociology 3310F/G, Family Studies and Human Development 3230A/B, the former Sociology 3311F/G.

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

- Evaluate different research methods, and their usage.
- Formulate research questions and choose a qualitative research design to examine those questions.
- Understand and meet the ethical standards for conducting research with human subjects.
• Design and carry out a research project, including conducting in-depth interviews, ethnographic field observations, and content analysis.
• Analyze and interpret qualitative data.
• Write an effective research report.
• Prepare an effective oral presentation that presents key information in a narrow time frame.

Required Text(s)
No textbook will be used. Articles are assigned weekly and will be posted on OWL.

Method of Evaluation
1) Ethnography assignment OR content analysis February 3, 2022 25%
2) Interview Project Proposal & Presentation February 17, 2022 10%
3) Group Presentation: Research Findings March 31, 2022 (last class) 10%
4) Interview Project Term Paper Due April 1, 2022 (last day of term) 40%
5) Five Reading Responses (you pick your week) 15%

Evaluation Breakdown (detailed information provided in class)

1) Ethnography or Content Analysis (25%); details provided in class and on OWL
   Due February 3, 2022; length: 7-10 pages, double spaced
   Note: late assignments will be docked 5% per day, unless accommodation has been given

Option 1.1) Ethnography Exercise
• Spend some time observing a specific site; collect field notes.
• Write a short essay describing your observations, and the challenges of being an observer

Option 1.2) Content Analysis Exercise
• You will be assigned a specific content analysis question and the media to review

ASSIGNMENT 2), 3) AND 4) ARE BASED ON A GROUP INTERVIEW PROJECT
This project is designed to give you hands-on experience in all phases of an interview-based qualitative research project. Some of this work will be done in groups; some of it will be done individually. I will provide topics in class, and you can sign up for a topic.
The exercise will require that you complete the following stages of a research project:
1) Design the project, including a small literature review, research questions, a discussion of ethics and an interview guideline. (group work)
2) Data collection: conducting interviews (each group member conducts one interview; the groups shares all the interviews for analysis)
3) Data analysis (both group and individual)
4) Presentation of findings in an individual paper.
5) Group presentation of findings
2) Interview Project Proposal (10%) and Presentation; one submission per group; all group members receive the same mark

- You have to submit a proposal for your group’s interview project
- The proposal needs to include the following:
  - A short literature review giving the context of the study. This should be no more than 1-2 pages and include at least 3 references to studies on your topic.
  - A set of research question you will answer with your project.
  - A description of your sample and your recruitment strategy.
  - Your letter of information and consent form.
  - A first draft of your interview guide.

Due: February 17, 2022 (together with your presentation)
Note: as this is a group proposal, late assignments will not be accepted

3) Interview Project Results: Group Presentation (10%)

- Combine the findings from your individual term papers to prepare a group presentation for the class

Presentation held last class, March 31, 2022

4) Individual Interview Project Term Paper (40%); detailed information to be provided in class

- Use all interview transcripts from your team (not just yours), code and analyze them, and write a research report individually

Term paper due April 1, 2022 (last day of term); length: 10-15 pages double-spaced
Note: late assignments will be docked 5% per day, unless accommodation has been given

5) Five Reading Responses (you pick your week) (15%)

- On five different weeks of your choice, you are to submit a short comment and/or question regarding the assigned readings for that week. In this submission, you should pose one comment or question regarding the articles’ key findings/positions.
- In total, this will be five (5) submissions. Each submission will earn you three marks if the submission indicates that you actually read the texts and critically engaged with them. There will be deductions for superficial readings and no marks for submissions that do not engage with the text in any meaningful way. For instance, comments such as “I really liked the article” or “The author did a great job explaining xyz” or “There are too few participants to make the research generalizable” will not gain you any marks. You need to demonstrate that you read and thought about the article.
- You need to submit before class of the week you picked. Submissions after class will not be accepted.

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann
- By email: wlehmann@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistant: TBD
- By email: TBD
Important Policies

How to Get Important Information
Make sure to check the course OWL site regularly for course updates, cancellations, and other course-related postings.

Course Attendance Requirements:
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.

Standards of Professional Behaviour
It is the responsibility of all of us in this class to adhere to and promote standards of professional behaviour that support an effective learning environment. These include:

- **Respect for others** both in and out of the classroom through words and actions (be professional, fair, and respectful in interactions with people on-line and in-person; understand and respect differences among classmates and colleagues; avoid disrupting the learning environment; respect others’ expectations of confidentiality and privacy)
- **Active engagement in learning** and commitment to quality (being prepared for classes; participating and listening actively to other; using technology and social media appropriately, striving to do your best)
- **Personal integrity** (following through on commitments; doing own work)

Discrimination and Unconscious Bias

- **Zero-tolerance** for discrimination. I encourage students to “call out” comments or content that may be marginalizing, oppressive, or discriminatory. If students are uncomfortable raising concerns in class, please speak to me immediately about any discriminatory conduct.
- **Unconscious/implicit bias.** We all have unconscious biases. Yes, everyone! Our brains unconsciously process huge amounts of information without us even being aware of it. This can include snap judgements about people we meet and situations we encounter. People have unconscious preferences for people who are similar to them and situations that are familiar. This unconscious bias can exclude, marginalize, and discriminate against minorities. As sociologists, it is our duty to use our sociological imaginations to combat unconscious bias.
  - Here is some additional information and tips to combat unconscious bias:
    - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GP-cqFLS8Q4
    - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKHSJHkPeLY

Students should also be aware of the **UWO Student Code of Conduct** found at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf

Digital Student Experience
Students should also consider checking out the Western University Digital Student Experience website for additional information about online learning https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/.
If you need assistance with OWL and/or online access, you can seek support on the OWL Help page. Alternatively, you can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

**What do you need?**

What do you need to work at your best? Please let me know how I can help you. Western provides a number of resources for students who need accommodation or who are having mental health challenges (see below) but I encourage students to speak to me if there is anything I can do to improve their learning experience.

**Policies for Assignment Deadlines:**

There two ways in which make exams will be granted.

1) **Self-Reported Absence (SRA) form:** you now have the option of submitting Self-Reported Absence (SRA) form a maximum of two times between September and April and one time between May and August. That means, you don’t have to go through academic counselling or provide documentation. The duration of the excused absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours. You must be in touch with your instructor (Dr. Lehmann) no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by the SRA. SRAs will not be allowed for assessments worth more than 30%. And SRA will extend any deadline by 48 hours. If that is not enough, please use option 2) below.

2) **Approved Documentation:** Longer deadline extensions will be granted with approved documentation. Depending on the accommodation, we will determine new deadlines on a case-by-case basis. If you miss a deadline due to illness or for any other unforeseen reason, please notify me (Dr. Lehmann) within 24 hours of the missed deadline. No documentation is required when you notify me, but I need to know that you missed the deadline within 24 hours (or I assume you will not be submitting at all). You then must provide notification and documentation to your Academic Counselor within 48 hours. If your problem is medical in nature, you should be seen by your doctor on the date an 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 hand in your assignment at a later date.

**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:**

Students may be required to submit their assignments to turnitin.com on the class WebCT website after they are completed. These papers will be subject to submission for textual originality.

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

**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 Counseling 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 Counseling office.

**Grade Guidelines**
The Department of Sociology has grade distribution guidelines that all instructors are required to follow. For Sociology courses at the 3000 level, class averages must be in the range of 73-80%.
Course Schedule

1. Introduction: January 6, 2022
   • Introduction to the course: content, assignments, expectations
   • Discussion of major assignment project; formation of groups.

2. Defining Qualitative Methods and Preparing for Research: January 13, 2022
   • What is qualitative methods. The difference between quantitative and qualitative methods.
   • Understanding the context of your project: literature reviews
   • Formulating Research Questions/Objectives
   • Choosing the right methodology
   Reading 1: Krahn and Taylor
   Reading 2: Taylor and Krahn

3. Content Analysis: January 20, 2022
   • What is content analysis; how is it done?
   • Use of art, photos and other visual data for qualitative research
   • Hands-on work: Content analysis exercise
   Reading 1: Raby: Polite, well-dressed, and on time or Reading 1: Jackson and Gee: Look Janet, no you look John
   Reading 2: Corrigall-Brown and Wilkes: Picturing Protest: The Visual Framing of Collective Action by First Nations in Canada

4. Ethnography and Observational Field Work: January 27, 2022
   • Sampling and techniques of ethnographic research
   • Ethics in ethnographic research
   • Hands-on exercise; field notes
   Reading 1: Calarco: "I Need Help!" Social Class and Children's Help-Seeking in Elementary School
   Reading 2: Manzo: Social Control and the Management of “Personal” Space in Shopping Malls
   Other options: “paying for the party”, “no exit”; a street corner ethnography could be good

5. Ethics in Qualitative Research: February 3, 2022
   • Research ethics in academic and non-academic research
   • Hands-on Exercise: ethics implications for your assignments (and research more generally)
   Reading 2: Duncan et al: Is my mum going to hear this? Methodological and ethical challenges in qualitative health research with young people
   Reading 3: Gibson et al: Talking about suicide: Confidentiality and anonymity in qualitative research
   Ethnography/content analysis due today

6. In-depth interviews: February 10, 2022
   • Developing interview guides & strategies and techniques for successful interviews
   • Interview exercise in class
7. Presentation of Research Proposals: February 17, 2022
   • Your groups will be presenting to the class your research proposals
   
   Group proposal due today

READING WEEK: FEBRUARY 24, 2022

8. Other interviewing options: focus groups and photo elicitation: March 3, 2022
   • Focus groups; Art based and photo solicitation, Oral histories, Virtual methods
   Reading 2: Young et al: Drinking Like a Guy: Frequent Binge Drinking among Undergraduate Women
   Reading 3: Raby, Lehman et al: Reflections on Using Participant-Generated, Digital Photo-Elicitation in Research With Young Canadians About Their First Part-Time Jobs

9. Analysis and Coding of Qualitative Data: March 10, 2022
   • Transcribing, coding, organizing and interpreting data
   • Hands-on work in class: Coding exercise
   Reading 1: Saldana: The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers (Chapter 1)
   Reading 2: I will provide an example of a transcript which we will use to practice coding. Read ahead of class.

10. No class today: Drop-in consultation on group projects: March 17, 2022
    • I will schedule meetings with each group about their projects.

11. Writing up and presenting research; and summary of learning: March 24, 2022
    • Writing effective qualitative research papers and reports
    • How to prepare effective presentations of your results; debriefing of project; wrap up and summary
      Today’s readings are examples of the differences between a scholarly article and research report from the same study:
      Reading 1: Lehmann et al: Youth apprenticeships in Canada: on their inferior status despite skilled labour shortages (Journal Article) compared to Reading 2: Taylor et al: High School Apprentices: Experiences and Outcomes

12. Group Presentations: March 31, 2022

   Individual term paper: due April 12 (last day of term)