



Social Justice and Peace Studies 3400F (570)
RESEARCH FOR SOCIAL CHANGE
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026

Instructor: A. Larkin
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Course Information

Calendar Description:

This class introduces students to critical feminist, anti-racist, Indigenous methods to conduct research that promotes social justice, peace building and dispute resolution. Students will engage with qualitative and some quantitative methods effective for research with diverse social groups, and techniques to engage with a range of documentary and media sources.

Prerequisite(s): Social Justice and Peace Studies 1025F/G and Social Justice and Peace Studies 1026F/G.

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: SOCLJUST

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This 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.



SJPS 3400 F

Critical Research Methods for Social Change

FALL 2025

Instructor: Dr. Allyson Larkin

Contact: alarkin2@uwo.ca (preferred method—please include 3400 in subject line)

Office Hours: By appointment, in person or on Zoom

Course Overview: Welcome to SJPS 3400, Critical Research Methodologies, a course that explores a wide range of methods, motivations, questions and theories that inform research practices that aim to raise awareness, alleviate oppression, identify misinformation and to promote a more just and peaceful world. In this course you will learn how to use a wide range of tools that are essential for working in the field of Social Justice or Peace-building. Investigating social problems, policies and practices requires digging beneath the more obvious assumptions and expectations that we encounter in our day to day lives.

There are many historical examples of how university research has been used to justify social policies and actions that have been devastating to whole populations. One example would be how the Indigenous residential schools were promoted as a beneficial experience for Indigenous children. Other examples include research that seeks to prove the superiority of one race of people over another or to debunk other knowledge that has become unpopular or inconvenient—think about how climate change or the impact of tobacco on our health have been manipulated by interests who sought to gain by suppressing the truth or manufacturing misinformation. I would argue that it is as important to learn to identify misinformation or poorly designed research as it is to have the skills and knowledge to conduct effective and honest research.

Topics covered in this course include: Scoping the field for research, developing effective research design, ethical dilemmas of critical research, engaging theory into research analysis and production, Indigenous methods and knowledge mobilization and writing grants to gain access to support to conduct research.

Learning Objectives: Throughout this course, students will learn to:

- Identify how dominant epistemological norms and cultural assumptions shape a great deal of research
- Explore the relationships between critical research and social activism.
- Deliver effective public presentations
- Develop confidence in the design of research proposals, including developing a formal research design proposal
- Compare and contrast the strengths, limitations, and appropriateness of various methodological approaches
- Analyze ideas about how to apply critical methods/methodological research

Learning Outcomes

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

- Understand how different research methods and methodologies align with specific fields of research
- Identify gaps and inconsistencies in research design
- Develop research grant proposals
- Mobilize the knowledge they have developed from their research projects

Note on AI use in class and with assignments: Some assignments in this course may include or allow use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), including ChatGPT or related tools for the creation of text, images, computer code, audio, or other media. The instructor will inform you when, where and how you may use these tools, and provide guidance for citation. *If* AI is used without citation or in a manner that has been excluded on any assignment or assessment in this class, students will not receive credit for their work.

Class Meetings: This class is highly interactive and a portion of your final assessment will be based on consistent participation and attendance. We will engage a ‘flipped classroom’ approach to the course this term. One hour of the class will be asynchronous material, either a documentary, readings, independent activities, taped lecture or other independent work that you can choose to engage with as your schedule allows. More explanation about flipped classrooms will be discussed in class. Students will be expected to arrive in class prepared to engage in discussion on this material.

The in-person class meetings will incorporate brief lectures, group discussions, interactive group activities, simulations and student facilitated discussions. It is absolutely essential that students engage with the instructor and their peers to exchange ideas and to pursue a deeper understanding of the methods and strategies we are studying.

Readings and Class Discussions. My expectation is that everyone will have completed all assigned readings or other resources before we meet in class. The readings/resources are

absolutely essential to making our time in class meaningful. Readings/resources will be posted prior to each week's class and the slides or other resources will also be posted under the lessons tab. Everything can be found online; there are no required texts for this course.

Current Events: Please make sure you are keeping up to date on current events that are relevant to the study of Social Justice and Peace Studies. Almost every media story today is related to some aspect of our socio-economic life, so I will be drawing connections to contemporary events to illustrate how they are reported, whose views are prioritized and use these as examples for considering whose interests are left out, how bias may skew a story or potentially how information is used incorrectly. I also recommend that you seek out news sites from a wide range of sources, that may or may not agree with your own perspectives and beliefs. This will better inform you as to how others are consuming media and the ideas that are informing their positions. Effective dialogue demands that we are well-versed in a wide range of political positions and ideologies.

A note about participation: Attending every class is absolutely essential to be successful in this course! I do, however, understand that life can demand that we miss class on occasion, due to illness or other events. If you have to miss class for any reason, please email ASAP. Everyone gets one 'pass'—no questions asked, no excuse. Repeated absences, however, will definitely impact your participation mark and potentially your ability to pass the class. More than two absences will require a meeting with me.

Participation marks are earned by attending class, actively participating in conversations and discussions and demonstrating that you have engaged with the class resources. I will provide more details in class on how participation marks will be calculated.

Evaluation and assignments.	Value	Due
<i>Assignment Overviews are on Brightspace class site.</i>		
Class Engagement, participation, attendance (Ongoing all term)	15%	
Reflexivity and Research	15%	Sept 21
Developing a Research Proposal	10%	Oct 5
Mixing Methods	25%	Nov 10

Research Presentation	25%	TBD
Niigaan Sinclair Veritas Lecture	10%	Oct 19
TOTAL	100%	

Date	TOPIC/DUE DATES	RESOURCES
Sep 10	Welcome & Overview	Please come prepared to engage in some activities designed to create a classroom community
Sep 17	Who am I and why am I doing this work? Researcher Bias and Reflexivity Choosing a research topic	Kleinsasser, A. M. (2000). Researchers, reflexivity, and good data: Writing to unlearn. <i>Theory into practice</i> , 39(3), 155-162. Project Implicit: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html
Sep 24 NOTE: Oct 1 there will not be a class meeting because Prof Larkin is away at a conference	Research for Social Action, Social Change and Reconciliation	McGregor, D. (2017). From 'decolonized' to reconciliation research in Canada: Drawing from indigenous research paradigms. <i>ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies</i> , 2018, 17 (3): 810-831. Fassinger, R., & Morrow, S. L. (2013). Toward best practices in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method research: A social justice perspective. <i>Journal for Social Action in Counseling & Psychology</i> , 5(2), 69-83.
Oct 8	Do no harm: Ethics and research Ethics simulation in class	Eisen, A., & Berry, R. M. (2002). The absent professor: Why we don't teach research ethics and what to do about it. <i>The American Journal of Bioethics</i> , 2(4), 38-49. Roth, W. M., & Unger, H. V. (2018). Current perspectives on research ethics in qualitative research. In <i>Forum qualitative sozialforschung/forum: Qualitative social research</i> (Vol. 19, No. 3, p. 12). DEU.
Oct 15	Mixed Methods—what are the best tools for your project?	Dombrowski, L., Harmon, E., & Fox, S. (2016, June). Social justice-oriented interaction design: Outlining key design strategies and commitments. In <i>Proceedings of the 2016 ACM Conference on Designing Interactive Systems</i> (pp. 656-671).
Oct 22	Interviewing methods and analysis	De la Croix, A., Barrett, A., & Stenfors, T. (2018). How to... do research interviews in different ways. <i>The clinical teacher</i> , 15(6), 451-456.

		Knott, E., Rao, A. H., Summers, K., & Teeger, C. (2022). Interviews in the social sciences. <i>Nature Reviews Methods Primers</i> , 2(1), 73.
Oct 29	Critical discourse & policy analysis: Cracking codes in what we hear, see and read	Fairclough, N. (2013). Critical discourse analysis and critical policy studies. <i>Critical policy studies</i> , 7(2), 177-197.
Nov 5 NO CLASS- Reading week		Hobbs, R., Kanižaj, I., & Pereira, L. (2019). Digital literacy and propaganda. <i>Media Studies</i> , 10(19), 1-7. Baker, T., & McGuirk, P. (2017). Assemblage thinking as methodology: Commitments and practices for critical policy research. <i>Territory, Politics, Governance</i> , 5(4), 425-442. Why are States banning critical race theory? https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-are-states-banning-critical-race-theory/
Nov 12	Effective data: gathering participants and organizing responses	Pagano, M. B., Dunbar, N. M., Stanworth, S. J., & BEST Collaborative and the Clinical Studies Group. (2020). How do we design and report a high-quality survey?. <i>Transfusion</i> , 60(10), 2178-2184.
Nov 19	So what? Mobilizing knowledge from research for social impact	SSHRC Knowledge Mobilization https://sshrc-crsh.canada.ca/en/funding/policies-regulations-and-guidelines/guidelines-effective-knowledge-mobilization.aspx file:/// Heilig, J. V., & Brewer, T. J. (2019). Making the Case for Academia's Engagement in Knowledge: Mobilization and Purposeful Public Scholarship in Social Media. <i>Critical Questions in Education</i> , 10(2), 81-91.
Nov 26	Presentations	In-class—Individual Schedule TBD
Dec 3	Presentations	Remaining Presentations & Class wrap up

CLASS SCHEDULE and Required Resources. All resources can be accessed through hyperlink or on Google Scholar through UWO Libraries. Additionally, pdfs can be found on the course Brightspace page.

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

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

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the 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, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under Special Examinations).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University

College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-supportservices/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:
https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

GBSV Support:

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:
<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safecampus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with you instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammarchecking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the 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; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

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.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.