

GEOG 3250B – Social Science Research Methods in Geography Course Syllabus*: Winter 2025

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

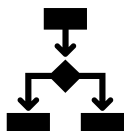
Classes Start	Spring Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
January 6	February 17-23	April 4	April 5 & 6	April 7-30

January 14, 2025: Last day to add a second-term half course

February 17, 2025: Family Day

March 7, 2025: Last day to drop a second term half course without penalty

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."

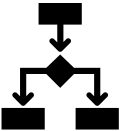
3. Textbook

- Required textbook:** Bell E, Bryman A & Kleinknecht S (2023) [Social Research Methods](#), 6th 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. Missed assignments/assessments not submitted within 48 hours 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
Week 1 • Lec: Tues Jan 7 th	Course Overview & Introduction			No lab this week	
Week 2 • Lec: Tues Jan 14 th • Lab: Weds Jan 15 th	Research Problems & Questions	Chapter 1	Lab 1 Critical Research Appraisal	In-person lab	
Week 3 • Lec: Tues Jan 21 st • Lab: Tues Jan 22 nd	Research Design	Chapters 2 & 3	Lab 2 Ethics for Research Involving Human Subjects	No in-person lab – independent activity	Lab 1 due
Week 4 • Lec: Tues Jan 28 th • Lab: Weds Jan 29 th	Observations & Surveys	Chapters 5 & 6	Lab 3 Observation	Start work on Lab 3 – independent activity (no in-person lab this week)	Lab 2 due
Week 5 • Lec: Tues Feb 4 th • Lab: Weds Feb 5 th	Term project assignment details			In-person lab component of Lab 3 this week in-lab (i.e., attend your regularly scheduled lab session)	

Week	Lecture Topic	Readings <i>(from course textbook)</i>	Lab Assigned	Lab Session notes:	Assignments Due
Week 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lec: Tues Feb 11th • Lab: Weds Feb 12th 	Interviews & Focus Groups	Chapter 11	Lab 4 Instrument Design	Start work on Lab 4 (in-person lab)	Lab 3 due
FEB 17 - 23	WINTER READING WEEK				
Week 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lec: Tues Feb 25th • Lab: Weds Feb 26th 	Participant Observation & Ethnography	Chapter 10		<u>No in-person lab</u> ; continue working on Lab 4 <i>*TA office hours held this week</i>	
Week 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lec: Tues Mar 4th • Lab: Weds Mar 5th 	Qualitative Analysis	Chapter 13	Lab 5 Qualitative Coding & Analysis	Start working on Lab 5 (in-person lab)	Lab 4 due
Week 9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lec: Tues Mar 11th • Lab: Tues Mar 12th 	Sampling	Chapter 7		<u>No in-person lab</u> ; continue working on Lab 5 <i>*TA office hours held this week</i>	
Week 10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lec: Tues Mar 18th • Lab: Weds Mar 19th 	Quantitative Analysis	Chapter 8	Lab 6 Quantitative Analysis	Start working on Lab 6 (in-person lab)	Lab 5 due
Week 11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lec: Tues Mar 25th • Lab: Tues Mar 26th 	No lecture – professor away at conference <i>Time dedicated to working on term assignment</i>			<u>No in-person lab</u> ; continue working on Lab 6	Term project due by 11:55pm via OWL submission

Week	Lecture Topic	Readings <i>(from course textbook)</i>	Lab Assigned	Lab Session notes:	Assignments Due
	<i>due @ end of week</i>			<i>*TA office hours held this week</i>	on Fri Mar 28th
Week 12 • Lec: Tues Apr 1 st	“More methods” presentations		“More methods” presentations, cont’d		Lab 6 due @ regularly scheduled time (Weds Apr 2nd @ 9:30 am)

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	50% (labs are weighted differently from each other, for a cumulative 40% of your course grade)	See course schedule
Term Project	Written	35%	Fri Mar 28 th by 11:55 pm via OWL assignment submission

Assessment	Format	Weighting	Due Date
"More methods" presentations	Oral and visual	15%	In-class (lecture & lab period) April 1 st

*The assessment formats identified above are essential to meeting the learning objectives in the course. As such, alternative assessment formats will not 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* (@ **9:30 am on Weds**)** in the week that the lab is indicated as being due. Assessments submitted >48 hours after the posted submission deadline will not be accepted for grading (save for those covered by a documented accommodation).
- 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).

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.

9. Information about Late or Missed Assessments and Evaluations

General information about missed work:

University policy on academic considerations are described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation. Further information about academic considerations, and information about submitting this self-attestation with your academic consideration request may be found here.

Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

☒ **Written assignments – the labs and the term assignment – have a flexible submissions policy in the form of a 48 hour submission window. Assignments may be submitted up to 48 hours beyond the stated submission date and time (deadline). Assignments will not be accepted for grading beyond the 48-hour submission window.**

Because the submission deadline for this assessment already includes flexibility in the form of a 48-hour submission window, requests for academic consideration for assignments which are submitted following the end of the period of flexibility will be denied. This includes the use of undocumented, self-attested accommodation requests. These cannot be used to extend the already-flexible 48-hours submission window for this assessment.

Where a student receives documented academic considerations or academic accommodations which overlap with the built-in flexibility of the assessment, the longest period of accommodation will determine the deadline. Here too the built-in flexibility of the assessment should not be taken to extend any considerations or accommodations.

☒ **The 'More Methods' Presentation has a Formal Documentation Designation.** It is considered to be central to the learning objectives for this course. Accordingly, students seeking academic consideration for this assessment **will be required to provide formal supporting documentation**. Students who are granted academic consideration for this assessment will be provided with the opportunity to present in-person during a scheduled time in the formal exam period, on one of the days in which makeup exams will be scheduled by the Department of Geography.

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](#).

Absence from Course Commitments

Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the central academic consideration portal. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically schedule during the last week of the term. Students should also note that the instructor may designate one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described elsewhere in this document. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor of this course, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline. Supporting documentation for

academic considerations for absences due to illness should use the Student Medical Certificate or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.

Course Assessments that Require Supporting Documentation

As per **item 10 above**, for this course the following assessment has been designated as requiring supporting documentation:

'More Methods' Presentation, April 1st

Academic Consideration for Course Components with Flexible Deadlines

This course employs flexible assignment submission. The assignment deadlines can be found above in the course outline (**item 6 – Course Schedule**). Details about flexibility in assessment are detailed under **item 10 – Information About Late or Missed Assessments and Evaluations**.

As flexible assessment submission policies are in use in this course, requests for academic consideration – including self-attested undocumented accommodation requests – will not be granted. If you have a long-term academic consideration or an accommodation for disability, it is your responsibility to contact your instructor about extended deadlines, etc.

Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays. Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

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. For further information about accommodations, please see **item 10** above and **item 16** below.

12. Lecture Materials and Course Content

All course materials – including lecture slides, lecture audio and video – 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 the instructor become aware that materials are being circulated online, pdfs of lecture slides will cease to be made available.

13. 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.

The use of generative AI is not permitted in this course. It may not be used to complete, in whole or in part, any component of assessed work in this course.

Written assessments including the podcast script and annotated bibliography will 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 work 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>).

14. 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.

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.

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

18. Important Dates

Monday January 6: Classes resume

Tuesday January 14: Last day to add a second term half course

Monday February 17: Family Day – Department Office Closed

February 17-23: Spring Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

Friday March 7: Last day to drop a second term half course

Friday April 4: Classes end

April 5 and 6: Study days

April 7-30: Examination Period