



Sociology 2206B

570

Winter 2018

Investigating the Social World: Quantitative Research

Professor: Don Kerr

Office: DL312

Email: dkerr@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Mondays 12:30 - 3:15 or
By Appointment

Ext: 4438

Class Times and Location(s): Mondays 3:30pm - 6:30pm
DL012

Course Description: Mandatory for third-year Sociology students in an Honors Specialization. In this course students will learn to evaluate quantitative sociological research and gain hands-on experience carrying out and writing up a research project that investigates current social issues. Topics include: posing a research question, developing concepts and measures, and analyzing quantitative survey data.

Prerequisite(s): Enrolment in an Honors Specialization or Honors Double Major in Sociology or Criminology with a minimum grade of 60% in Sociology 2205A/B and 2206A/B, or Social Work 2206A/B and 2207A/B. If not in an Honors Specialization or Honors Double Major, a minimum grade of 70% in Sociology 2205A/B and 2206A/B, or Social Work 2206A/B and 2207A/B is required.

Antirequisite(s): The former Sociology 3300A/B, 3302A/B.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may 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.

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE at Western University

INVESTIGATING THE SOCIAL WORLD: QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Winter 2018

SOCIOLOGY 3306B SECTION 570 – MONDAYS 3:30 p.m. – 6:30PM

COURSE INFORMATION

Professor: Dr. Don Kerr Office: DL 312 (3rd floor of Dante Lenardon Building).

Phone: 433-3491 ext. 4438

E-mail: dkerr@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Monday 12:30 - 3:15 p.m. (or by appointment)

WEBSITE: <http://dkerr.kingsfaculty.ca/teach/sociology-3306/>

SPSS lab consultant:

Donna Maynard (Wemple Computer Workspace - Room W022)

Hours: TBA

Course Introduction

The emphasis of this course is on how to analyze social data. Statistical techniques can help us to answer many fundamental questions in sociology, whether our interests are theoretical or of a more applied nature. Emphasis in this course will be on methods of statistical analysis that are appropriate when working with relatively large sociological datasets. This will involve an application and extension of many of the statistical procedures and methods learned in Sociology 2205/2206.

This course sets out to help you develop your skills in both interpreting and producing social research. My goal is to help you to become a more informed and critical reader of statistical evidence, whether it be in reading academic work or journalistic accounts of social research. This will be achieved through the completion of assigned course readings, a substantial amount of data analysis, three written assignments and a final “analytical assignment”. Students will also be introduced to appropriate statistical software useful in the analysis of large quantitative datasets.

The first few weeks of the term will be devoted to an overview of how quantitative research is conducted in sociology, as well as a review of basic statistical procedures that you should already be familiar with from Sociology 2205/2206. This course then builds on the topics covered in these earlier courses, and extends them to introduce techniques such as bivariate and multiple regression, among other statistical models. While you were introduced in Sociology 2205/2206 to methods of statistical analysis appropriate in describing the distribution of single variables (measures of central distribution and dispersion) and relationships between pairs of variables (measures of association), the emphasis of the current course is on methods of statistical control and multivariate analysis (analyses involving many variables simultaneously).

I am convinced that your comfort with and abilities in statistical analysis will improve with effort and timely practice. For this reason, this course requires you to complete a series of three "mandatory" written assignments. All three assignments will require you to analyze data using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Sciences). In most, you will be asked to not merely produce statistics, but all importantly, to also interpret them with short summaries and interpretations of the findings that you have obtained. Your final analytical assignment (12 pages) will be due at the end of the term, and involves applying methods that you learn about in conducting your three assignments.

There is also a final exam scheduled for the final examination period.

TEXTBOOK

The course package which includes a selection of readings for this course is available at the UWO Bookstore. This is a series of collected chapters from various texts dealing with quantitative research in sociology. Occasionally I may post particularly relevant readings (in pdf) on this website. Many of these will be in PDF format so will require Adobe Acrobat Reader to be viewed and printed.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- (i) Final exam 20% (final examination period)
- (ii) 3 assignments 30% (10 % each)
- (iii) Analysis assignment 40% (due end of term)
- (iv) Participation/attendance 10%

(i) Final exam (20%): This course involves a final exam scheduled for the final examination period (3 hours). The final exam will involve a mix of multiple choice and problems involving the interpretation of SPSS results. While you are asked to bring a calculator to the final, there will be minimal computations involved (unlike in the final exam in Sociology 2205). The final exam is cumulative, involving everything from the beginning of the year. Rather than asking you to merely "calculate" statistics, I will be asking you "conceptual" questions relating to their meaning and interpretation.

THERE IS NO PROVISION FOR A MAKE-UP EXAMINATION IN THIS CLASS. FOR AN UNEXCUSED ABSENCE FROM AN EXAM, A ZERO WILL BE RECORDED. IF YOU ARE SERIOUSLY ILL, I MUST BE INFORMED BEFORE THE EXAM AND WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS PROVIDED. IN THE INTEREST OF FAIRNESS TO ALL STUDENTS, AND IN PARTICULAR, TO THOSE THAT ADHERE TO THESE GUIDELINES, NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE. IF YOU CANNOT TAKE AN EXAM (DUE TO ILLNESS) ON THE DAY IT IS SCHEDULED, YOU MUST CONTACT ME BEFORE THE EXAM OR DUE DATE (IN PERSON OR BY EMAIL). IF YOU DO NOT CONTACT ME BEFORE THE SCHEDULED EXAM, YOU RECEIVE A GRADE OF ZERO.

(ii) Assignments (30%): Three assignments are required in this course. The due dates are listed below 1st assignment February 5th (Monday; in class) 2nd assignment March 12th (Monday; in class) 3rd assignment April 2nd (Monday; in class) Assignments must be typed and well organized. They also must be handed in personally in class. With late assignments, if I am not in my office, submit your assignment to the late assignments box in the SA building (late penalties apply). Note: This box is emptied at 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. daily. Papers submitted after 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon are stamped with the following day's date. Papers submitted after 4:00 p.m. on a Friday afternoon are stamped Monday's date.

WHILE OF COURSE STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO DISCUSS THE MATERIALS COVERED IN THIS COURSE, STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO SUBMIT INDEPENDENT WORK. ANY EVIDENCE OF PLAGIARISM WILL RESULT IN A GRADE OF ZERO ON YOUR PAPER (I.E. IF YOU MERELY COPY ANOTHER STUDENT'S WORK, BOTH STUDENTS WILL RECEIVE A GRADE OF 0). WARNING: I EXPECT INDEPENDENT WRITE-UPS. IF I FIND IDENTICAL OR "NEAR" IDENTICAL WORDING TO WORK SUBMITTED BY A CLASSMATE, THIS IS CONSIDERED PLAGIARISM. PLAGIARISM IS A MAJOR ACADEMIC OFFENCE. PLEASE REFER TO SCHOLASTIC DISCIPLINE UNDER THE SENATE POLICY ON ACADEMIC RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, AT: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook>

IN THE INTEREST OF FAIRNESS FOR ALL STUDENTS, ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE IN CLASS ON THE DATES NOTED IN THE DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE. LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL ONLY BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT PENALTY WITH APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION. ASSIGNMENTS RECEIVED AFTER THE DUE DATE WILL HAVE THEIR GRADE REDUCED BY A RATE OF 5% DAILY. For example, a grade of 95 is converted to a 90 if one day late, 85 if two day's late, etc.

(iii) Analytical Assignment (40%): The final analytical assignment is due one week after the last day of classes (5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 16th)

NOTE: Early in the term, on either or Friday January 26th or Monday January 29th, I would like you to schedule a half hour appointment with me whereby we will decide upon a general topic for your analytical assignment early on. In preparing for this meeting, you should thoroughly familiarize yourself with one of the following SPSS dataset (listed below) that I will link to my website for this course. After reviewing what is available in these databases, select a dependent variable for your analysis (WHAT EXACTLY WOULD YOU LIKE TO ANALYZE).

Try to find something that you might consider personally interesting. Think about what other variables on the dataset might be related to this variable, and might potentially be worthy of further study. We can discuss, but please come to our appointment after thoroughly reviewing what is available.

Public Use Individual File from the 2006 Census

General Social Survey, 2009 [Canada]: Cycle 23, Criminal Victimization.

Main file (GSS) Canadian Community Health Survey, 2010

National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, 1994 cycle 1

Your final analytical assignment will involve a brief review of relevant literature from academic journals (2-3 pages), a specification of the variables that you will be focusing upon in your analysis (1-2 pages), a concise statement of the hypothesized relationships that you expect to find among these variables and how you go about testing for these relationships (1-2 pages), and a brief exposition of the results from your SPSS analysis (4-5 pages). In so doing, you shall use the technical skills that you refine through your SPSS assignments. Details will be forthcoming on my website.

(iv) Attendance/participation (10%): I shall be keeping track of attendance and classroom participation.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

January 8th Course Introduction: The nature of science Reading: Singleton Chapter 2

January 15th Writing research reports Reading: Singleton Chapter 18

January 22nd SPSS and data analysis Reading: Bryman and Teevan, pp. 240-262

NOTE: Friday January 26th or Monday January 29th - please schedule personal appointments

January 29th – Lab work/ student meetings (schedule to be set)

February 5th - Introduction to multivariate relationships Reading: Agresti and Finlay, Chapter 10 **Assignment #1 due (in class)**

February 12th Regression Reading: Aron and Aron, pp. 42-54; Sirkin, pp. 443-465.

February 19th Reading week

February 26nd Multiple regression Reading: Agresti and Finlay, 382-404.

March 5th Logistic regression Reading: TBA

March 12th Logistic regression and modelling interaction effects Reading: Agresti and Finlay, pp. 404-421
Assignment # 2 due (in class)

March 19th Regression: Applications Reading: Beaujot and Anderson, pp. 1-27.

March 26th Additional Issues: Sample weights and analysis. Reading TBA

April 2nd Research Ethics. Reading TBA **Assignment # 3 due**

April 9th Review for final exam

Final paper (due in my office, a full week after the last class, Monday April 16th, 5:00 p.m.)

Final examination period: Final exam (3 hours)

**Faculty Office Hours:**

Faculty office hours can be found on King's homepage under the menu heading Current Students (<http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/courses-enrolment/planning/faculty-office-hours/>) and are also posted on the bulletin board across from the Administrative Assistants Office on the second floor of Dante Lenardon Hall.

Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:

(http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf). Student Medical Certificate (SMC)

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

Tests/Examinations:

Students are responsible for seeking accommodation with appropriate documentation, prior to writing tests/examinations, if they are of the view that their performance may be affected by extenuating circumstances.

Support Services:

Students who are in emotional/mental health distress should refer to Mental Health@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

University Students Council provides many valuable support services for students (including the health insurance plan) <http://westernusc.ca/services/>.

Information about Counselling and Student Development, including Accessibility Services (formerly Services for Students with Disabilities) at King's is available at <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/who-we-are/administrative-departments/dean-of-students/>

For emotional/mental health assistance see: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

The website for Academic Services at King's University College is <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-support/>

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices:

Use of Electronic Devices:

You are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations.

Use of Laptops in the Classroom:

King's University College at The University of Western Ontario acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of laptop computers can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of laptops by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using laptops for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct. See

https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/studentLife/conduct/code_of_conduct_2003.pdf

Inappropriate use of laptops [or smart phones] during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.”

Statement on Academic Offences:

King’s is committed to Academic Integrity.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

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

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://turnitin.uwo.ca/>.

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.

Copyright re: Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including power point presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty Members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a Faculty Member. Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member is interested in posting a student’s answers or papers on the course web site he/she should ask for the student’s written permission.

(Commercial use of Course material - <http://umd.edu/legal/commercial.html>)

Mailbox re Submission of Late Essays/Assignments ONLY:

Only late essays/assignments not handed in at class may be dropped off in the drop box, located between the inner doors of the Cardinal Carter Library. Please inform your students that essays dropped into the mailbox will be picked-up twice per day: once in the morning (9:30 a.m.) and in the afternoon (4:00 p.m.). All essays dropped off after 4:00 p.m. on a Friday will be date-stamped the following Monday. Essays should be placed in an envelope addressed to the professor with the course code and student number clearly indicated.

Class Cancellations:

All reported class cancellations are posted at: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/outages-service-interruptions/>