



Brescia University College

Sociology 2206A (530): Research Methods in Sociology
September - December 2016

Dr. Stephen Lin
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Office hours: by appointment

Class time/room:
Tuesdays 2:30pm - 4:30pm; Thursdays 2:30pm - 3:30pm / BR 302

Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce students to the tools which scientists use to conduct research on society and produce knowledge – in other words, how to *be* sociologists. Many of the fundamental issues of research will be covered in this course, including the scientific method and research process, ethical dilemmas that may arise, and some of the procedures used to collect and analyze data, i.e., quantitative and qualitative approaches to social research. During the course, students will learn how to carry out a scientific investigation from the formulation of hypotheses, to the selection of an appropriate methodology, to the implementation of a study. Enhancing students' ability to critically examine sociological research is an important part of this course.

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

Antirequisite(s): Social Work 2206A/B or the former 2205, Health Sciences 2801A/B or the former Health Sciences 2800.

Required Text(s):

Neuman, L.W., & Robson, K. (2014). *Basics of Social Research* (3rd Canadian ed.). Toronto: Pearson Canada.

You don't need to purchase any SPSS-related textbook and you may use the older edition of the textbook as long as you match the correct chapter and page number with what is stated in the weekly reading information

Statistical Computing:

In this course, I will introduce you the statistical software used by social scientists, called SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). SPSS is available on some computers located on campus. You do not need to purchase this software or any textbook because I will teach you its basics during the lab time set aside for this course (see the timetable on page 5). It is important that you come to the lab to learn this new software.

Reading and Participation:

This course is required for the honours programme in sociology. As a result, it is expected that students will come to class prepared to discuss the assigned material. There is also attendance grade for tutorials; failure to attend classes regularly will put you at a disadvantage. Much of the course is cumulative, so missing one class or tutorials can cause problems for comprehending the material in the following classes.

Method of Evaluation:

Initial Group Assignment	5%
Final Group Research Proposal	30%
Midterm Exam (computer-marked multiple choice)	30%
Final Exam (multiple choice)	35%

Evaluation Breakdown (detailed information provided in class)

Group Assignment #1 (October 11); Group Research Proposal (December 6):

For these assignments you will apply your skills towards designing a suitable research proposal, which normally includes proper research questions, a literature review, and an outline of the study's research methodology. For Group Assignment 1 you will begin by choosing a research topic and formulating a specific research question and hypothesis. For Group Research Proposal, you will produce a full research proposal consisting of your research question and hypothesis from Initial Group Assignment, a literature review, and a description of an appropriate research methodology that could be used to study your chosen topic. Comprehensive steps necessary to implement this methodology and carry out your study should be included in your proposal. Detailed instructions for the assignments will be provided in class and on OWL.

Mid-Term Exam (October 25):

The mid-term exam is worth 30% of your total grade and covers **chapter 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9 and lecture materials (from September 8 to October 20)**. It will be 2 hours in length. This exam consists of multiple-choice questions only.

Final Exam (December Exam Period):

The final exam is worth 30% of your total grade. It will be 2 hours in length and will be **cumulative** from the beginning of this course. However, 20% of the questions will target on information before the midterm and 80% will cover information after the midterm. This exam will consist of multiple choice only.

Tutorial:

Tutorials will be held regularly during the class time (on Thursdays only) throughout the semester to help you with the group assignments and midterm/final exam preparation.

Course Schedule

Part I: The Fundamentals of Research			
1	Sept 8 Sept 13-15	Introduction to the Course (Group Formation) Theory & Social Research	Ch. 1, 2
2	Sept 20-22	Designing a Study	Ch. 5
3	Sept 27-29	Conceptualization, Operationalization & Measurement	Ch. 6
Part II: Modes of Observation			
4	Oct 4-6	Experimental & Survey Research I	Ch. 8, 9
5	Oct 11-13	Survey Research II / How to Write Survey Questions ** Group Assignment # 1 Due (<u>Oct 11 by 11:59pm</u> <u>Email Submission only</u>)	Ch. 8
6	Oct 18-20	Sampling	Ch. 7
7	Oct 25	2-hour Midterm Exam / No Class on Oct 27	None
8	Nov 1-3	Interviewing & Field Research Literature Review Workshop (Nov 3)	Ch. 4, 12, 13
9	Nov 8-10	Nonreactive Quantitative Research & Secondary Analysis	Ch. 10
10	Nov 15-17	Nonreactive Qualitative Research	Ch. 14
11	Nov 22-24	Brescia Library Computer Lab Research Proposal Workshop (Q & A session)	Handout on OWL
13	Nov 29-Dec 1	Ethics in Social Research	Ch. 3
Part III: Data Analysis			
14	Dec 6	Analysis of Quantitative & Qualitative Data *Group Research Proposal Due on <u>Tuesday, Dec 6</u> <u>by 11:59pm (Email Submission only)</u>	Ch. 11, 15

BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

1. POLICY REGARDING MAKEUP EXAMS AND EXTENSIONS OF DEADLINES

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete her academic responsibilities. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Please note that personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are not grounds for academic accommodation.

A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is **required** if a student is seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. A SMC can be downloaded under the Medical Documentation heading of the following website: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>. If it is not possible to have an SMC completed by the attending physician/nurse practitioner, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that her ability to meet academic responsibilities was seriously affected. Please note that under University Senate regulations documentation stating simply that the student "was seen for a medical reason" or "was ill" is **not** adequate to support a request for academic accommodation. All documentation is to be submitted to an Academic Advisor.

Whenever possible, requests for academic accommodation should be initiated in advance of due dates, examination dates, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and Academic Advisor in a timely manner.

The full statement of University policy regarding extensions of deadlines or makeup exams can be found at <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2014/pg117.html>

2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal problem that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds may not be considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult an Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines (refer to the Registrar's website, www.registrar.uwo.ca, for official dates). You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.* The Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory.

3. ABSENCES

Short Absences: If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

Extended Absences: If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations, if appropriate.

4. POLICY ON CHEATING & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Students are urged to read the section on Scholastic Offences in the Academic Calendar. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Misconduct in the Western Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Student Services Centre, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse. The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage 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 academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). 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. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, between Western University and Turnitin.com.

Computer-marked Tests/exams:

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. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal signed by the student must be sent to the Department Chair. If the response of the department is considered unsatisfactory to the student, she may then submit a signed, written appeal to the Office of the Dean. Only after receiving a final decision from the Dean may a student appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's Office, or you can consult an Academic Advisor. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Rights and Responsibilities in the Western Academic Calendar.

6. PREREQUISITES AND ANTIREQUISITES

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the 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.

Similarly, you will also be deleted from a class list if you have previously taken an antirequisite course unless this has the approval of the Dean. These decisions may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course because you have taken an antirequisite course.

7. SUPPORT SERVICES

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at http://www.brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar_services/index.html . The Western Registrar's website is at <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/index.cfm> . The website for the Student Development Centre at Western is at <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>. Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario.