



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 2206B - 002
Research Methods in Sociology
Winter 2025
Delivery Method - in-person

Instructor: Michael Haan, Associate Professor

Department of Sociology
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Teaching Assistants: Your primary TA's office hours and Zoom links are available on the lab assignment handout (to be uploaded to Brightspace)

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, and materials-based methods.

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:

- Bell, Edward, Alan Bryman, and Steven Kleinknecht. Social Research Methods, 6th Canadian Edition. Oxford University Press.
- A calculator capable of working with exponents and square roots, but **not** capable of storing text and/or equations.

Communication:

Students are responsible for checking the course Brightspace site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/home>) 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.

How to Contact Me: I can be reached during my office hours or through email: mhaan2@uwo.ca

How to get important information:

I will periodically send information to you via Brightspace. I will also be available via email, and will answer any questions within 24 hours (it might take a little longer on weekends). If you ask a question that I think others in the class will be interested in, I reserve the right to send my response to everyone via Brightspace. I will not identify you as the person that asked the question.

Policy on Laptops and other Electronics/Phones in Class:

Laptops are permitted in class, but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, they will be told to close the lid and they will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cell phones are turned off at the beginning of class.

Method of Evaluation:

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

Grades are allocated as follows:

Test 1: February 13	30%
Attendance:	15%
Mini-assignment:	15%
Final Exam (cumulative): TBA	40%

Policy on Exams

Every examination in this class (including the final) will be 3 hours long. It will be written in person, and only a calculator not capable of storing text is permitted. The calculator should be able to calculate exponents and square roots. No other devices or cheat sheets are permitted.

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.

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.

University policy on academic considerations are described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation. Further information about academic considerations, and information about submitting this self-attestation with your academic consideration request may be found here. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.”

Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#). Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the central academic consideration portal. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically schedule during the last week of the term. Students should also note that the instructor may designate one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described elsewhere in this document. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor of this course, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness should use the [Student Medical Certificate](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.

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.

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).

Artificial Intelligence:

1. *All assignments must be completed independently, without the aid of artificial intelligence (AI).*

Academic Policies:

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

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.

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/>).

Students are expected to retain all research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, your instructor may ask you to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against you.

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.

Copyright: Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student’s own private use.

Absence from Course Commitments: Students must familiarize themselves with the Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the central academic consideration portal. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Note that **supporting documentation is always required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams)** and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically schedule during the last week of the term. Students should also note that the instructor may designate one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described in the course outline. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor of this course, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness should use the Student Medical Certificate

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.

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 Academic Counselling Office.

Missed Tests and Exams: Students with an approved absence from an in-class test will be required to write a make-up test. 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. Course professors may not be available to respond to questions during the make-up test/exam slots.

Students with an approved absence from a final exam in December or April will be required to write a makeup exam known as a Special Examination. Permission to write a Special Examination may be granted on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documentation provided to the student's Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

Students who fail to write a make-up test or special examination will receive a grade of zero on that assessment. No other make-up opportunities will be provided unless further academic consideration is granted by the student's Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

Religious Accommodation: Students should review the policy for [Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#) .

Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the

examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

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 Brightspace 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.

Accessibility Options: Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf . Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website: www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/examinations/accommodated_exams.html .

Mental Health: Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <https://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence: Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html . To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca .

Additional resources:

Registrar Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <http://westernusc.ca/services>

Course Selection: Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any antirequisite courses they may have taken.

If a student enrolls in a course for which they do not have the prerequisites, they may be removed from the course and have it deleted from their record. This decision may not be appealed. A student will receive no adjustment to their fees in the event that they are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

If a student takes a course that is antirequisite to a course previously taken, they will lose credit for the earlier course, regardless of the grade achieved in the most recent course.

Please visit your Home Faculty Academic Counselling webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters:

https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html .

Bookstore: Search for Textbook availability and cost <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search>

2024-2025

Course Schedule and Readings:

- January 9:** *Class 1 – Introduction to the course*
- January 16:** *Class 2a – General research orientations (Chapter 1)*
Class 2b – Research designs (Chapter 2)
- January 23:** *Class 3a – Research ethics Chapter 3.*
Class 3b – The nature of quantitative research. Chapter 4.
- January 30:** *Class 4a – Survey research. Chapter 5.*
Class 4b – Structured observation. Chapter 6.
- February 6:** *Class 5a – Quantitative sampling. Chapter 7.*
Class 5b – Quantitative data analysis. Chapter 8.
- February 13:** *Class 6 - Test 1*
- Feb 15-23 - Spring Reading Week**
- February 27:** *Class 7a – The nature of qualitative research. Chapter 9.*
Class 7b – Ethnography and participant observation. Chapter 10.
- March 6:** *Class 8a – Interviewing. Chapter 11.*
Class 8b – Content Analysis. Chapter 12.
- March 13:** *Class 9a – Qualitative data analysis. Chapter 13.*
Class 9b – Bringing it all together. Chapter 14.
- March 20:** *Class 10a – Conducting a research project. Chapter 15.*
Class 10b – Reading other people’s research. Assigned readings.
- March 27:** *Class 11a – SPSS and/or Stata lab.*
Class 11b – SPSS and/or Stata lab
- April 3:** **Review**

Dates for department makeup exams for those with documented absences will be announced on Brightspace.

Policy on Exams

Every examination in this class (including the final) will be up to 3 hours long. It will be written in person, and no devices or cheat sheets are permitted.

Sample Exam Questions

Note: There will be roughly 30 questions like the ones below for the midterm, and about 50 for the final.

1. In a study where the goal is to get a probability sample of 100 students and 10 professors, a good sampling technique would be a:

- a. Simple random sample
- b. Snowball sample
- c. Quota sample
- d. Convenience sample
- e. Theoretical sample

2. The measure of association that should be used for two nominal variables is

- a. Cramer's V
- b. Pearson's R
- c. Kendall's Tau-b
- d. eta
- e. proc freq

3. Consider the following equation (3 points):

$$\text{Number of Cigarettes smoked} = 11 + 2 * \text{male} - 8 * \text{whitecollar}$$

which estimates the number of cigarettes consumed by a group of smokers. Two dummy variables, male and whitecollar, serve as predictors. Using the coefficients in the equation, estimate:

- 1) How many cigarettes a white collar woman would smoke?
- 2) How many cigarettes a white collar man would smoke?
- 3) Suppose the equation above had a Pearson's r value of 0.07. By how much would your estimate of cigarettes smoked be better than a complete guess?