


GEOG 3250B – Social Science Research Methods in Geography

Winter 2021

Syllabus subject to change



Although this academic year might be different, Western University is committed to a **thriving campus**. We encourage you to check out the [Digital Student Experience](#) website to manage your academics and well-being. Additionally, the following link provides available resources to support students on and off campus: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

1. Technical Requirements



Stable internet connection



Laptop or computer



Working microphone

Recommended technical specifications are available at:

<https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/timetables.html>

2. Course Information



Course Component	Delivery Mode	Dates	Time
Lecture	Online – Virtual Asynchronous	N/A	N/A
Labs	Online – Virtual Synchronous	Tuesdays, starting Jan 19 th	11:30 am – 12:20 pm & 12:30 pm – 1:20 pm

Classes Start	Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
January 11	February 13-21	April 12	April 13	April 14-30

* March 15, 2021: Last day to drop a second-term half course



Course Instructor	Contact Information	Professor's Office Hours
Dr. Agnieszka Leszczynski	aleszczy@uwo.ca	Thursdays* 1:30 – 3 pm via Zoom Meeting ID: 973 3561 5058 Passcode: 315989

Teaching Assistant(s)	Contact Information	Lab Office Hours
TBA	geog3250@uwo.ca	TBA** To be held via Zoom Meeting ID: TBA Passcode: TBA

* Dr. Leszczynski's Office Hours start Thurs Jan 14th

** TA Office Hours start week of January 18th

Office hours will be held remotely using Zoom (see **Professor's Office Hours** above for details)



Students will be able to get help with labs during Lab Office Hours, which will be held remotely using Zoom (see **Lab Office Hours** above for details)

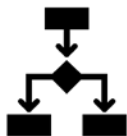
3. Calendar Description

A survey of a range of social scientific methods for studying humans (e.g., interviews, questionnaires); with an emphasis on research designs involving human interaction. Topics include identifying research problems, questions and designs, sources of error, ethics and values in research, methods of data collection, data analysis and presentation of findings.

2 lecture hours per week, 1 lab hour per week, 0.5 course

Prerequisite(s): Two full courses in Geography and third or fourth year status at the University.

Prerequisite(s):



Senate Regulations state, “unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will 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.”

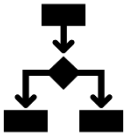
4. Textbook



☒ **Required textbook:** Bryman, Alan & Bell, Edward (2019) Social Research Methods, 5th Canadian Edition. Oxford University Press. *Available at the University Bookstore.*

☒ **Additional resources:** Any additional reading materials not included in the course textbook will be made available via the **Course Readings**, accessible via the OWL site for this course.

5. Course Objectives and Format



Research is the systematic pursuit of answers to questions that fascinate us. Social science research investigates a vast range of problems related to inequality, prejudice, mobility, social behaviour, cultural identity, and more. This course is designed to:

- Help students learn and apply the concepts and skills needed to design a social science research projects.
- Equip students to critically assess research conducted by others.

Component	Mode	Dates	Time	Frequency
Lectures	Virtual asynchronous	New lectures will be posted on OWL by 4:00 pm each Monday	2 hours for lectures	Weekly
Labs	Virtual synchronous	Tuesdays 11:30 am - 12:30 pm & 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm	1 hour for labs (+ additional time completing assignments)	Weekly (see course schedule)

All course material will be posted to **OWL**: <http://owl.uwo.ca> (GEOG 3250 001 FW20). Any changes will be indicated on the OWL site and discussed with the class.

Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox are the preferred browsers to optimally use OWL; update your browsers frequently. Students interested in evaluating their internet speed, please click [here](#). [Using the right browser is important, especially when using different features integrated with OWL]

If students need assistance, they can seek support on the OWL Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

Details for joining synchronous Lab sessions:

Lab Session Day/Time	Zoom Details
Tuesday 11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Zoom Meeting ID: 912 6944 0128 Passcode: 796227
Tuesday 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm	Zoom Meeting ID: 912 6476 4899 Passcode: 202365

Labs **do not meet** in weeks that the **Course Schedule (7. Course Content and Schedule)** does not indicate that there is a **Lab Session** that week.

6. Learning Objectives



Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe major research approaches, their relationship to theory, and to each other;
- Formulate effective problem statements and research questions;
- Discuss advantages and disadvantages of various methods and research designs for investigating different kinds of questions;
- Find, critically review, and synthesize academic literature on a given topic;
- Anticipate possible benefits and risks of research and plan how to fairly handle them;
- Create research instruments (surveys, interview guides) and use them to collect data;
- Apply basic concepts in sampling and probability;
- Collaborate, divide tasks and manage time effectively as part of a research team;
- Perform basic quantitative and qualitative analysis; and
- Write a convincing project proposal that demonstrates effective and ethical social research design.

7. Course Content and Schedule

Week	Lecture Topic	Readings	Lab Assigned	Lab Session	Assignment Due
Week 1 Week of Jan 11th	Course Introduction				
Week 2 Week of Jan 18th	Research problems and questions	Chapter 1	Lab 1: Critical Research Appraisal	Start work on Lab 1	

Week	Lecture Topic	Readings	Lab Assigned	Lab Session	Assignment Due
Week 3 Week of Jan 25th	Research Design	Chapters 2 & 16		Continue working on Lab 1	Lab 1 due Friday Jan 29th by 11:59 PM EST (via OWL submission)
Week 4 Week of Feb 1	Observation & Surveys	Chapters 4, 5 & 6	Lab 2: Observation	Start work on Lab 2 – independent activity (no synchronous lab session)	
Week 5 Week of Feb 8	Ethnography & Participant Observation	Chapter 10		Continue working on Lab 2 (in synchronous lab session)	Lab 2 due Friday Feb 12th by 11:59 PM EST (via OWL submission)
Week of Feb 15	WINTER READING WEEK				
Week 6 Week of Feb 22	Interviews & Focus Groups	Chapters 9 & 11	Lab 3: Instrument Design	Start work on Lab 3	
Week 7 Week of Mar 1	No Class			Midterm exam (1 hour, in scheduled synchronous lab session)	Lab 3 due Friday Mar 5th by 11:59 PM EST (via OWL submission)
Week 8 Week of Mar 8	Qualitative analysis	Chapter 13	Lab 4: Qualitative Coding & Analysis	Start working on Lab 4	

Week	Lecture Topic	Readings	Lab Assigned	Lab Session	Assignment Due
Week 9 Week of Mar 15	Sampling	Chapter 7		Continue working on Lab 4	Lab 4 due Friday Mar 19th by 11:59 PM EST (via OWL submission)
Week 10 Week of Mar 22	Quantitative Analysis	Chapter 8	Lab 5: Quantitative Analysis	Start Lab 5	
Week 11 Week of Mar 29	Ethics	Chapter 3		Continue working on Lab 5	
Week 12 Week of April 5	Bringing it all together				Lab 5 due Monday April 6th at 11:59 PM EST (via OWL submission)
Week 13 Week of April 12	No class				Term Project Assignment due on Monday April 12 @ 11:59 pm via OWL submission

8. Communication

- Students should check the OWL site every 24 – 48 hours
- For any other communication, the centrally administered **e-mail account** provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at his/her official university address is attended to in a timely manner. You can read about the privacy and security of the UWO email accounts [here](#).
- Emails will be monitored daily M-F; students will receive a response in 24 – 48 hours (excluding weekends)
- If you have lab specific questions, please email the TAs using the geog3250@uwo.ca email address (standard response time is 24-48 hrs excluding weekends)



9. Evaluation



Below is the evaluation breakdown for the course. Any deviations will be communicated.

Assessment	Format	Weighting	Due Date
Laboratory assignments (5 assignments)	Format specified on lab instructions; all submissions must be as a single .pdf file submitted via OWL.	50% (each lab is weighted equally, or 10% of total course grade)	See course schedule. Unless otherwise specified, all lab assignments are due on Fridays at 11:59 PM EST.
Midterm Exam		20%	In scheduled, synchronous lab session in Week 7.
Term Project	Research design proposal in response to an RFP. Written assignment (typed, to be submitted in PDF).	30%	Due on Monday April 12 @ 11:59 pm via OWL submission.

Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures as well as the assigned chapters/sections in the text.

- Virtual proctoring will be used for the midterm.
- After an assessment is returned, students should wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting one of the TAs via the **geog3250@uwo.ca** email address; to ensure a timely response, reach out within 7 days.

Click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. The table below outlines the University-wide grade descriptors.

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Information about late or missed evaluations:

- Late assessments without illness self-reports will be subject to a late penalty of 10 %/24 hrs for the first 48 hours, for a maximum penalty of 20%. No assignments will be accepted without medical documentation more than 48 hours after the posted deadline.
- Late assessments with illness self-reports should be submitted within 24 hours of the end of the illness self-report period.
- Late assessments with medical documentation must be submitted directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean's office as soon as possible. It will be the Dean's office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.

Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of need. It is important to monitor your performance in the course. Remember: *You* are responsible for your grades in this course.

10. Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

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

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

11. Make-up Examinations

The makeup date for those using SRAs or with a document-supported medical accommodation will be advertised to the class.

12. Use of Electronic Devices

N/A.

13. Online Proctoring Notice and Guidelines

Tests and examinations in this course will be conducted using the remote proctoring service, Proctortrack. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide **personal information** (including some biometric data) and the session will be **recorded**. More information about this remote proctoring service is available in the Online Proctoring Guidelines at the following link:

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/onlineproctorguidelines.pdf>.

Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. Information about the technical requirements are available at the following link:

<https://www.proctortrack.com/tech-requirements/>.

14. Lecture Recordings

Lecture audio-video recordings are the copyright of the instructor, and may not be disseminated, posted, shared, or made available online through any course notes websites, or any other channels.

15. Statements concerning Online Etiquette

Some components of this course will involve online interactions. To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please honour the following rules of etiquette:

- Please use “GEOG 3250” in the subject headings of all email correspondence.
- When joining labs and office hours, please minimize background noise, and kindly mute your microphone for the entire class unless speaking.
- In Office Hours and during the labs, you can also use the Chat function to let the host know that you would like to raise a new question or that you would like further clarification on a point being discussed.
- Please be prepared to turn your video camera off at the instructor’s request if the internet connection becomes unstable
- Unless invited by your instructor, do not share your screen in the meeting

16. Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a [Scholastic Offence](#).

17. Western’s Commitment to Accessibility

The Department of Geography strives at all times to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. [Information regarding accommodation of exams](#) is available on the Registrar’s website.

More information about [“Accessibility at Western”](#) is available.

18. Mental Health

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit Western’s [Health and Wellness website](#) for more information on mental health resources.

19. Support Services

[Western’s Support Services](#)
[Student Development Centre](#)

20. Important Dates

January 11: Classes resume
 January 19: Last day to add a second term half course
 February 15: Family Day – Department Office Closed
 February 13 to February 21: Spring Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)
 March 15: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty
 April 2: Good Friday
 April 12: Classes end
 April 13: Study day
 April 14 to April 30: Examination Period