

ANTHROPOLOGY 9201B-001

Research Design in Sociocultural and Linguistic Anthropology

Winter 2025

COURSE OUTLINE

Instructor:	Dr. Greg Beckett (he/him)
E-mail:	gbeckett@uwo.ca
Office hours:	By appointment, in person or on Zoom
Credit value:	0.5
Class Time:	Fridays 9:30 am to 12:30 pm
Location:	SSC 3227

Calendar Description: This course offers an introduction to a range of issues related to the practice of anthropological and ethnographic research. Among the topics we will be addressing through readings, presentations and discussions are research design, ethics, and the advantages and limitations of different approaches to data collection, analysis, and presentation of results.

Course Syllabus:

Throughout the course we will focus on broad questions/issues related to research design and on how research design and methodological decisions affect/shape the finished work we intend to produce. We will also focus, when appropriate, on learning about and gaining experience with specific methods that will be relevant to students' own future projects.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- Critically evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of different qualitative research methods in specific contexts of application
- Identify and critically evaluate the research projects of others through the analysis of research outcomes
- Identify ethical issues involved in the research process
- Design an original research project
- Effectively communicate research plans

Course Materials:

Required Readings

There are no required readings for this course. Recommended readings will be made available on OWL Brightspace. Students will select and read additional relevant sources for their own assignments.

Software and Equipment

Students have free access to the on-line survey program [Qualtrics](#) that they will be using in a surveying exercise.

Assignments and Assessment:

This is a process-based course, which means that I am most concerned that you try your hand at the various skills we are learning. While I do hope you approach each assignment in good faith, rest assured that my concern is with overall process rather than grading the content of particular “products.” What you get out of this course depends on what you put into it! Grades will reflect your level of engagement.

There are four main types of assessments in this course: (1) weekly participation; (2) assignments related to designing your own research project; (3) weekly practicum assignments related to the skills we are learning; and (4) group practicum work, most of which will be done in class.

Below is a breakdown of all the assignments by category, with their weight and due dates noted. Details about each assignment will be provided in class and on Brightspace.

Weekly Participation and Email Updates (10%)

This is a hands-on course, so participation in class is expected each week.

Research projects require constant work. Small bits of work done often will get you very far in your project! As part of this course, you should be working on developing and designing your own research project each week. To help build this “small but often” approach to research, you will send me a weekly email update for weeks 2 through 11. In your email updates, you should say something about what you have done and what you plan to do next on your project. These can be short, but I want to see some evidence that you are actively working on your own project. For the longer individual projects (e.g., annotated bibliographies), your weekly updates should include work to done to advance those tasks.

Weekly emails are due at the end of the week (Fridays, with flexible submission windows to Sundays).

Individual Research Design Assignments (45% total)

In this course, we will focus both on general aspects of research design as well as on particular aspects of methods and research approaches that are relevant for your own individual MA and PhD

projects. As part of the coursework, you will complete eight assignments specifically focused on your own project. These will vary in length and complexity, as well as in weight towards your final grade. Details for each assignment will be given in class and on Brightspace.

IRD 1: From Topics to Questions (5%) – due week 3

IRD 2: Annotated Bibliography (5%) – due week 7

IRD 3: Literature Map (5%) – due week 9

IRD 4: Historicizing Your Project (5%) – due week 10

IRD 5: Content Analysis and Discourse Analysis (10%) – due week 11

IRD 6: Project Planner (5%) – due week 12

IRD 7: Presentation of your Research Design (5%) – due week 12

IRD 8: Listening Project (15%) – due after classes end (Friday April 11)

Practicum Assignments (30% total)

The only way to learn how to do anthropology is to do some anthropology! In this course, we will break down the key aspects of anthropological research into a set of small tasks. These weekly practicums should not take you too much time but are meant to help you start to get a hands-on feel for anthropological research and to begin to reflect on what types of methods and approaches might work best for your own projects.

These practicums relate to our in-class discussions. It is important to keep up with them and to complete them as listed. Further instructions for practicums will be made available in Brightspace.

Practicum 1: Unpacking Your Invisible Knapsack Worksheet – due week 2

Practicum 2: Ethical Reasoning Worksheet – due week 2

Practicum 3: Ethics Certification (TCPS) – due week 3

Practicum 4: Insider/Outside Accounts Worksheet – due week 3

Practicum 5: Online Field Sites Worksheet – due week 4

Practicum 6: Locating “the Field” Worksheet – due week 4

Practicum 7: Searching for Sources Worksheet – due week 5

Practicum 8: Theory Framework Worksheet – due week 5

Practicum 9: Fieldnotes: Participating to Observe Worksheet – due week 6

Practicum 10: Fieldnotes: Spaces/Sounds Worksheet – due week 6

Practicum 11: Asking Questions Worksheet – due week 8

Practicum 12: Interview Guide Worksheet – due week 8

Practicum 13: Survey Questions Worksheet – due week 8

Practicum 14: Fieldnotes: Autoethnography – due week 11

Practicum 15: Sensory Analysis Worksheet – due week 11

Group Practicums (15% total)

In the second half of the term, we will have five sessions (weeks 7 through 11) in which you will work in groups on some aspect of research design. These group practicums will involve putting into practice, in a collaborative and collective way, the elements of research design discussed in the first part of the term.

More information on group practicums will be given in class and on Brightspace.

Group Practicum 1 – in class, week 7

Group Practicum 2 – in class, week 8

Group Practicum 3 – in class, week 9

Group Practicum 4 – in class, week 10

Group Practicum 5 – in class, week 11

Due dates and extension policy

Unless otherwise notes, assignments are due at the end of the day on the Friday of the specified week. All assignments also have a flexible submission window of two days after the due date. (Thus, for assignments due on Fridays, the flexible window extends until Sunday of that same week.)

This is a hands-on course and there are many assignments. It is important to complete them all in a timely manner, as they will build on each other. If you need more time, please discuss any additional extensions with me before assignments are due. Assignments received after the flexible submission window without approved extensions will receive a zero.

Institutional Statements and Policies:

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies are outlined in Western's academic policies by clicking on this link: [Western's academic policies](#).

Statement on Accommodation, Illness Reporting and Academic Considerations

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](#).

Students should 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.

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](#).

Statements on Plagiarism and AI:

All written work in this course should be your own writing. Some assignments will have you working in groups, which will include collaborative writing. But use of generative AI tools for your own coursework is prohibited. This includes using AI based summary tools (e.g., in Adobe Reader). Do not use summary tools. Trust me – you can come up with much better summaries of the texts than an AI tool can! And consider this: if an AI tool can design your research project, why do you need to do it?

Thus, in this course the use of AI tools to complete assignments (unless otherwise noted) is considered a form of academic dishonesty.

Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence:

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at [this website](#).

Statement on Mental Health:

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Mental Health@Western](#) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.