



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 2206B-650
Research Methods in Sociology
Summer 2023

Online - Asynchronous

Instructor: Matthew Stackhouse

Office Hours: Thursday 9:00am – 11:00am EST, Zoom

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

Course Description:

The course is an introduction to the research process and ethical dilemmas faced by sociologists, as well as the survey of the essential procedures used to collect sociological data (e.g., sampling, questionnaire design, and observational field research techniques). We will cover several fundamental elements and ethical dilemmas of social research design including the role of theory in empirical research, research ethics, constructing sociological arguments, procedures used to collect and analyze data (e.g., quantitative and qualitative approaches to social research), and the analysis, interpretation, and presentation of data and results. We will engage with several methodological research procedures such as sampling strategies, using surveys, experiments, ethnography, interviews, and more. Students will learn the basics of conducting a research project beginning with the formulation of a research question and hypotheses, to the selection of an appropriate methodology, and to the implementation of proposing a study. Overall, this course will enhance students' ability to critically examine and evaluate sociological research.

Prerequisite(s): None.

Anti-requisite(s): Social work 2206A/B, Health Sciences 2801A/B, Political Science 3324F/G, or Political Science 2325F/G.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

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

1. understand what sociological research is and how sociological questions can be answered;
2. understand the importance of research ethics involved in doing human subjects research;
3. understand, describe, and identify key aspects of qualitative and quantitative research and recognize the strengths and limitations of each;
4. develop and enhance skills for reading and critically thinking about empirical research;
5. formulate and create sociologically relevant research questions and evaluate research designs;

6. design a realistic project that incorporates all elements of the research process; and
7. appreciate the challenges and complexity of sociological research.

Course Material:

Carr, Deborah, Elizabeth Heger Boyle, Benjamin Cornwell, Shelley Correll, Robert Crosnoe, Jeremy Freese and Mary C. Waters. *The Art and Science of Social Research*. 2nd Edition. W.W. Norton.

Textbook purchase can be made with two options, both from the UWO bookstore.

- **Option 1:** Purchase a license for E-book: ISBN 978-0-393-53749-9
- **Option 2:** Purchase a hardcopy: ISBN 978-0-393-53752-9

Note: The contents of both options are comparable. Please select the format that works best for you.

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.

I will host open office hours every Thursday at 9:00am – 11:00am over zoom. This is the only dedicated time that I have, and I strongly encourage your attendance to ask questions. We can meet by appointment if you cannot make the time, but this is a last resort.

I invite communication via email but will encourage you to attend office hours for more detailed questions and concerns. Please maintain professionalism when emailing me and refrain from writing your email like a text message. See this review for best practice and I will reply within 24 hours: <https://www.purdue.edu/advisors/students/professor.php>

Method of Evaluation:

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course. The course is entirely asynchronous. All assessments are to be submitted via OWL’s drop box. Testing is open book; more details will be discussed during the course.

Assessment	Weight	Due Date
<u>Research project:</u>		
Topic selection & annotated bibliography	15%	June 30 th
Final research proposal assignment	30%	July 28 th

Midterm	20%	July 9 th
Questionnaire assignment	15%	July 14 th
Final Exam	20%	TBA

Evaluation Breakdown:

1. Midterm exam (20%), July 7th – 9th: The midterm is worth 20% of your total grade and covers chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and lecture materials (from June 19th – July 3rd). This exam is comprised of a mix of multiple-choice and short answer. The exam will be open during the morning of July 7th (time TBD) and closed July 9th at 11:55 pm EST.

2. Questionnaire (15%), Due July 14th 11:55 pm EST on OWL: You are required to construct a questionnaire with the skills you learn from lecture. In class, we will discuss the advantages and challenges of using a questionnaire, and how to build an effective questionnaire. You will be required to create your own questionnaire on a sociological topic that will be assigned in lecture. More details will be posted on OWL.

3. Final Exam (20%), TBA (July 31st – August 3rd): The final exam is worth 20% of your total grade and tests material from July 10th to 24th. This exam consists of multiple-choice and short answer questions. The exact exam dates will be scheduled by the Registrar's Office during the exam period of July 31st – August 3rd.

4. Research proposal project:

One objective for this course is to design a realistic project that incorporates all elements of the research process. For the research project, students will produce a research proposal based on their own interest in a sociological or criminological topic (topic will be approved by instructor). More details will be posted on OWL closer to the when the assignments are given out.

The proposal is to be driven by research question(s) and hypotheses drawn from referenced literature. In total, the written assignment is worth 45% of your final grade and is comprised of two components, listed as follows:

- **4a. Topic Selection and Annotated Bibliography (15%), Due June 30th 11:55 pm EST on OWL:** You are required to submit a topic selection and annotated bibliography. This will consist of your chosen topic written as a research question(s) and a brief explanation for why your topic is sociologically relevant. An annotated bibliography is also required with at least five peer reviewed sources. At the end of the annotated bibliography, you must synthesize the reviewed sources and propose 2 – 3 hypotheses for your proposal. The assignment will be 3 – 3.5 pages max. From this assignment, you will receive feedback regarding your topic and research question. More information will be posted on OWL just prior to the onset of the course.

- **4b. Final Research Proposal (30%), Due July 28th by 11:55 pm EST on OWL:** You are required to complete a research proposal that will consist of a brief introduction (including research questions and hypotheses), a literature review, discussion regarding ethics, and methodology (likely includes an appended questionnaire, will discuss more in class). You are required to use a minimum of eight academic sources. The assignment should be approximately 7-9 pages double spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman, APA formatting.

Please do your best to submit assessments on time. Unexcused late written assessments will be penalized 5% per day.

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. The course professor 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. We can arrange for a brief extension or make-up test opportunity in the instance that you cannot meet a required deadline and have provided the necessary documentation (medical or otherwise) to your Home Faculty Academic Counsellor.

Course Schedule and Readings:

As a student, you are responsible for reading required chapters, watching lectures, taking notes, and preparing for deadlines in advance. I will upload each lecture every Monday at 9:00am EST. Workshops made to assist with your final assignment will be a separate upload.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assessment
1	June 19 th – 23 rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Common errors • Theory foundations for research • *Formulating research questions and hypotheses 	Ch. 1, 2	

2	June 26 th – 30 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research ethics • Conceptualization, generalization, validity • *Literature review workshop 	Ch. 3, 4, 5	<p>Topic selection and annotated bibliography due June 30th on OWL</p> <p>Questionnaire posted to OWL on June 30th.</p>
3	July 3 rd – 7 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sampling strategies • Survey research 	Ch. 6, 7	Midterm due July 9 th
4	July 10 th – 14 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimental research • Ethnography 	Ch. 8, 10	Questionnaire due July 14 th
5	July 17 th – 21 st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interview • Materials-based methods 	Ch.11, 12	
6	July 25 – 28 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation research • Course conclusion 	Ch. 9	<p>Final research proposal due July 28th</p> <p>Final Exam July 31st – August 3rd</p>

*Indicates separate upload for workshop

Important Dates:

- June 19th: Second summer term begins
- June 23rd: Last day to add a course
- July 1st: Canada Day
- July 17th: Last day to drop course without academic penalty
- July 28th: End of course
- July 31st – August 3rd: Examination period

Academic Policies:

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

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