

Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics
Epidemiology 9580S – Systematic Reviews

Winter 2022

Tuesdays 1:30 to 3:30 pm

(Jan 11 to 27 - ZOOM)

Feb 1 to 17 - NCB 293)

Thursdays 1:30 to 2:30 pm

(Jan 11 to 27 - ZOOM)

Feb 1 to 17 - NCB 293)

Dates: January 11 to 27 (online)

Feb 1 to 17 (In-person)

TA: Joshua Wiener

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Office Hours: TBD

Instructor: Dr. Monali Malvankar

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Office Hours: After class or by appointment

Course Information

Pre-Requisites: Epidemiology 3200A, Biostatistics 3100A

Unless you have the requisites for this course or written permission from the undergraduate Chair to enroll, 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.

Course Syllabus

Systematic reviews form the core of evidence-based decision-making in health care and are based on reliable syntheses of research and information. This course will cover the theory and rationale behind systematic reviews, discuss the strengths and limitations of the method, and provide step-by-step guidance on how to perform a systematic review.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize different types of literature reviews and how they are used in health care decision making
- Develop a systematic review protocol that clearly defines the study objectives and search strategy

- Conduct the literature search, study screening, data extraction, and quality assessment
- Acquire knowledge about systematic review software
- Write-up a systematic review manuscript

Weekly Topics

Week	Date	Topic
1	January 11 to 13	Introduction to Systematic Reviews and developing a Research Question
2	January 18 to 20	Developing a Search Strategy
3	January 25 to 27	Study Screening
4	February 1 to 3	Quality Assessment
5	February 8 to 10	Data Extraction
6	February 15 to 17	Reporting Systematic Reviews

Course Structure (Jan 11 to 27):

Students will be divided into review teams, and each team will work through the steps of a systematic review project. The weekly asynchronous session (Thursdays) will cover key information on how to conduct a systematic review. Each review team will meet with the course instructor during the weekly synchronous session (Tuesdays) for consultation on their project and address any questions or issues that arise throughout the process. This will allow students to develop these systematic review skills in a supported environment.

Course Structure (Feb 1 to 17):

The class sessions (Tuesdays) will cover key information and class sessions (Thursdays) will allow students to work on these skills in a supported environment. It should be noted that this course requires a significant amount of independent work, but it is intended to be highly practical and will prepare you to conduct systematic reviews. During the course, you will plan, conduct, and report a rigorous systematic review. With sufficient planning and effort, your final group report may be appropriate for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Because of the short time frame of this course, students are **required** to have identified a topic for their **group project** before week two (**January 18 at the start of class**) of the term. Student groups are encouraged to consult with the course instructor regarding a suitable topic.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

Khan K, Kunz R, Kleijnen J, Antes G. (2011) *Systematic Reviews to Support Evidence-Based Medicine*, 2nd Edition. London: Arnold Publishers Ltd.

Download Available from the UWO Library: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781853157998>

Other Reference Texts:

Egger M., Smith G., Altman D., *Systematic Reviews in Health Care: Meta-Analysis in Context*, Second Edition, BMJ books.

Link: <http://ca.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-072791488X.html>

Higgins JPT, Green S (editors). *Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions*. Version 5.1.0 (March 2011). The Cochrane Collaboration, 2011.

Download Available From: [https:// training.cochrane.org/handbook/current](https://training.cochrane.org/handbook/current)

Additional readings will be posted to OWL.

Methods of Evaluation

A. Participation (5% of final grade)

- Students are expected to attend and actively participate in all class discussions and class presentations.
- Solve and upload weekly practice problems in their respective dropbox (**Due: every Sunday before midnight**)

B. Assignments (20% of final grade)

- Review Protocol
 - Each group will prepare a brief (2 pages) protocol outlining the review methods, including a brief background/rationale, research question, proposed search strategy, and inclusion and exclusion criteria
 - **Due: Tuesday, Feb 8 at the start of class**

C. Presentations (30% of final grade)

- Each group will prepare a brief 8-10 mins presentation on their respective projects including background/rationale, research question, proposed search strategy, grey literature search
 - **Due: Tuesday, Feb 1 at the start of class**
- Each group will prepare a brief 8-10 mins presentation on their respective projects including inclusion/exclusion criteria, screening, and quality assessment
 - **Due: Tuesday, Feb 15 at the start of class**

D. Final Essay (45% of final grade)

- Students will prepare a final group report for their systematic review in the style of a journal manuscript
 - **Due: Feb 25 before midnight**

Late Assignment Policy

Please negotiate an alternative deadline with the instructor in advance if you foresee difficulties meeting the assigned due dates.

Marking Reassessments

Should you have concerns about a mark you have received on an assignment, you are welcome to request a reassessment from the instructor. In order to request a reassessment, please write one paragraph explaining why you believe you deserve a different mark from the one that you received. This

will be read in conjunction with your original submission. The instructor will reassess your assignment based on this information. Requests for changes in marking made in any other manner will not be considered.

Western Academic Policies and Statements

Absence from Course Commitments

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences](#)

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, you must seek approval for the absence as soon as possible. Approval can be granted either through a self-reported absence or via the Academic Counselling unit. Students have two self-reports to use throughout the academic year; absence from course commitments including tests, quizzes, presentations, labs, and assignments that are worth 30% or less can be self-reported. Self-reported absences cover a student for 48 hours (yesterday + today or today + tomorrow). Your instructor will receive notification of your consideration; however, you should contact your instructor immediately regarding your absence. Students are expected to submit missed work within 24 hours of the end of the 48-hour period. Please review Western's [Academic Consideration for Student Absences](#) policy for more details.

If you have used both their self-reported absences or will miss more than 48 hours of course requirements, a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) should be signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner and you should contact academic counseling. Academic Counselling will be operating virtually this year and can be contacted at scibmsac@uwo.ca.

Special Examinations

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

Statement on 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, at the following Web site: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.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://www.turnitin.com>).

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 and Audio/Video Recording Statement

Course material produced by faculty is copyrighted and to reproduce this material for any purposes other than your own educational use contravenes Canadian Copyright Laws. You must always ask permission to record another individual and you should never share or distribute recordings.

Support Services

As part of a successful student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page <http://www.music.uwo.ca/> and our own McIntosh Gallery <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>.

Registrarial Services: <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

USC Student Support Services: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support and Engagement: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>

Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (Graduate or Undergraduate Chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Health and Wellness-related information and services are available at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>

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

Accessible Education Western (AEW)

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members. More information and access to services is available on the AEW website:
http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

Department & Faculty Offices

The Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics is located on the third floor of the Western Centre for Public Health & Family Medicine (PHFM) on Western University's Main Campus.

Technology Requirements

You are responsible for all required course materials and announcements posted to the course's OWL website. Please ensure that when you log in you are able to access the course site. A copy of the course outline will be available on both OWL and the departmental website.

Students will also use the following software or online platforms throughout the course (all available free of charge):

- Covidence: used for study screening (online)
<http://www.covidence.org>
- Mendeley: citation management software
<http://www.mendeley.com>
- Review Manager (RevMan 5.3.5): used for data extraction and to create summary tables
<http://tech.cochrane.org/revman/download>
- GRADEpro: used for GRADE evidence tables and summary of findings tables
<https://gradepro.org>