



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 2206B-001
RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIOLOGY
Winter 2024

(Delivery Method: In person)

Instructor: Dr. Jasmine Ha

This is a DRAFT only. Please see the course site for the final version.

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 for social scientific research, and the analysis, interpretation, and presentation of data and results. Methodologically, this course will introduce you to the use of surveys, experiments, ethnography, interviews, comparative/historical methods, and social network analysis.

Recommended in Years 2 or 3 of a Major, Specialization or Honours Specialization offered through the Dept of Sociology.

Prerequisite(s): None

Anti-requisite(s): Social Work 2206A/B, Health Sciences 2801A/B, Political Science 3324F/G, or Political Science 2325F/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. Formulate sociologically relevant research questions and evaluate research designs;
3. Know the basic elements of different 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; and
6. Develop skills for reading and critically thinking about empirical research.

Course Material:

Textbook. Carr, D., Boyle, E. H., Cornwell, B., Correll, S. J., Crosnoe, R., Freese, J., & Waters, M. C. (2021). *The art and science of social research* (Second edition). W.W. Norton & Company.

The textbook is available for purchase at the UWO Bookstore. Both hard-copy and electronic formats are available.

Communication:

How to contact me:

By email: jasmine.ha@uwo.ca and office hours (TBD). Email is not suitable for questions requiring considerable exposition. These questions are suited for in-person exchange during office hours. Office hours are drop-in and first come, first serve.

If you have course-related questions that may be relevant for the whole class, it is best to ask the questions in class or to post them on our OWL course site's Forum.

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

Communication Guidelines & Expectations:

- Messages and email will be returned within 48 business hours (unless announced otherwise). That means you may not receive a response during the evening or on the weekend.
- Be patient, avoid emailing multiple times.
- Make sure your tone and correspondence in all communication is professional

How to get important information:

The **OWL Course site** will be set up to include all relevant course materials. In particular, pay attention to the following tabs:

- The **Homepage** will have key instructions on where to find information.
- The **Announcements** will be Used for Regular Communication or Urgent Messages
- The **Calendar** will be used regularly to let you know when assessments are due.
- The **Tests and Quizzes** will be used for the weekly quizzes.
- The **Assignments** will have all course assessment outlines and instructions on what to do if you have questions.

Method of Evaluation:

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

The final grade will be determined as follows:

Weekly quizzes	10%
Research Assignment 1 (Feb 7)	20%
Research Assignment 2 (Mar 13 or April 3)	20%
Midterm Exam (Feb 14)	20%
Final Exam (TBD)	30%

Weekly quizzes (10%). The weekly quizzes are designed to help students stay on track with the course and guide in-class discussions. There will be 10 quizzes from Week 1 to Week 12, excluding the Reading Week and Mid-term Exam. As universal accommodation for all students, we will only count 8 of your best scores. Therefore, each completed quiz is worth 1.25% of your final course grade. Each quiz will be made available every Monday before the lecture, and students will have one full week (i.e., by next Monday at 11:55PM) to complete it. Due to the extended availability of the quizzes, late submission will not be accepted for any reason.

Research Assignments (40%). The exciting part of doing sociology is to conduct your own research. The assignments are designed to give you the experience of a “researcher” by applying the concepts to practice.

- **Research Assignment 1** (20%) due on *Wednesday, Feb 7th, 2024, at 11:55PM EST.*
- **Research Assignment 2** (20%): choose one of the two options below:
 - Option A: Survey and Experiment methods.
Due on *Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 11:55PM EST.*
 - Option B: In-depth interviews, Ethnography, and Materials-based methods.
Due on *Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at 11:55PM EST.*

Midterm Exam (20%) and Final Exam (30%). The exams will be held in-person in multiple-choice format. Both exams are cumulative, covering all course materials from Week 1 up to the respective exam dates.

- The mid-term exam will be held in class on *Feb 14th, 2024.* Duration: 2 hours.
- The final exam will be scheduled by the Registrar’s Office. Duration: 2 hours.

Note that 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.

Additional Notes About Grading

There will be no opportunities for extra credit. I encourage you to work consistently throughout the semester, and to reach out to other students in the class or to me as soon as you have trouble with the material. Consistent with departmental guidelines, it is expected that the class average for this course will be around 70-75%. Should the final overall grades yield a value significantly below this range, grades will be adjusted upward to ensure an appropriate mean for the class.

Additional Notes about the use of AI tools

Within this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point

for exploring a topic, with students expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and avoiding plagiarism. Essays, written assignments and/or lab reports should reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work. Students should also generate their own figures (e.g., graphs, diagrams) rather than using AI generated ones. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and effective learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and use them to produce original written contributions. The same principles also apply to the use of translation software to support the writing the essays and other written assessments.

Inappropriate use of AI tools, including representing AI-generated written works as your own, is an academic offense equivalent to plagiarism (for more detail, please review Academic Policies on Scholastic Offense and Plagiarism below) and will be processed in line with the general policy for academic offense in the Faculty of Social Science. The typical penalty for a first academic offense in the Faculty of Social Science is zero on the assignment and the student being registered on the Academic Offense List.

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning.

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

Student Absences:

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

Assessments worth 10% or more of the overall course grade:

For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible.

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam. Course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test.

Late assignments with accommodation

Any student receiving academic accommodation for an assignment will receive an extension. Students receiving academic accommodation for an exam will write a Special Exam, typically scheduled by the Department of Sociology. See 'Absences from final examinations' below.

In rare circumstances when illness or other serious circumstances prevent the student from completing the assignment and/or exam in a timely manner, the instructor can offer an alternative assignment or reweighting other completed components to the final. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis and with discussions with the student as well as the academic counsellor.

Late assignments without accommodation

Any assignment submitted after the deadline, without academic accommodation, will receive an automatic 5% penalty per 24-hour period (including weekends). Assignments will not be accepted after one full week from the due date.

Absences from Final Examinations

Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible. Academic Counselling will determine eligibility to write a Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

Note: missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own. Students should check the Western website to see what directives for COVID are to be followed. Western has been and will continue to follow directives established by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. That directive will state whether students should or should not come to campus/class and any other requirements (e.g., masks are mandatory). Please check on your own and do not email the instructor, the Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator or the Faculty of Social Science Academic Counselling Office.

Academic Policies

Please review the Department of Sociology “[Important Academic Policies](https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf)” document https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf for additional information regarding:

- Scholastic Offences
- Plagiarism
- Copyright
- Academic Accommodation
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health