

# Assignment 1

**Sociology 2206a -570 Fall 2019**

**Professor Don Kerr**

**Worth 15% of final grade (late penalty 10% of assignment grade per day)**

**Due: October 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am (at the beginning of class)**

This assignment, if done properly, should help you gain some basic research skills that will be useful for any course in social sciences.

This assignment has two parts, and two basic purposes:

In Part A, you are asked to engage in preliminary research through the library system of UWO. The purpose here is to help you become familiarized with a few ways to find high quality scholarly material in the form of both books and scholarly journals.

In Part B, you are asked to provide a short research report, which summarizes and compares some of the material you found in Part A. The purpose here is to familiarize you with some of the methods we discuss in class in the context of professionally written research articles – to give you some practise summarizing, comparing and evaluating these methods in a real life context.

Please hand in Part A. and Part B. separately, with a cover page for each, and a single staple in the left hand corner (no binders or plastic covers etc. please). For all written sections, please double space (unless otherwise indicated) and use 12p font and 1” margins.

Please start by choosing one of the following very general research questions to be the subject of your research in Part A, and of your research report in Part B.

***Question 1: Why is it that immigrants tend to earn significantly less than the Canadian born?***

***Question 2: What is the relationship between gender and participation in sport among adolescents?***

***Question 3: What is the relationship between socioeconomic status and mental health in Canada?***

For the purposes of this assignment, you can stick with the very general questions above, or if you are comfortable with it, you can make your question more specific or exclusive. You can narrow it down to a specific time period, place, type of person, time of life etc. and collect more specific information based on your more specific question – note the only real limit is that your specific question has to stay inside the general one and not ask a question on a new topic.

Once you have chosen one question, please move onto Part A (you need to complete Part A in order to start Part B.).

## Part A. (worth 50% of assignment grade)

Please note that you can do most of this assignment from your personal computer – you will only need to physically go to the library once to complete this assignment provided you sign in to remote access the library systems – this can be done on the main UWO libraries page (<http://www.lib.uwo.ca/>).

Once on the library website, go to the “Databases”. Here you will have access to all the *electronic databases* that house the scholarly journals you will need access to for your whole university experience.

This assignment involves two common databases: *Sociological Abstracts* and *the Social Sciences Citation Index*. These will provide titles and/or abstracts that help you quickly evaluate the usefulness of publications, as well as providing access (through direct or indirect links) to the full texts themselves.

The abstracts databases allow you to quickly filter through and evaluate large numbers of articles or other research while the citation index is especially helpful in directly linking related research.

Please find works that are empirical research studies rather than purely theoretical pieces. You will be writing about some of what you find in Part A in Part B, and you will need empirical research with full methods sections to write about. These can be qualitative or quantitative.

Please try to find the most relevant material you can – not just indirectly related to your chosen research question. While not always necessary for the purposes of your work, it is usually preferable to locate relevant *Canadian literature* as the bulk of the research currently available tends to apply to the United States.

**For each step listed below, please provide photocopies/printouts in the correct order, with each step clearly labeled (in pen, on the printouts). Please use the quick checklist at the end of this description to be sure you hand in all parts of the assignment.**

### **Step 1:**

Locate a *book* from the UWO library catalogue relating to your chosen question. Go to the library and photocopy the *inside* cover of the book. This should include a page with publication information like copyrights etc. and the page with a table of contents. Include this (these) in your assignment. It may be an authored contribution or an edited collection. Please find something relatively recent (no older than 2005). Note that this will require you to think through appropriate **key words** to search for your chosen question – something you will need to do for the next couple of steps as well.

## **Step 2:**

Locate five journal articles directly related to your question using the ‘Sociological Abstracts’ database available through the UWO library system. Print the first page of each full article and submit with your assignment.

INSTRUCTIONS: On the UWO libraries website, go to ‘databases’ then ‘sociological abstracts’. Choose ‘advanced search’, and select for ‘scholarly journals’. Use the abstracts available to choose 5 that seem to be particularly relevant.

Hit on the relevant link and/or select “get it at Western” for each if available, and download and save the entire pdf file. It is the first page of each pdf file that I am looking for (it will include the abstract or introduction – some pdfs have a ‘cover page’ with a title, but this is not what I want). If this doesn’t work, try searching for the journal on the library website and find the article that way (i.e. the pdf). Many of the abstracts will not directly link to the article. Please also note that a few articles will not be available electronically (only on paper) and a very few won’t be available at Western at all – skip these and choose a different relevant article available electronically.

## **Step 3:**

Look at the bibliographies at the end of each of the five pdf articles you have downloaded and choose one of the five bibliographies. Print a copy of the *bibliography* from your chosen article and include it in your assignment. Now choose one reference from this bibliography (Please underline it on your printout) that sounds important to your research question, and find and download a pdf copy of that article using the same database as in step 2 (sociological abstracts). Provide a copy of the first page of this article in your assignment as well. This is an excellent strategy for finding past interrelated literature – particularly ‘fundamental’ literature like research or theoretical classics!

## **Step 4:**

Choose one of the articles you found in step 2 or 3. **It should each be at least a couple of years old to work well for this section.** Here you need use the *Social Sciences Citation Index* database to find and download an article that has cited the article you chose. You will need to print the first page of the newly found article and provide it with your assignment. You will also need to provide a printout of the first page of the actual search and provide it with your assignment.

On the UWO libraries website, go to ‘databases’ then ‘social sciences citation index’. Use elements of your reference (title, year, and/or author etc.) to locate the article you chose. Important, on this page be sure that you are searching only in the social sciences; you can do so by using the more settings command (Once you’ve found the correct article, click on ‘view record’ then ‘times cited’ (on the right) to get to a full list of papers that have cited this article. Note: It might be 0 times cited, so if that’s the case, look up another article (no luck, try again as this article has not been cited yet).

Print the first page of this list to be included in your assignment (it will say ‘citing articles’ near the top of the correct page). Choose one of the articles that have cited your chosen work, find and download a pdf copy, and provide a copy of the first page as part of your assignment – just like you have in previous steps.

The above is also a very useful strategy for finding interrelated research. For example, you know of an important theoretical contribution (published a number of years back) that is directly related to your area of research interest. You merely do a “citation search” on this article, and you should be able to identify everyone who ever referred to this article in their own published research!

### **Step 5:**

Using all of the research you’ve collected in steps 1 through 6, create a list of references (bibliography). It should say ‘References’ at the top. It should be single spaced, but with a space between each reference. It should be in alphabetical order. It should use the format listed below.

Using pencil or pen, please underline the article from which you retrieved the bibliography in step 3 and the article you found. Using a different colour pen or pencil, please underline the article from which you found forward citations as well as the article you found (in step 4)

### **Use the following format (ASA) in STEP 5:**

List all references with full publication information, alphabetically by author’s last name. Where more than one reference is given for an author or set of authors, they should be arranged by year, from earliest to most recent.

Please note that you should normally try to include the author’s full first name in citing their research (unless it is not provided for some reason).

Please also note that you do not include a url/web address in your reference list. These are only included when you cite material from the internet (although you are probably using the internet to find your articles, they are not *from* the internet).

### **Examples of BOOKS:**

Bacchi, Charles. 1983. *Liberation Deferred?: the Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

McLaren, Greg and Alan McLaren. 1996. *The Bedroom and the State: Changing Practices and Politics of Contraception and Abortion in Canada, 1890-1990*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

### **Examples of JOURNAL ARTICLES:**

Brittain, Harry. 1995. “Administration of the Toronto Department of Public Health.” *Health Journal* 86: 365-371.

Swedberg, Richard, Ulf Himmelstrand, and Greg Brulin. 1987. “The Paradigm of Economic Sociology: Premises and Promises.” *Theory and Society* 16: 169-213.

## Quick checklist for Part A.

### **Step 1:**

- o Title page of a relevant book (photocopy).

### **Step 2:**

- o First page of five different scholarly articles (printed from pdfs of the full articles).

### **Step 3:**

- o Bibliography from one of the articles found in step 4 (printed from pdf of full article).
- o First page of one article found in the above bibliography (printed from pdf of full article).

### **Step 4:**

- o Screen capture (you can use “print screen” on the keyboard to do so) - First page of search results for your chosen article. Alternatively you can merely take a photo with your phone, and provide a hard copy of that.
- o First page of one article found in the above search (printed from pdf of full article)

### **Step 5:**

- o Bibliography (Reference list) of all material found in steps 1, through 4.

### **MISCELLANEOUS BIBLIOGRAPHY ITEMS**

1. Although used in text itself when writing up a research paper (when an article has 3 or more authors), et al. should not be used in the bibliography.

2. In book titles prepositions (with, from, in), conjunctions (and, but, so, or), and articles (a, an, the) are generally not capitalized (unless first word of a title).

3. Vol. Number, translated by, and other information may follow the title of a book, are capitalized and are followed by a period, e.g., Population Changes. Vol. 11. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

## **Part B. (worth 50% of assignment grade)**

Professional, quality literature reviews can take weeks, or even months. Here I am asking you to complete a *miniature literature review focused on methodology*, rather than a full review with equal focus on theory and methods. This report should be a minimum of 5 double spaced pages (12p font, 1" margins). This report should read like a short essay, so there should be a brief introduction and a brief conclusion, along with the 'meat' of the report. You should also have a reference list using the style outlined in Part A, and use the in-text citation style described below.

For the body of the report: Choose two of the articles you found in steps 2 or 3. The idea is to summarize and compare two studies which deal with more or less the same specific topic. In other words, both studies should be focusing more or less on the same variables that you selected earlier (the question you chose in Part A.).

I am asking you to summarize the methodologies used in the published research you have found, then compare the methods and conclusions reached by the researchers. I would like you to focus almost exclusively on methods, reserving maybe 20% of your report space to summarize theory, compare empirical conclusions etc.

The first short paragraph briefly tells me what topic you are focusing on, and in a general manner introduce the two articles that are being compared.

The following is a list of questions to get you started – not all of these questions will apply to the articles you've chosen, and there may be other questions that you would like to answer as well, so think of this list a guide. Remember this is in an essay style – subheadings are Ok, but please do not use point form or Q&A style. Be descriptive, and try to include reasons the researcher may have done it a certain way.

- Is the research qualitative or quantitative; inductive or deductive etc?
- Does the researcher work with a large sample (100s if not 1000s of cases) or a relatively small non-representative sample (a few cases, perhaps a few dozen)?
- Where was the study conducted?
- What was the target population being researched?
- Does the researcher gather information on people, or focus on written and/or symbolic material? Does the researcher interview individuals or rely upon other source (e.g. direct observation)? Does the researcher rely upon a questionnaire/survey?
- Is the research longitudinal or cross sectional?
- Did the researcher conduct an experiment, or did he rely on some other type of research design? What sorts of variables (independent and dependent) were involved in his or her research?
- What was the main conclusion of the research article (no more than a paragraph or so on this specific issue)?
- Of the two studies, which do you think is more successful with its methodology (with some justification)? Does one study have a higher level of external validity than the other? Were there tricky ethical issues encountered in conducting the research?

*Try to structure your paper with well-organized paragraphs (1 or 2 sentences is typically not thought of as a paragraph; your paragraphs should also not be too long (no more than a page, max).*

### **In-Text Citations:**

In writing this research report, you are required to follow the following format for referencing literature in the text of a report (no footnote/endnote citations please): If you do not directly quote an article, but merely use/describe an author's ideas, it is adequate to provide only the author and year in the text (example: Maynard, 2009).

If you include a direct quote from the article (or a specific statistic), you must provide author, year and page number (example: Maynard, 2009: 341). There should be few (if any) quotes in your report – in the social sciences it is much more common to summarize someone's ideas than to directly quote them.

All references in the text should refer to the last name of the author or authors.

- when typing it out, you include the citation at the end of the sentence (Kopinak, 2000).
- if more than two authors, you merely include both (Kerr and Beaujot, 2008).
- if more than two, cite first author only and use “et al.” and year of publication (Carroll et al., 1994).

With quotes, you must include pagination, enclosed in a single pair of parentheses.

- As indicated, “population growth is expected to start declining as early as 2016” (Beaujot, 2007: 22).

If the author's name is used in the text, follow it with the year of publication and pagination if necessary.

- Carroll et al. (1995: 12) observed...

More than one reference to the *same author and year* should be distinguished by letters attached to the year of publication (example: Clark, 1996a: 113).

A number of references in the text may be enclosed within a single pair of parentheses, separated by semi-colons (example: Clark et al., 1995; Smith, 1996; Jones, 2008). This is relevant if you are referring to several studies that make the same general argument.

Quotes longer two sentences are typically indented and single-spaced (you should generally avoid using long quotes like this in the social sciences, unless you are writing an extended essay). If you must use a quote like this, place the reference in the sentence prior to the quote:

As Wells (1992: 34) pointed out:

Then follow with the indented quote. Note that there are no quotation marks about indented material. This again is only appropriate when you have more than one sentence, otherwise merely include in body of the paragraph.