

## GEOG 3250B – Social Science Research Methods in Geography Course Syllabus\*: Winter 2024

This course is taught in-person

*\*Syllabus subject to change*

### 1. Course Information



\*Details about design and delivery of the course are listed below in Section 6

Classes Start	Spring Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
January 8	February 19-23	April 8	April 9 & 10	April 11-30

January 16, 2024: Last day to add a second-term half course

February 19, 2024: Family Day

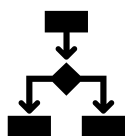
March 7, 2024: Last day to drop a second term half course without academic penalty



Course Instructor	Contact Information	Office Hours
Dr. Agnieszka Leszczynski	aleszczy@uwo.ca	Tues 2:30 – 3:30 SSC 1402

Teaching Assistant(s)	Contact Information	Office Hours
Daniel Amoak	damoak@uwo.ca	TBA

### 2. 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, 2 lab hours per week, 0.5 course

Antirequisite(s): Political Science 2325F/G.

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

Prerequisite checking is the student's responsibility

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."

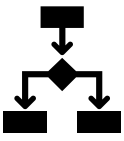
### 3. Textbook

**Required textbook:** Bell E, Bryman A & Kleinknecht S (2023) Social Research Methods, 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Edition. Oxford University Press.

- Available at the University Bookstore or as a rented e-textbook via VitalSource: <https://www.vitalsource.com/en-ca/products/social-research-methods-edward-bell-alan-bryman-v9780190165772>

**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.

### 4. 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 social science research projects.
- Immerse students in techniques of social science research data collection and analysis.
- Equip students to critically assess research conducted by others.



Attendance is required.

Missed work must be completed within 48 hours of the stated submission deadline (excluding weekends). Missed assignments/assessments not submitted within 48 hours (excluding weekends) of the original submission date will not be accepted for grading.

All course material will be posted to OWL: <http://owl.uwo.ca>. 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.

## 5. Learning Outcomes



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.

## 6. Course Content and Schedule



Week	Lecture Topic	Readings <i>(from course textbook)</i>	Lab Assigned	Lab Session notes:	Assignments Due
<b>Week 1</b> • Lec Mon Jan 8 <sup>th</sup>	Course Overview & Introduction				
<b>Week 2</b> • Lec Mon Jan 15 <sup>th</sup> s • Lab: Tues Jan 16 <sup>th</sup>	Research Problems & Questions	Chapter 1	<b>Lab 1</b> Critical Research Appraisal	<i>*TA office hours held this week</i>	
<b>Week 3</b> • Lec Mon Jan 22 <sup>nd</sup> • Lab: Tues Jan 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Research Design	Chapters 2 & 3	<b>Lab 2</b> Ethics for Research Involving Human Subjects		<b>Lab 1 due</b>
<b>Week 4</b> • Lec Mon Jan 29 <sup>th</sup> • Lab: Tues Jan 30 <sup>th</sup>	Observations & Surveys	Chapters 5 & 6	<b>Lab 3</b> Observation	Start work on <b>Lab 3 – independent activity</b> (no regularly	<b>Lab 2 due</b>

Week	Lecture Topic	Readings <i>(from course textbook)</i>	Lab Assigned	Lab Session notes:	Assignments Due
				scheduled lab this week)  <i>*TA office hours held this week</i>	
<b>Week 5</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lec</b> Mon Feb 5<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• <b>Lab:</b> Tues Feb 6<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>	Term project assignment details			Continue working on <b>Lab 3</b> this week in-lab (i.e., attend your regularly scheduled lab session)  <i>*TA office hours held this week</i>	
<b>Week 6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lec</b> Mon Feb 12<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• <b>Lab:</b> Tues Feb 13<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>	Interviews & Focus Groups	Chapter 11	<b>Lab 4</b> Instrument Design	Start work on <b>Lab 4</b>	<b>Lab 3 due</b>
<b>FEB 19 - 23</b>	<b>WINTER READING WEEK</b>				
<b>Week 7</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lec</b> Mon Feb 26<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• <b>Lab:</b> Tues Feb 27<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>	Participant Observation & Ethnography	Chapter 10		Continue working on <b>Lab 4</b>  <i>*TA office hours held this week</i>	
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>NO LECTURE</b> – Professor away at conference		<b>NO LAB</b>		<b>Lab 4 due via OWL @</b> regularly scheduled submission time (by 12:30 on Tues Mar 5 <sup>th</sup> )
<b>Week 9</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lec</b> Mon Mar 11<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>	Qualitative Analysis	Chapter 13	<b>Lab 5</b>	Start working on <b>Lab 5</b>	

<b>Week</b>	<b>Lecture Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b> <i>(from course textbook)</i>	<b>Lab Assigned</b>	<b>Lab Session notes:</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Labs:</b> Tues Mar 12<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>			Qualitative Coding & Analysis	<i>*TA office hours held this week</i>	
<b>Week 10</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lec</b> Mon Mar 18<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• <b>Labs:</b> Tues Mar 19<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>	Sampling	Chapter 7		Continue working on <b>Lab 5</b>  <i>*TA office hours held this week</i>	
<b>Week 11</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lec</b> Mon Mar 25<sup>th</sup></li> <li>• <b>Labs:</b> Tues Mar 26<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>	Quantitative Analysis	Chapter 8	<b>Lab 6</b>  Quantitative Analysis	Start working on <b>Lab 6</b>  <i>*TA office hours held this week</i>	<b>Lab 5 due</b>
<b>Week 12</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lec</b> Mon Apr 1<sup>st</sup></li> <li>• <b>Lab:</b> Tues Apr 2<sup>nd</sup></li> </ul>	More Methods: Visual Methods, Digital Methods, Walking Methodologies	* see <b>Course Readings</b> tab in OWL for Week 11; search for "Week 11" tag		Continue working on Lab 6  <i>*TA office hours held this week</i>	<b>Lab 6 due</b> via OWL submission on <b>Friday April 10<sup>th</sup> by 3:55 pm</b>
<b>Week 13</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lec:</b> Mon Apr 8<sup>th</sup></li> </ul>	Final Exam Review			<b>NO LAB</b>	<b>Term project due by 11:55pm</b> via OWL submission on <b>Mon, April 10<sup>th</sup></b>

## 7. Communication



- Students should check the OWL site every 24 – 48 hours
- For any other communication, the centrally administered **e-mail account** provided to students – i.e., your “@uwo.ca” email address - 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 Monday - Friday; standard response time is 24 – 48 hours *excluding* weekends.
- When emailing, please put **“GEOG 3250” in the subject line**
- If you have **lab specific questions**, please attend the **TA office hours** or email your TA

## 8. Evaluation

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



Assessment	Format	Weighting	Due Date
Laboratory assignments  (6 assignments)	Written	40%  (labs are weighted differently from each other, for a cumulative 40% of your course grade)	See course schedule
Term Project	Written	30%	April 10 <sup>th</sup> by 11:55 pm via OWL assignment submission
Final exam <sup>†</sup>	Mixed format (multiple choice, short answer, long answer)	30%	Final exam period, 2 hrs

<sup>†</sup>The written exams and their formats, as well as all other evaluation methods identified above, are essential to meeting the learning objectives in the course. As such, alternative assessment formats will be offered in lieu of the evaluation methods listed immediately above.

- Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures, labs, as well as the assigned chapters/sections in the text.
- Except where otherwise indicated, **all lab assignments are to be typed and submitted *in PDF format* via OWL by the due date specified**

Except where otherwise indicated, **all lab assignments are due at the start of the lab section (@ 12:30 pm)** in the week that the lab is indicated as being due. Any labs submitted **>15 minutes** after the start of a scheduled lab section will be considered late.

- **late penalties = 10% per day, up to a maximum of 48 hrs** (see item immediately below)

**Assignments will be accepted up to 48 hours after their scheduled due date & time.**

- e.g., if your lab is due on Tuesday @ 12:30 pm, you will have until 12:30 pm on Thursday to submit it.

After an assessment is returned, students should wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their TA. If you have questions about your lab grade on any one assignment, please raise this with your TA *first*. To ensure a timely response, reach out within 7 days (i.e., within a week of your lab being handed back to you).

When deemed necessary, virtual proctoring may be used in the delivery of the final exam.

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

**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.**

#### Information about late or missed evaluations:

Assignments (labs, term project) will **not** be accepted for grading more than **48 hours (excluding weekends)** after the **scheduled due date & time**. See details below for how this applies to late assignments submitted with and without illness self-reports.

**Late assessments without illness self-reports** will be subject to a late penalty of 10%/24 hour period up to a maximum of 20% (where/when submitted within 48 hours of the scheduled submission deadline).

**Late assessments with illness self-reports** should be submitted within 24 hours of submission of the last illness self-report.

- Illness self-reports will only be accepted as applying to scheduled submission dates.
- Illness self-reports do not extend the 48 hour post-deadline period for the submission of late assignments, but a late penalty will not apply for the first 24 hrs or full 48 hrs post submission deadline, depending on the temporal window covered by your illness self-report.

## 9. 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

In cases where accommodation is being sought for work totalling less than 10% of the final course grade, Dr. Leszczynski will consider extensions on coursework *only* in extenuating circumstances, with supporting documentation.

In all cases where accommodation is being sought for work totalling 10% or more of the final grade in a course, please contact the appropriate Faculty Dean's office.

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

Policy on Academic Consideration for Medical Illness - Undergraduate Students

Student Medical Certificate (SMC)

### 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](#).

## 10. Make-up Examinations

Makeups will be granted with approved documentation only. All documentation for missed exams must be provided to the Academic Counselling Office within 48 hours of the scheduled exam, otherwise the instructor will assign a grade of zero.

The format and content of make-ups may differ substantially from the scheduled test or examination.

## 11. Use of Electronic Devices

**The use of electronic devices for purposes of photographing and/or recording still images (e.g., photos), video, or audio of lectures or labs is strictly prohibited.** This means that you cannot audio or video record the instructor, TAs, or other members of the lab teaching staff.



- If you require an accommodation on this policy, please contact the instructor (Dr. Leszczynski). For further information about accommodations, please see item 17 (Western's Commitment to Accessibility) below.

**No electronic devices will be allowed during examinations.**

## 12. Lecture materials and course content

**All course materials – including lecture slides, lecture audio and vide – 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. **Should Dr. Leszczynski become aware that materials are being circulated online, pdfs of lecture slides will cease to be made available.**

## 13. How to Be Successful in this Class:



Students enrolled in this class should understand the level of autonomy and self-discipline required to be successful.

1. Invest in a planner or application to keep track of your courses. Populate all your deadlines at the start of the term and schedule time at the start of each week to get organized and manage your time.
2. Make it a daily habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class.
3. Follow weekly checklists created on OWL or create your own to help you stay on track.
4. Take notes as you go through the lesson material. Keeping handwritten notes or even notes on a regular Word document will help you learn more effectively.
5. Connect with others. Try forming a study group and try meeting on a weekly basis for study and peer support.
6. Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, check the online discussion boards or contact your instructor(s) and or teaching assistant(s).
7. Reward yourself for successes. It seems easier to motivate ourselves knowing that there is something waiting for us at the end of the task.

## 14. 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.

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.

## 15. Western's Commitment to Accessibility

The Department of Geography and Environment 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.

## **16. 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.

## **17. Support Services**

Western's Support Services  
Student Development Centre

Western 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.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html).

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

## **18. Important Dates**

Monday January 8: Classes resume

Tuesday January 16: Last day to add a second term half course

Monday February 19: Family Day – Department Office Closed

February 17 to February 25: Spring Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

Thursday March 7: Last day to drop a second term half course without academic penalty

Friday March 29: Good Friday – Department Office Closed

Monday April 8: Classes end

April 9 and 10: Study days

April 11-30: Examination Period