



The University of Western Ontario  
SOCIOLOGY 3306B-001

Investigating the Social World: Quantitative Research Methods

Winter 2024

**Delivery Method:** In person

**Instructor:** Jasmine Ha

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

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### **Course Description:**

This is a mandatory course for third-year Sociology students in an Honours Specialization. In this course, students will learn to evaluate quantitative sociological research and gain hands-on experience carrying out and writing up a research project that investigates current social issues. Topics include posing a research question, developing concepts and measures, and analyzing quantitative survey data.

**Prerequisite(s):** [Sociology 2205A/B](#) and [Sociology 2206A/B](#).

Unless you have either the prerequisites or written special permission from the Dean to enroll in the course, 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.

**Anti-requisite(s):** none

### **Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

The goal of this course is to provide the students with a sophisticated understanding of both evaluating and conducting quantitative research in sociology. Starting from the formulation of research questions and working through data collection and analysis, this course introduces the quantitative research process and fundamental methodological concepts, analytic tools, and procedures. Throughout the course, an emphasis will be placed on the relationship between theory and methods, the meaning behind the numbers, and telling stories based on the evidence. Students will learn how to apply them in the real research setting by developing their own research projects.

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

- understand the process of quantitative research in social science;
- develop a set of quantitative research questions, which are theoretically informed and grounded in existing research;
- appreciate the relationship among theory, concepts, measures, and analytical design;
- assess and evaluate best practices in research methods of data collection;
- apply univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis to produce empirical evidence; and

- interpret the results of quantitative data analyses.

### **Course Material:**

#### ***Textbook:***

Singleton, R. and B. Straits. 2018. Approaches to Social Research, 6th Ed. Oxford University Press.

Please consult the Western Bookstore for the prices and purchase options:

[https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2023A&courses%5B0%5D=001\\_UW/SOC3306A](https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2023A&courses%5B0%5D=001_UW/SOC3306A)

#### ***Required supplemental readings:***

In addition to the textbook, other materials which are assigned as a part of the required readings will be available on the OWL.

#### ***Statistical Computing:***

The statistical computing for the course will be done using STATA. STATA is available on computers located in the Social Science computing lab (Room 1032).

If you would like to work on STATA for a course project from home, it is also available via MyVLab (<https://myvlab.uwo.ca/>), free of charge for the students registered in this course. You can find access information at: [https://myvlab.uwo.ca/using\\_mfa\\_on\\_myvlab.html](https://myvlab.uwo.ca/using_mfa_on_myvlab.html).

### **Communication:**

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.

***How to contact me:***

By email: [jasmine.ha@uwo.ca](mailto: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.

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**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:

Midterm exam (Feb 27, in class)	25%
In-lab assignment (Mar 27)	15%
Project – Literature review (due Feb 6)	20%
Project – Final report (due April 3)	40%

***Mid-term exam*** (25%): A mid-term exam is scheduled for ***Tuesday, Feb 27<sup>th</sup>***. It will take place in-person during class time. It will be a *closed-book exam* to test knowledge about fundamental quantitative research design and *no use of electric devices* will be permitted. The exam consists of a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions and will require knowledge of the textbook, additional assigned readings, and lectures up to the week prior to the exam date. You are responsible for all the material in the assigned chapters and readings even if this material is not covered in class.

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.

***In-lab Assignment: Data analysis challenge*** (15%): The activity is scheduled for ***Tuesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>*** during class time. Students will be assessed for hands-on skills in working with and interpreting empirical results from the data. You are allowed to consult all the course materials previously introduced in class but expected to work under a time-constrained setting. The questions will be presented at the beginning of the lab, and the results should be submitted via OWL by the end of the class time.

**Course Project - Quantitative Research Paper (60%):** To demonstrate your knowledge of quantitative research methods, you will be asked to develop a research paper using the Canadian General Social Survey (GSS). It is encouraged to select a research topic which can be addressed by the GSS, Cycle 27, Social Identity. (It is possible for you to explore themes outside of the scope of this specific dataset. If a research project requires alternative dataset, student must seek permission by the instructor.) This assignment will consist of two components:

- **Literature review and formulating a research question (20%)** – Approx. 5 Pages  
Due on *Tuesday, Feb 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 11:55PM*
- **Final research paper (40%)** – Approx. 12 Pages  
Due on *Tuesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, at 11:55PM*

The final research paper builds on the first assignment, such that students are expected to use the first assignment as a part of the final paper. In doing so, students are encouraged to modify and improve the first assignment, reflecting the feedback. Both papers should be electronically submitted by the OWL.

### ***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 73-80%. Should the final overall grades yield a value significantly below this range, grades will be adjusted upward to ensure an appropriate average 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](https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf) for additional information regarding:

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