



**Sociology 2206a (571)
Research Methods in Sociology
Fall/ Winter 2026-2027**

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): **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 2206a 571 Fall 2026
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
Sept 09	Lecture 1 <i>Course logistics, Introductory lecture: 'What is research?'</i> Practical 1 <i>Intro to assignments and related resources</i> <i>A1 Choosing a course question – how does X impact Y for s/P?</i>	Chapter 1: General Research Orientations
Sept 16	Lecture 2 <i>'What is knowledge and what should we know?'</i> Practical 2 <i>Where is social research published and accessed?</i> <i>How to use your academic library like a researcher</i> <i>A2 Finding preexisting research on your question</i>	Chapter 1: (continued) Chapter 2: Research Designs
Sept 23	Lecture 3 <i>'What is knowledge and what should we know?'</i> Continued Practical 3 <i>How to use your academic library like a research con't</i> <i>A3 Finding reference/citation linked research on your question</i>	Chapter 4: The Nature of Quantitative Research Chapter 9: The Nature of Qualitative Research
Sept 30	Truth and Reconciliation Day	No Classes, No Readings
Oct 07	Lecture 4 <i>Sampling: Who/what/where/how to take samples of what we want to learn from</i> Practical 4 <i>Introducing survey data and data documentation</i> <i>A4 Choosing survey data and X, Y and s/P variables for your question</i>	Chapter 7: Sampling
Oct 14	Reading Week	No new readings
Oct 21	Lecture 5 <i>Analyzing the evidence: What the numbers tell us (and don't) - describing a concept we've measured</i> Practical 5 <i>Picking out a target sample and dealing with missing information:</i> <i>Organizing and managing your data to prepare for analysis</i> <i>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</i> A1, 2, 3, 4 due Friday Oct 23 at 1159 (anything submitted after this date will get half marks)	Chapter 8: Quantitative Data Analysis

Oct 28	Lecture 6 <i>Analyzing the evidence: What the numbers tell us (and don't) – describing relationships between concepts we've measured</i> Practical 6 <i>Evaluating and describing what is measured: Making sense of your X and Y for your s/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 Last Looks for the midterm exam	Chapter 8: Quantitative Data <i>Analysis con't</i> No new readings - Please see the TESTS content tab and review material from lectures 1 through 6
Nov 04	Midterm Exam	No readings
Nov 11	Lecture 7 <i>'Asking people questions as a way to learn'</i> Practical 7 <i>Evaluating and describing relationships between what is measured: What does the relationship between your X and Y look like?</i> A7 Provide some evaluation and bivariate analysis on your X by Y relationship by Creating a crosstab and doing some bivariate analysis	Chapter 5: Survey Research
Nov 18	Lecture 8 <i>'Asking people questions as a way to learn' continued</i> Practical 8 <i>Paraphrasing and citing previous work that relates to ours</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	Chapter 5 continued : Asking Questions Will also include a bit discussion from Chapter 11: Qualitative Interviewing
Nov 25	Lecture 9 <i>'Watching people as a way to learn'</i> Practical 9 <i>Summarizing what we've done/ learned</i> A9 Answer some more specific questions from the library research/your own work about measures of X and Y, and what you found A5, 6, 7 due Friday Nov 27 at 1159 (anything submitted after this will get half marks)	Chapter 6: Structured Observation Chapter 10: Ethnography
Dec 02	Lecture 10 <i>'Analyzing the content of personal and social artefacts as a way to learn' and other 'unobtrusive' methods</i> Practical 10 <i>Continuing to summarize what we've done/learned</i> A10 Finishing it off: Answering some last questions about your findings and conclusions	Chapter 12: Content Analysis Includes 'other sources of data' topic
Dec 09	Final Exam Review and finishing up A8, 9, 10 due TODAY at 1159 (anything submitted after this date will get half marks)	Please see TESTS content tab of owl for info on your Final exam and review lectures 7 through 10
Final Exam Period	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
2026-27**

1. Academic Accommodations (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 at [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible, and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>.

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this which assessment has been designated as requiring documentation for consideration (that is, exempt from undocumented absences).
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

If an instructor has built flexibility into their assessments (e.g., “complete 8 of 10 quizzes”), this flexibility will already address consideration needs and thus academic consideration may be denied.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see

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

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** 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 (i.e., you are scheduled to write 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](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their 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.

3. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

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

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options on how to obtain help:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone 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: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's 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 (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. 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://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

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.

6. 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 https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.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 to check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course.** Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.