

Course Outline

Sociology 2206B (section 530)

Research Methods in Sociology (Online, Asynchronous Version)

(Updated December 15, 2020)

General Information

Term: Winter
Year: FW2020

Instructor Information

Prof. E. Bell
To contact me, please use the Messages tab on the course OWL site. If there is a problem with OWL, use: eabell@uwo.ca.

Course 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, or Political Science 3324F/G.

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

Required Course Materials

Alan Bryman and Edward Bell
2019 *Social Research Methods: Fifth Canadian Edition*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

If you would like to order a hard copy of this textbook, you can do so at the Western Book Store's website (<https://bookstore.uwo.ca/>) and it will be shipped directly to you.

Alternatively, if you prefer the ebook version, it is available at:

<https://www.vitalsource.com/en-ca/products/social-research-methods-alan-bryman-edward-bell-v9780199029518>

Virtual Office Hours

By appointment. See the Overview tab on the course OWL site for instructions.

Brescia Competencies

Brescia courses are designed to develop students' competencies in a number of different areas (see https://brescia.uwo.ca/about/competency_based_learning/index.php). This course is designed to create a learning environment in which you will develop your competency in:

- 1) **Critical thinking**: the ability to exchange information and meaning across cultures, space, and time appropriately and correctly. This competency includes oral, written, and interpersonal communication, and the ability to use current or innovative media.
- 2) **Inquiry and analysis**: the ability to ask questions, examine issues, and reach informed conclusions by breaking down complex issues, exploring evidence, and describing relationships among persons, things, or events.
- 3) **Problem solving**: the ability to create and execute a strategy to answer a question or achieve a goal. Includes being able to anticipate the consequence of a potential solution, select a strategy among several alternatives, and decide when an acceptable outcome has been reached.
- 4) **Communication**: The ability to exchange information and meaning across cultures, space, and time appropriately and correctly. This competency includes oral, written, and interpersonal communication, and the ability to use current or innovative media.
- 5) **Self awareness and development**: The ability to draw meaning, knowledge and value from honest and fair reflection and self-evaluation. Students are able to recognize their emotions and patterns of thinking, their impact on others, and make a commitment to personal growth.
- 6) **Social awareness and engagement**: The ability to respect and be open to diversity (e.g. cultural, religious, political) and social justice. Students take personal responsibility to actively engage in and contribute to creating positive change in local, regional, national, or global communities and societies.
- 7) **Valuing**, the ability to make decisions or choose actions based on the consistent application of principles expressing fundamental values that are accepted on account of reason or spiritual insight.

Learning outcomes for this course, and their relationship to the Brescia competencies

This course will create a learning environment in which you can enhance your ability to:

- 1) think analytically about the world around you, and evaluate empirical claims about the social world (critical thinking, inquiry and analysis, problem solving);
- 2) understand how science differs from other ways of knowing (critical thinking, inquiry and analysis, problem solving, communication, self awareness and development, social awareness and engagement);
- 3) appreciate how knowledge is acquired in sociology and other social sciences, and how it is evaluated (critical thinking, inquiry and analysis, social awareness and engagement; valuing);

- 4) identify and reflect on the leading research paradigms in sociology—the positivist, interpretive, and critical approaches—and their philosophical underpinnings (critical thinking, inquiry and analysis, problem solving, self awareness and development, social awareness and engagement, valuing);
- 5) explain and interpret methodologically relevant matters such as causation, conceptualization, data collection, measurement, validity, reliability, research ethics, field research, interviewing, and sampling (critical thinking, inquiry and analysis, problem solving, communication, valuing);
- 6) critically evaluate social research reported in scholarly books and articles, and in the media (critical thinking, inquiry and analysis, problem solving, communication);
- 7) produce a sociological research question of some public significance (critical thinking, inquiry and analysis, problem solving, communication, self awareness and development, social awareness and engagement, valuing); and
- 8) conduct your own social research (all competencies).

Teaching Methodology and Expectations of Students

This course will be taught online in an asynchronous manner. Students are expected to engage with the material every week, and to complete the course requirements on time. *To start the course, go to the “Overview” section of the course OWL site.*

Copyright and Intellectual Property

PowerPoint lecture slides and notes, lists of readings, in-class activities, assignment guidelines, and other components of the course materials are typically the intellectual property of the instructor. Unauthorized reproduction through audio-recording, video-recording, photographing, sharing on social media, or posting on course-sharing websites is an infringement of copyright and is prohibited. Such action may be considered a Code of Conduct violation and lead to sanctions.

Evaluation

There will be four assignments in this course, each worth 25% of the final grade.

Evaluation Breakdown:

Component	Weight	Deadline
Assignment 1	25%	Friday, January 29
Assignment 2	25%	Friday, February 26
Assignment 3	25%	Friday, March 19
Assignment 4	25%	Monday, April 12

See the “Assignments” section of the course OWL site for further details.

Academic Accommodation

See the Academic Policies and Regulations section at the end of this course outline or consult the Academic Calendar.

Course Content

Topics will be covered in the order listed. See the “Course Content” section of the course OWL site for further details.

Topic	Description	Readings
1	The nature of science, research, and theory a) Science vs. other ways of knowing b) Three approaches to social science: positivist, interpretive, critical	Guide to the Book (pp. vii-viii); Preface (pp. xix-xx); Chapters 1, 9, 10
2	A general introduction to causation and research design	Chapter 2, and p.127 on the ecological fallacy
3	Research ethics	Chapter 3
4	Conceptualization, operationalization and measurement: levels of measurement; reliability, validity	Chapter 4; and pp. 173-176
5	Survey research	Chapter 5
6	Structured observation	Chapter 6
7	Qualitative interviewing, qualitative data analysis	Chapters 11, 13
8	Quantitative sampling	Chapter 7

2020-21 BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

1. POLICY REGARDING ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

The complete policy regarding [Accommodation for Illness - Undergraduate Students](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12) can be found at http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12.

Students who have long-term or chronic medical conditions which may impede their ability to complete academic responsibilities should seek Academic Accommodation through Student Accessibility Services (http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?PolicyCategoryID=1&Command=showCategory&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_10).

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.

Students who experience an illness or extenuating circumstance sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

1. Submitting a **Self-Reported Absence** form provided that the conditions for submission are met;
2. For medical absences, submitting a **Student Medical Certificate (SMC)** signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner;
3. For non-medical absences, submitting **appropriate documentation** (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to their Academic Advisor. Students are encouraged to contact their Academic Advisor to clarify what documentation is acceptable.

Requests for Academic Consideration Using the Self-Reported Absence Portal

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance of 48 hours or less that is sufficiently severe to render them unable to meet academic requirements should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours. Note that the excused absence includes all courses and academic requirements within the up to 48 hours, it is not intended to provide an excused absence from a single course while students fulfill their academic responsibilities in other courses during that time.

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances:

1. Students will be allowed a **maximum of two self-reported absences** between September and April and one self-reported absence between May and August;
2. The duration of the absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours from the time the Self-Reported Absence form is completed through the online portal, or from 8:30 am the following morning if the form is submitted after 4:30 pm;
3. The excused absence will terminate prior to the end of the 48 hour period if the student undertakes significant academic responsibilities (writes a test, submits a paper) during that time;
4. Self-reported absences will **not** be allowed for scheduled final examinations; midterm examinations scheduled during the December examination period; or for final lab examinations scheduled during the final week of term;
5. Self-report absences may **not** be used for assessments worth more than 30% of any course;
6. Any absences in excess of 48 hours will require students to present a Student Medical Certificate (SMC), or appropriate documentation;
7. Students **must** communicate with their instructors **no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form** to clarify how they will fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence.

Request for Academic Consideration for a Medical Absence

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 for illness 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 their academic responsibilities. Minor ailments typically treated by over-the-counter medications will not normally be accommodated.

The following conditions apply for students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds:

1. Students must submit their Student Medical Certificate (SMC) along with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities. An SMC can be downloaded from http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf ;
2. In cases where there might be an extended absence or serious issue, students should submit their documentation promptly and consult their Academic Advisor for advice during their recovery period;
3. Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, scheduled tests or examinations, and other academic requirements;
4. Students **must** communicate with their instructors **no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by the SMC to clarify how they will fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence;

5. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office/Academic Advisor in consultation with the course instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements, arranging Special Exams (make-ups), re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawal without academic penalty.

The [full policy on requesting accommodation due to illness](#) can be viewed at:

http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12

2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal challenge 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 are not normally considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines; please refer to the [Registrar's website](#), <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/> or the list of official sessional dates in the Academic Calendar (<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm?SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=>).

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.*

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.

Please note that for asynchronous online courses, attendance or participation requirements maybe different than for synchronous or in-person courses.

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 and warranted.

It is important to note that the Academic 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

(http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=5&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_68).

4. SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES

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.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_20.

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. 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 Scholastic Discipline for Undergraduate Students in the Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Academic Dean's Office, 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.

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, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.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 is to be sent to the School Chair. If the response of the Chair is considered unsatisfactory to the student, they may then submit a written appeal to the Office of the Dean. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Dean, they may appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA), if there are sufficient grounds for the appeal and if the matter falls within the jurisdiction of the SRBA. For information on academic appeals consult your Academic Advisor or see the Student Academic Appeals – Undergraduate in the Academic Calendar

http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_14.

Note that final course marks are not official until the Academic Dean has reviewed and signed the final grade report for the course. If course marks deviate from acceptable and appropriate standards, the Academic Dean may require grades to be adjusted to align them with accepted grading practices.

6. PREREQUISITES

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from the 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 prerequisite(s).

7. SUPPORT

Support Services

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/>. Students can access supports through Brescia's Student Life Centre (<http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/student-life/>) and Learning Skills Services at Western (<https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/>)

Mental Health and Wellness

Students may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to your learning, such as increased anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, feeling down or lost, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. Services are available to assist you

with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can obtain information about how to obtain help for yourself or others through **Mental Health & Wellness at Brescia** (<http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/mental-health-wellness/>) and **Health and Wellness at Western**, http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html.

Sexual Violence

All members of the Brescia University College community have a right to work and study in an environment that is free from any form of sexual violence. Brescia University College recognizes that the prevention of, and response to, Sexual Violence is of particular importance in the university environment. Sexual Violence is strictly prohibited and unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Brescia is committed to preventing Sexual Violence and creating a safe space for anyone in the Brescia community who has experienced Sexual Violence.

If you or someone you know has experienced any form of Sexual Violence, you may access resources at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/sexual-violence/>.

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.
