



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/>.

Faculty of Information and Media Studies

Fall 2020

MS 9101: Research Methods

Classes

Synchronous via Zoom (see info below)
Fridays 1:00-3:00 pm

Instructor

Prof. Anabel Quan-Haase
Office: NCB 255
Telephone: 661-2111 ext. 81405
Email: aquan@uwo.ca
Office hours: Fridays 11:00- 12:00 via Zoom

1. Course Description

This course is designed to prepare students to undertake their own independent research. Topics covered include the role of theory in research; the choice of a research problem; and the design of research projects. Students will become familiar with a range of research tools and approaches including discourse analysis, content analysis, historical analysis, experimental design, survey research, interviewing, and participant observation.

Technical Requirements:



Stable internet connection



Laptop or computer



Working microphone



Working webcam

Online Participation and Engagement



- Students are expected to participate and engage with content as much as possible during synchronous teaching via Zoom
- Students can participate during class via chat and discussion
- Students can also participate by interacting in the forums with their peers and the instructor

2. Learning Outcomes and Specific Course Objectives

1. Understand the role of theory in research;
2. Be able to identify appropriate research problems;
3. Become familiar with a range of research methods appropriate to research problems in media studies;
4. Be able to critically examine and discuss research and
5. Be familiar with the structure of a thesis proposal.

3. Prerequisites

None.

4. Required Texts

Creswell, J.W. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th or 5th ed). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Weldon stacks: H62.C6963 2014 [also see a copy at FIMS Grad library]

 Book: [IN LIBRARY, H62.C92 2014, Brescia General Collection](#)
[IN LIBRARY, H62.C92 2014 c.2, Brescia General Collection](#)
[IN LIBRARY, H62.C6963 2014, Education Library Service Desk - 1 Day Loan](#)
[IN LIBRARY, H62.C6963 2014, FIMS Graduate Library Stacks - In-Library Use Only](#)
[IN LIBRARY, H62.C74R4 2014, King's Stacks \(Second Floor\)](#)
[DUE 19-01-08, H62.C6963 2014, Weldon Library 3rd Floor - Regular Loan](#)

From Sage:

<https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/research-design/book255675>

Sloan, L., & Quan-Haase, A. (Eds.). (2017). *The handbook of social media research methods*. London, UK: Sage.

-Ebook available at Western or copies at FIMS Grad library & Weldon.



The SAGE handbook of social media research methods
by [Quan-Haase, Anabel](#); [Sloan, Luke](#); [Brown, David M](#); [Buchel, Olga](#); [Chen, Yimin](#); [Soto-Corominas, Adriana](#); [Rosa, Javier de la](#); [Nevin, Andrew D](#); [Rubin, Victoria L](#); [Suárez, Juan Luis](#)
2017

Book: [IN LIBRARY, HM742.S24 2017, FIMS Graduate Library Reference - In-Library Use Only](#)
[IN LIBRARY, HM742.S24 2017, Weldon Library 3rd Floor - Regular Loan](#)
[ONLINE, Online](#)

5. Course Requirements and Grading

Requirements	Date	Proportion of Test Grade
Participation	Throughout	20%
Seminar Facilitation	TBA	20%
Method Group Exercise	Oct 16/23	20%
Final Paper (Review)	November 27	40%
Total		100%

Students are expected to do the weekly readings. The weekly readings will be the basis for class discussions. There are a total of two assignments and two class presentations.

The first assignment consists of a group exercise and presentation.

The second assignment is a review of a thesis or paper in media studies.

Students are also asked to take part in a seminar facilitation. Detailed information on each of the assignments will be provided to students. The goal of the thesis review is to provide students with an introduction to the nature and scope of research in the area of media studies. The method group exercise provides students with some hands-on research experience.

SDC's Learning Skills Services, Rm 4100 WSS, www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning

LS counsellors are ready to help you improve your learning skills. We offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counseling.

5.1 Participation

Participation will be evaluated based on how well prepared students are for class, their participation in the class, and their record of attendance. Considering that discussion and critical analysis are an important part of the learning process in research methods, students are expected to participate frequently in class discussion throughout the year. Students who engage with the course material in a critical and in-depth manner will receive high participation marks. Also students are required to attend all classes. Missing more than 3 classes will lead to a low attendance grade. If you cannot attend class, please email the professor with detailed explanations. Students are expected to be on time.

5.2 Seminar Discussion Facilitation

Each student is expected to choose a method of their choice and to discuss its strengths and weaknesses. A summary of the method should be provided, including purpose, key assumptions, procedures, strengths and weaknesses, and conclusions. Students are also expected to present an exemplary use in Media Studies of the chosen method. Students are responsible for facilitating the discussion and raising key points. All students are expected to participate in the discussion. (MA students can work in groups of 2 or 3)

5.3 Method Exercise

This is a group exercise and should help you develop your hands-on research skills. Groups of 3-4 students will develop a research strategy to investigate a research question of their interest. Part of the assignment will be to negotiate the nature of the research question, the best method to be employed, and how to go about it. This is a first taste of the reality of conducting research and collaborating with colleagues. The project and best practices will be presented to the class on October 16/23.

5.4 Thesis and Method Review

This assignment consists of writing a review of a thesis in media studies (PHD) or a review of a paper (MA). The assignment will help you gain familiarity with various methods. Through the review you will develop skills in the critical assessment of research methods. This will provide a useful foundation for your thesis. It also provides familiarity with the structure of a thesis and its components. MA students will review a paper from a faculty member at FIMS and PhD students a doctoral thesis.

5.5 Plagiarism

Students are responsible for understanding the nature and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other scholastic offenses. Plagiarism and cheating are considered very serious offenses because they undermine the integrity of research and education. Actions constituting a scholastic offense are described at the following link:
<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>

(In accordance with policy at UWO):

“Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work and programs in electronic form for plagiarism checking. (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).”

Students are expected to work alone unless it is specified in the assignment. Possible penalties for a scholastic offense include failure of the assignment, failure of the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

6. A few words about the assignments and deadlines

I will not give extensions except under special circumstances. If you cannot meet the deadline, notify the instructor as soon as possible, preferably before the scheduled date and

present adequate documentation. Late papers without permission are subject to a cumulative penalty of 5% points per day.

The method exercise and final paper should be submitted via OWL. Be sure to keep a copy of all work submitted in fulfilment of this class for at least 3 months after termination of the class.

“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://www.turnitin.com>).”

Compassionate Grounds

Serious Illness of a Family Member: Inform your instructor as soon as possible and submit a medical certificate from the family member's physician to your home faculty's Academic Counseling office. **In Case of a Death:** Inform your instructor as soon as possible and submit a copy of the newspaper notice, death certificate or documentation provided by the funeral director to your home faculty's Academic Counseling office.

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for more information on these resources and on mental health.

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 519-661-2111 ext 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

7. Support Services

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

8. Course Schedule

It is your responsibility to consult the course schedule in order to keep up with the course readings and ensure you do not miss the deadlines for the assignments. The course schedule outlines the topics to be discussed each week, the readings corresponding to the lectures, and deadlines for the assignments. Assigned readings should be completed **before** attending the class.

Being on Time and Texting/Social Media

Students are expected to be on time for class (even on Zoom). Any missed material is your responsibility.

Class Schedule

I. ORIENTATION TO RESEARCH

1 **Sept. 11 Introduction to the Course:** Overview of course material and assignments.

Designing and conducting research in *Media Studies*: A plurality of views.

Writing strategies: creativity, procrastination & speed.

Goals of the MS programme.

Epistemology and “Anything Goes.”

Social Science, Humanities & Computer Science.

2 **Sept. 18 Components of the Research I.**

Readings:

a) Creswell, W. J. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches.*

Chapters 1-3. (p. 1-76)

The Selection of a Research Approach

Review of the Literature

The Use of Theory

b) Sloan, L., & Quan-Haase, A. (Eds.). (2017). *The handbook of social media research methods.* London, UK: Sage.

Chapter 1.

II. QUANTITATIVE METHODS

3 **Sept. 25 Components of the Research II.**

Readings:

a) Creswell, W. J. *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches.*

Chapters 5-7. (p. 105-154)

The Introduction

The Purpose Statement

Research Questions & Hypotheses

b) Sloan, L., & Quan-Haase, A. (Eds.). (2017). *The handbook of social media research methods.* London, UK: Sage.

Chapter 2.

4 **Oct. 2 Quantitative Methods 1: Surveys**

Readings:

a) Creswell, W. J. *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches.*

Chapter 8. (p. 155-182)

Quantitative Methods

Seminar: Survey Design.

Collecting survey data (paper and pencil, online surveys), coding survey data, creating scales, analyzing survey data, validity, reliability, regression models.

Reading:

- a) [Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. \(2007\). The benefits of Facebook "friends:" Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12\(4\), article 1.](#)

Additional voluntary readings (for background knowledge):

- a) Dillman, D. A. (2000). *Mail and Internet surveys: The tailored design method* (2nd ed.). New York: John Wiley.
- b) Babbie, E. 2007. Chapter 9: Survey Research. In *The Practice of Social Research*, pp. 243-317. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Exercise: The Pitfalls of Survey Design.

How to conduct survey research. Formulating the right questions, types of questions, types of scales.

Oct. 5 Email Topic Choice for Method Exercise,
Email Thesis Choice for Thesis Review Paper.

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Oct. 9: Social Media Analysis: Instagram

Seminar: Social Media Analysis

We will look at the theoretical foundations of content analysis and its various applications to media studies. Theoretical Foundations and applications. What is content analysis? How does it work? When is it a good method to apply? Approaches to analyzing the content of news, magazines, blogs: coding schemes, code development, comparing inter-coder reliability measures, reporting results.

Readings:

- a) Sloan, L., & Quan-Haase, A. (Eds.). (2017). *The handbook of social media research methods*. London, UK: Sage.

Chapter 34.

Additional voluntary readings (for background knowledge):

b) Sloan, L., & Quan-Haase, A. (Eds.). (2017). *The handbook of social media research methods*. London, UK: Sage.
Chapters 22-38.

II. QUALITATIVE METHODS

- 6** **Oct. 16** Topic: Method Exercise.
Group Presentations: Discussion of Method Exercise.
Group presentations + discussion.
Group Assignment Due: Method Exercise.
- 7** **Oct. 23** Topic: Method Exercise.
Group Presentations: Discussion of Method Exercise.
Group presentations + discussion.
Group Assignment Due: Method Exercise.
- 8** **Oct. 30 Qualitative Analysis.** Coding, Scheme Development, Inter-coder reliability.
Seminar: Grounded Theory.
Readings:
a) Creswell, W. J. Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches.
Chapter 9. (p. 183-214)

Qualitative Methods
Presentation: Grounded Theory/Coding Verbal Transcripts.
Presenter: Prof. Anabel Quan-Haase.
How do we get from the transcripts of verbal reports to our findings? How are coding schemes developed? How do we guarantee the validity of the results?

Additional voluntary readings (for background knowledge):
a) Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. Grounding grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis. London, UK: Sage Publications. Chapter 3.
b) Miles, M B, and Huberman, A. M. 1994. Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 4.
- 9** **Nov. 6 No class/Fall break**
- 10** **Nov. 13 Mixed Methods**

Readings:

a) Creswell, W. J. Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches.

Chapter 10. (p. 215-end)

b) Sloan, L., & Quan-Haase, A. (Eds.). (2017). *The handbook of social media research methods*. London, UK: Sage
Chapter 23.

Additional voluntary readings (for background knowledge):

a) Palys, T., & Atchinson, C. (2014). Research decisions: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method approaches (5th ed.). New York: Nelson.

III. WRITING UP THE STUDY/ COMMUNICATION OF RESEARCH

11 Nov. 20 Work on final papers. Consultations.

Readings:

a) Brookhart, S. M. (2018). Appropriate Criteria: Key to Effective Rubrics . *Frontiers in Education* . Retrieved from <https://www.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/educ.2018.00022>

12 Nov. 27 What does a research proposal look like? A thesis? A grant application? Sections of a proposal, thesis and grant application. Length, tone, voice... How to present data: charts, figures, images. [Tufte](#) in action.

Doing exemplary research: criteria for excellence, steps to follow, the ups and downs, creating your own path, getting it done, serendipity, creativity, work, routines, etc.

Readings:

b) Frost, Peter J., and Ralph E Stablein, eds. 1992. *Doing exemplary research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. **Journey 7, p. 207-233.**

Presentation: Writing the Proposal: Steps along the way.

Additional voluntary readings (for background knowledge):

a) Piantanida, Maria, and Noreen B. Garman. 1999. *The qualitative dissertation: A guide for students and faculty*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Corwin Press. Chapters 4 & 5.

b) Becker, H. (2007). *Writing for Social Scientists*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

c) Guidelines for the Master's and Doctoral Thesis Proposal in Media Studies
SEE FIMS Intranet

Assignment Due: Review

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Dec. 4 Ethical Considerations. Dealing with human subjects. Considerations needed with special populations. Research on the Internet.

Readings:

- a) Creswell, Ethics, chapter 4
- b) Sloan, L., & Quan-Haase, A. (Eds.). (2017). *The handbook of social media research methods*. London, UK: Sage Chapter 5.
- c) Lewis-Kraus, G. (2016, January 12). The Trials of Alice Goffman. *The New York Times Magazine*.
http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/17/magazine/the-trials-of-alice-goffman.html?_r=1

Presentation: Putting together an ethics protocol.

Additional readings:

- a) UWO Ethics Guidelines.
Guidelines:
https://www.uwo.ca/research/ethics/human/board_guidelines.html
- b) Tri-Council Ethics:
http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2/TCPS_2_FINAL_Web.pdf
- c) Big data ethics:
Kitchin, R. (2014). Big Data, new epistemologies and paradigm shifts. *Big Data & Society*, 1(1), 2053951714528481.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/2053951714528481>

Mini-assignments (no evaluation):

- Create letter of information
- Create recruitment materials for a study

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Dec. 11 Looking into the Future. Conferences, Papers, CVs, etc. What does a CV look like when you apply for your first job? How can I be building my CV along the way? How do I tailor it to an academic and industry setting?

Discussion of Final Assignments: Pros and cons of various methods chapters: How do I make decisions about what method works best? How do I present methods, what works? Presentations on finals papers (10-15 minutes).

Course Overview, Final Remarks.

No readings.

References at FIMS (GRC)

- Given, Lisa M., Ed. *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Los Angeles: Sage, 2008. IMS REF H61.S12 2008 Also available online as e-book
- Jupp, Victor (Ed.). *The Sage dictionary of social research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006. IMS REF H62.J877 2006

Additional Readings

- Babbie, Earl. (2007). *The practice of social research* (11th Edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Bassett, E.H. & O'Riordan, Kathleen (2002). Ethics of Internet research: Contesting the human subjects research model. *Ethics and Information Technology* 4 (3) pp. 233-247.
- Berger, A. (2005). *Media analysis techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA; London : Sage Publications.
- Bernard, H. Russell. 2000. *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Beveridge, W.I.B. (1960). *The art of scientific investigation*. New York: Vintage Book.
- David Deacon, Michael Pickering, Peter Golding & Graham Murdock. *Researching Communications: A Practical Guide to Methods in Media and Cultural Analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press and London: Arnold Hodder, 1999
- Fink, Arlene. (2005). *Conducting research literature reviews: From the Internet to paper*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Frey, L. R., Botan, C. H., Friedman, P. G., & Kreps, G. L. (2000). *Investigating communication: An introduction to research methods*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kim Schroder, Kirsten Drotner, Stephen Kline, Catherine Murray. 2003. *Researching Audiences*. London: Arnold.
- Krathwohl, David R. 1988. *How to prepare a research proposal: Guidelines for funding and dissertations in the social and behavioral sciences*. 3rd ed. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Lindlof, T. R. & Taylor, B. C. (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Rubin, R. B., Rubin, A. M., & Piele, L. J. (2000). *Communication research: Strategies and sources*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- White, Michele (2002). Representations or people? *Ethics and Information Technology* 4 (3) pp. 249-266.

Additional Resources

- Office of the Registrar web site: <http://registrar.uwo.ca>
- Student Development Services web site: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca>

Zoom Information for Weekly Classes starting September 11.

Topic: MS9101 Research Methods

Time: Sep 11, 2020 01:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/meeting/tJAtc-2srz8iGtBoIRADbyfVt9jEuDC6eqhg/ics?icsToken=98tyKuCsRj8uHtWRuBmDRoWIAo-gLOjzmCIHjbd_kzbXIgRRewXAIrIF6dbM47V

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/j/94044414804?pwd=VlICNThrRTcvUDVadUpENkhqMFkvZz09>

Meeting ID: 940 4441 4804

Passcode: 128512

One tap mobile

+16475580588,,94044414804#,,,,,0#,,128512# Canada

Dial by your location

+1 647 558 0588 Canada

Meeting ID: 940 4441 4804

Passcode: 128512

Find your local number: <https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/u/ad7MPF2I19>

Join by SIP

94044414804@zoomcrc.com

Join by H.323

162.255.37.11 (US West)

162.255.36.11 (US East)

69.174.57.160 (Canada)

Meeting ID: 940 4441 4804

Passcode: 128512