



**Sociology 2206b (571)
Research Methods in Sociology
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026**

Instructor: D. Maynard
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Course Information

Calendar Description:

An introduction to the research process and ethical dilemmas faced by sociologists, as well as a survey of the essential procedures used to collect sociological data, e.g. sampling, questionnaire design, and observational field research techniques.

Antirequisite(s): [Social Work 2206A/B](#), [Health Sciences 2801A/B](#), [Political Science 3324F/G](#), or [Political Science 2325F/G](#).

Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in 1.0 from Sociology courses at the 1000 level.

Extra Information: 3 hours. Recommended in Years 2 or 3 of a Major, Specialization or Honours Specialization offered through the Dept of Sociology.

Course Weight: 0.50
Breadth: Category A
Subject Code: SOCIOLOG

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.

RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIOLOGY
SOCIOLOGY 2206B 571 Winter 2025
King's University College at the University of Western Ontario

INSTRUCTOR

Prof. D Maynard
Email: dmaynar3@uwo.ca
Office/Office hours: Please see course owl page

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In general:

Students will become familiar with the traditions and best practices of research in sociology while being exposed to practical discussion of the research industry/careers, and learning to conduct primary research themselves, including being introduced to common tools such as academic libraries and software for organizing and analyzing evidence.

In specific, students will:

- Be familiar with the central philosophies regarding what 'knowledge' and 'social reality' is for scientific and non-scientific research traditions in sociology. Recognize the ways in which different ways of theorizing, asking research questions, and approaching practical research processes vary based on these traditions.
 - Know the three sources of evidence in sociology (what people say, what people do, and what people produce). Know the advantages and disadvantages to the research types that use various sources of evidence, in both scientific and non-scientific research traditions.
 - Be familiar with the step by step processes as well as best practices for conducting survey/interview based research, for observation based/ethnographic research and for 'unobtrusive' research including content analysis, secondary data analysis, and analysis using official statistics.
 - Understand the importance of sampling strategy and procedure in sociological research and be able to choose and create an appropriate sample given the research plan (both scientific and non-scientific samples).
 - Become familiar with the organization and 'management' of particularly scientific data as well as the production and basic analysis of both univariate and bivariate descriptive statistics. Be able to perform these functions using common data organization/analysis software (in this case excel).
 - Be able to use an academic library to find, make sense of, and reference specific/topical sociological research and be familiar with the various forms of publication in which sociological research is published (with special focus on Journals).
 - Be able to appropriately summarize, paraphrase and cite sociological research. Be able to appropriately critique published research/understand the limits of an item of research.
 - Have exposure to discussion of how research publishing happens IRL and what the careers of researchers look like on an everyday level (and how they get there).
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REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Edward Bell, Bryman, Alan, and Steven Klienknect. 2022. *Social Research Methods: Sixth Canadian edition*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

**No extra materials/resources from this text are required – 4th edition and after can all easily be used and even 2nd or 3rd editions just require that you find some of the info in different chapters, I strongly recommend buying used locally. The western bookstore has new and e-rental copies available only, so used copies are a quest for the student. Library copies, and the 'office' copy hanging on my office door are also there for your use.*

The maximum cost for this resource (for a new, hard-copy version) is approximately \$120.

COURSE FORMAT

This is a synchronous, in-person course partnered with some online delivery of content and online collection and return of assignments, and with in-person examinations. This course is mounted to the OWL (Brightspace) system at western. Students need access to a computer with internet access and access to your office suite (to use things like word and excel). Office 365 is provided by Western or students can use personal desk copies. There are two large exams and an ongoing assignment series. This is a hands-on course and students should expect to be present in class each week.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ASSIGNMENTS	20%
MIDTERM	40%
FINAL EXAMINATION	40%

N.B. There are no participation or attendance marks assigned for this course.

DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Course Plan	Assigned Textbook Reading
Jan 07	Lecture 1 Course logistics, Introductory lecture: 'What is research?' Practical 1 Intro to assignments and related resources A1 Choosing a course question – how does X impact Y for s/P?	Chapter 1: General Research Orientations
Jan 14	Lecture 2 'What is knowledge and what should we know?' Practical 2 Where is social research published and accessed? How to use your academic library like a researcher A2 Finding preexisting research on your question	Chapter 1: (continued) Chapter 2: Research Designs
Jan 21	Lecture 3 'What is knowledge and what should we know?' Continued Practical 3 How to use your academic library like a researcher con't A3 Finding reference/citation linked research on your question	Chapter 4: The Nature of Quantitative Research Chapter 9: The Nature of Qualitative Research
Jan 28	Lecture 4 Sampling: Who/what/where/how to take samples of what we want to learn from Practical 4 Introducing survey data and data documentation A4 Choosing survey data and X, Y and s/P variables for your question	Chapter 7: Sampling
Feb 04	Lecture 5 Analyzing the evidence: What the numbers tell us (and don't) - describing a concept we've measured Practical 5 Picking out a target sample and dealing with missing information: Organizing and managing your data to prepare for analysis A5 Pick out your s/P, X and Y and put them on a new excel sheet, and remove non-target and invalid cases to prepare for analysis	Chapter 8: Quantitative Data Analysis
Feb 11	Lecture 6 Analyzing the evidence: What the numbers tell us (and don't) – describing relationships between concepts we've measured Practical 6	Chapter 8: Quantitative Data Analysis con't

	<p><i>Evaluating and describing what is measured: Making sense of your X and Y for your s/P</i></p> <p><i>A6 Provide some evaluation and univariate analysis on your X and Y choices for your chosen s/P by creating and considering frequency tables and some basic statistics</i></p> <p>A1, 2, 3, 4 due on Friday at 1159 (anything submitted after this date will get half marks)</p>	
Feb 18	READING WEEK	<i>No new readings - Please see the TESTS content tab and review material from lectures 1 through 6</i>
Feb 25	MIDTERM EXAM	<i>No readings</i>
<i>Mar 04</i>	<p>Lecture 7 <i>'Asking people questions as a way to learn'</i></p> <p>Practical 7 <i>Evaluating and describing relationships between what is measured: What does the relationship between your X and Y look like?</i></p> <p><i>A7 Provide some evaluation and bivariate analysis on your X by Y relationship by Creating a crosstab and doing some bivariate analysis</i></p>	<i>Chapter 5: Survey Research</i>
<i>Mar 11</i>	<p>Lecture 8 <i>'Asking people questions as a way to learn' continued</i></p> <p>Practical 8 <i>Paraphrasing and citing previous work that relates to ours</i></p> <p><i>A8 Starting to bring everything together, look back at the library research from A2/A3, and your own work and answer specific questions about data and samples choices</i></p>	<i>Chapter 5 continued : Asking Questions Will also include a bit discussion from Chapter 11: Qualitative Interviewing</i>
Mar 18	<p>Lecture 9 <i>'Watching people as a way to learn'</i></p> <p>Practical 9 <i>Summarizing what we've done/ learned</i></p> <p><i>A9 Answer some more specific questions from the library research/your own work about measures of X and Y, and what you found</i></p> <p>A5, 6, 7 due on Friday at 1159 (anything submitted after this will get half marks)</p>	<i>Chapter 6: Structured Observation Chapter 10: Ethnography</i>
<i>Mar 25</i>	<p>Lecture 10 <i>'Analyzing the content of personal and social artefacts as a way to learn' and other 'unobtrusive' methods</i></p> <p>Practical 10 <i>Continuing to summarize what we've done/learned</i></p> <p><i>A10 Finishing it off: Answering some last questions about your findings and conclusions</i></p>	<i>Chapter 12: Content Analysis Includes 'other sources of data' topic</i>
April 01	<p><i>Finishing whatever needs doing</i></p> <p><i>Final Exam Review</i></p> <p>A8, 9, 10 due on Friday at 1159 (anything submitted after this date will get half marks)</p>	<i>Please see TESTS content tab of owl for info on your Final exam and review lectures 7 through 10</i>
<i>Final Exam Period April 07 to 30</i>	FINAL EXAM	

** Note that the readings and lecture schedule may vary slightly from the above*

MIDTERM TEST

This test will cover lectures 1 through 6 and is currently scheduled 2.5 hours long with a mix of multiple choice and shorter written questions. It will be in-person, on paper and held during normal class time. Students are expected to complete tests without aid from any person, or from non-approved resources (in this case, that would be aid from anything except your own brain). Proctoring during testing, as well as using software that analyzes patterns of answers for similarity and other forms of checking may be used to help assess the good faith of test taking and originality of each test. **This test is a designated assessment**, which means that like the final, students can only miss this exam with permission from the Academic Dean (a 'documented' absence).

FINAL EXAMINATION

The final examination will be scheduled during the final examination period. It will be 3 hours in length and will also have multiple choice, and shorter written questions. The focus will mostly be on untested lecture material from the end of the course but will also include broad course themes and important details covered throughout the term (it contains thematically cumulative portions). A course-end thematic review will be conducted to help you prepare for the cumulative portion (which, again, is about themes and important details – its not a retest of the nitty gritty). Like the midterm, students are expected to complete tests without aid from any person, or from non-approved resources (in this case, that would be aid from anything except your own brain). Proctoring during testing, as well as using software that analyzes patterns of answers for similarity and other forms of checking may be used to help assess the good faith of test taking and originality of each test.

ASSIGNMENTS

Through additive assignment work students will have an opportunity to apply what they have learned and learn some practical skills related to basic good research in a simplified way. The simple and straight forward nature means that students who participate fully have lots of successes and high assignment grades – a help in this content heavy and challenging course.

These assignments will allow students to identify a simple sociological subject/topic/question that interests them (from provided general choices), and that will link all the assignment material. Overall, students will comprehensively find, review and quickly accumulate and evaluate existing research in their area of interest through the library database at Western -what has been said about this question already? Students are asked to identify the main 'concepts' of their question and explore and understand the creation and basic descriptions of these measured concepts by choosing and investigating measures in existing social research data (provided by the professor) that represent their chosen concepts. Students finish the assignment set by linking their concepts together in a way meant to explore the relationships or potential 'cause and effect' associations – the beginning of 'answering' the research question – which is as far as this course can take you.

Practical learning time covering expectations and specific techniques for each assignment will be provided. Students can ALWAYS meet with the instructor to discuss possible difficulties or concerns – this is a hands-on course and your instructor is a very useful resource.

The series is broken down into 10 pieces that all demonstrate some small aspect of research or allow the student to make choices about where the assignment series will take them. Its very strongly recommended that students complete, submit and receive feedback on assignments at least roughly on the schedule they are provided in this outline. However, there are a couple of hard deadlines during the course for groups of assignment parts, and a hard deadline at the very end of the semester after which I will no longer accept assignment work.

A quick note about AI and assignment work: Within this course, use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT, translation tools, and grammar-checking tools) is not permitted for any work submitted for evaluation. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline. Please note that I understand the enormous benefit of AI for many academic and literary tasks, but I am teaching you thinking and doing basics and also underlying concepts of how things work and why – I'm not looking for a fake fancy final product at any point and I don't want to grade how good your Grammarly subscription is – please do your own thinking, choosing, writing and technical work for this class – I'm looking for good faith engagement from students, nothing more.

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-support-services/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/safe-campus/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 your instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking 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.