



The University of Western Ontario  
SOCIOLOGY 3307F UW001

## Investigating the Social World:

### Qualitative Research

Fall 2024

In Person

**Instructor: Professor T.L. Adams**

**Office Hours: TBA**

**Department of Sociology**

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

#### **Official Course Description:**

Students will learn to investigate the social world using content analysis, various methods of observation, and different types of interviewing. Particular attention will be paid to the relationship between epistemology and qualitative research approaches. Students will participate in research practice exercises. Ultimately, students will learn to think critically about sociological research.

#### **Expanded Course Description:**

In this course, students will learn to investigate the social world using a variety of qualitative research approaches, such as in-depth interviewing, observation, and 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, 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 obtain some hands-on experience with qualitative research.

***Prerequisite(s): Prerequisite(s):*** Sociology 2206A/B.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your 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):*** Sociology 3310F/G, Family Studies and Human Development 3230A/B.

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

By the end of this course, students should be able to do the following:

- \* Evaluate different research methods and their usage.
- \* Formulate research questions & choose a qualitative research design to address 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.
- \* Analyse and interpret qualitative data.

## **Course Material/ Required Textbook:**

Deborah K. van den Hoonaard and Lisa-Jo van den Scott. (2021). *Qualitative Research in Action: A Canadian Primer* (Fourth edition). Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780190165970

## **Communication:**

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

If you need to reach me, please email me at [tladams@uwo.ca](mailto:tladams@uwo.ca).

## **Method of Evaluation:**

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

Class attendance	All weeks	10%
In-depth interview proposal	Oct 7, 2024	15%
(Auto) Ethnography Assignment	Nov 4, 2024	25%
In-Class Content Analysis Assignment	Nov 11-18, 2023	15%
Interview transcription, analysis and write-up	Dec 2, 2024	35%

### ***Evaluation Details:***

*In-depth interview proposal:* Identify a sociological problem. Identify research questions. Create a draft interview guide; Describe your recruitment strategy; produce your letter of information and consent form. Due October 7 2024

*(Auto) Ethnography Assignment:* Conduct an ethnography or auto-ethnography. This involves observing a site, collecting field notes, and analysing your data, or making notes on an experience that you have had personally and analysing them. Then write a brief report summarizing your observations. Answer the questions posed to you on the assignment sheet. Due Nov 4 2024

*Content Analysis Assignment:* Content will be assigned to you. Choose content to analyse and answer the questions posed to you on the assignment. We will do this during class time, but you will be given extra time to complete the assignment. Due Nov 11-18 2024

*Interview transcription, analysis and write-up:* Conduct an interview (over zoom, face-time, in-person or phone). Analyse the interview transcripts for themes related to your research questions, and write a brief report on your findings. Submit your transcription, your thematic coding notes, and a brief write-up on your findings. Due Dec 2 2024

All written assignments should be submitted online through OWL Brightspace. Detailed guidelines on assignment components will be provided.

***ALL ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES ARE FLEXIBLE. THERE IS A 72-HOUR SUBMISSION WINDOW DURING WHICH ASSIGNMENTS CAN BE HANDED IN AND NOT CONSIDERED LATE.***

*Should students submit their assessment beyond 72 hours past the deadline, a late penalty of 2% per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade. As flexible deadlines are used in this course, requests for academic consideration will not be granted, EXCEPT FOR THE FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE DECEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup>.*

*For this course the following assessment has been designated as requiring supporting documentation (for submissions beyond the 72-hour window): INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION, ANALYSIS AND WRITE-UP, DUE DECEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup> 2024.*

### **Student Absences:**

If you are ill and cannot attend a lecture class, please email the professor before class.

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.

### **Artificial Intelligence:**

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

### **Academic Policies:**

Please review the Department of Sociology “[Important Academic Policies](#)” 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
- Course Selection
- Absence from Course Commitments
- Missed Tests and Exams
- Religious Accommodations
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health
- Gender-Based and Sexual Violence statement

## **Course Schedule and Readings:**

**September 9**            **Introduction & What is Qualitative Research? Approaches to Research**

Reading: textbook, chapters 1 & 2

**September 16**            **Designing Qualitative Research / Ethics in Research**

Reading: textbook, chapters 3 & 4

**September 23**            **In-depth interviews**

Reading: textbook, chapter 6

**September 30**            **No Class – National Day for Truth & Reconciliation**

**October 7**                **Ethnography (and Auto-Ethnography)**

Reading: textbook, chapter 5

\*\* In-Depth interviewing proposal due

**October 14**            **THANKSGIVING**

**October 21:**            **Arts-Based Research**

No reading:

**October 28:**            **Controversies in Qualitative Research**

Reading: TBD

**November 4:**            **Case Studies / Institutional Ethnography / Indigenous Research**

No reading

\*\* Ethnography assignment due

**November 11:**            **Content Analysis**

Reading: textbook, chapter 8

\*\* In-class assignment

**November 18**      **Analysis, Interpretation, and Writing**

Reading: textbook chapter 9 (and 10).

**November 25**      **Office Hours / Work on your Final Assignment**

**December 2**      **Course Wrap-Up, Review, and Reflections**

\*\* Interview Assignment Due this week

2024-2025