



Western
UNIVERSITY · CANADA

Western University
SOCIOLOGY 1027B-001

Life Is Not Always Fair
How social institutions and processes affect individual lives

Winter 2016-17
Mon 12:30-2:30, UCC 146

Instructor: Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9-11am
Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5430

Email: wlehmann@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistants:

Andrew English, Lyn Hoang, and Cavita Meetun

Course Description

In this introductory sociology course, we will explore the various social processes and institutions that shape the social world in which we live. We will challenge many commonly held assumptions, such as the idea that the success of individuals is always the outcome of talent and hard work, and that those who do not succeed in conventional terms must be lazy, deficient, and thus responsible for their own problems. In contrast, students will be introduced to important sociological debates about the nature of inequality, and how different social institutions and processes are implicated in the creation and maintenance of this inequality.

Some of the key questions we will be asking include:

- Who gets what kind of education?
- Who does what kind of work?
- Who gets what kind of health care?
- Who gets what kind of justice?
- Who is affected when corporations do bad things or the environment declines?

The course will conclude with a discussion of alternative approaches to learning, working, and living that some have argued contain the potential to overcome many of the problems with which modern societies are grappling.

Antirequisites

There are no anti-requisite to this course, but please do note that you cannot take more than 7.0 credits at the 1000-level in your degree.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Challenge common-sense assumptions about social life by applying sociological reasoning.
- Describe and examine a range of key sociological concepts and theoretical approaches and assess their merits for the explanation of social institutions, processes and behaviours.
- Demonstrate knowledge of major dimensions of social inequality and social structure in contemporary societies.
- Explain how different sociological research approaches are used to answer sociological questions.
- Demonstrate the skills necessary to engage in further sociological studies.

Required Text

Corrigall-Brown, Catherine. 2016. *Imagining Society: An Introduction with Readings*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Method of Evaluation

Midterm Exam:	February 13, 2017	30%
Final Exam:	During April Exam Period	40%
Tutorial Assignment:	Due: March 13, 2017	20%
Tutorial participation:		10%

Evaluation Breakdown

Both exams will be made up of multiple choice questions and are not cumulative. The exams will test materials covered in the readings, lectures, tutorials, films, and class/tutorial discussions.

The tutorial assignment is a small, take-home assignment. You will be given a research-like activity and be asked to answer a series of questions meant to reflect on the activity and its outcome. In your answers, you are asked to relate your reflections to the material, theories, and concepts covered in class. Specific instructions will be provided in your tutorials. More detailed information will be provided in your tutorials.

Tutorial participation will be a combination of tutorial attendance and active contribution to discussions during tutorials.

How to Contact Me

- In person: during office hours or by appointment in SSC 5430
- By telephone: 519-661-2111 x85385
- By email: wlehmann@uwo.ca

How to Contact Your Teaching Assistants

- Andrew English: aenglis4@uwo.ca
- Lyn Hoang: lhoang3@uwo.ca
- Cavita Meetun: cmeetun2@uwo.ca

How to get important information

Make sure to check the course OWL site regularly for course updates, cancellations, and other course-related postings. Your tutorial will have its own OWL site. Make sure to check it regularly, as your Teaching Assistants will communicate important information through the tutorial OWL sites.

Important Policies

Policies for Missed Exams:

Make-up exams will be granted with approved documentation only. If you have a conflict with one of the exam dates, it is your responsibility to discuss it with the Academic Counseling office at least one week before the regularly scheduled exam and provide documentation of the conflict. If approved, you will be allowed to schedule a make-up exam.

If you miss an exam (or assignment due date) due to illness or for any other unforeseen reason, you must provide notification of and documentation for the reasons for your circumstances to your Academic Counselor within 48 hours. If your problem is medical in nature, you should be seen by your doctor on the date of the exam or on the date an assignment is due. If your Academic Counselor agrees that your reasons are legitimate and are supported by your medical doctor's documentation, you will be allowed to write a make-up exam (or hand in your assignment at a later date).

Make-up Exams

All make-up exams are scheduled on Fridays only. Unless illness or a lengthy absence from campus make this impossible, the make-up exams will be scheduled for the Friday immediately following the regularly scheduled exam. Early make-up exams (i.e., make-up exams before the regularly scheduled exam) will not be granted.

Scantron Exams

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.

Policy on Laptops and other Electronics/Phones in Class

Laptops are permitted in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, they will be told to close the lid and they will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cell phones are turned off at the beginning of class.

Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation: http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html

Accessibility Options:

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 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html

Scholastic 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:

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

Mental Health

Students who are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western

(http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

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.

Grade Guidelines

The Department of Sociology has grade distribution guidelines that all instructors are required to follow. For Sociology courses at the 1000 level, the number of A's is not to exceed the number of B's, and class means are expected to fall in the range of 65-68%.

Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1: Introduction (January 9, 2017)

- The purpose of this class: common sense vs. sociological reasoning

Week 2: *Sociological Reasoning about Inequality* (January 16, 2017)

- Some examples of inequality: individual vs social explanations
- In sociological terms: functionalist versus conflict perspectives
- How do sociologists research these issues?

Readings: Chapter 1 (4-12; 20 – chapter end); Chapter 2 (38-45)

Week 3: *Social class, status and inequality* (January 23, 2017)

- What is class and status
- The problem with social mobility
- Poverty

Readings: Chapter 3

Week 4: *Race, ethnicity and inequality* (January 30, 2017)

- Social construction of race
- Multiculturalism vs anti-racism
- White privilege
- Immigration and education and work

Readings: Chapter 5

Week 5: *Gender, sexuality and inequality* (February 6, 2017)

- Gender hierarchies and family, work and life
- The class ceiling at work
- Sexual violence as power
- Heteronormativity

Readings: Chapter 6

Week 6: MIDTERM EXAM (February 13, 2017)

READING WEEK (February 20, 2017)

Week 7: Deviance and the Law: are we all equal under it? (February 27, 2017)

- Why are some people more likely to become victims or perpetrators of crime?
- What is a crime?
- Social construction of deviance

Readings: Chapter 11

Week 8: Inequality in education (March 6, 2017)

- Who does well in school and why?
- Social class, gender and race in education

Readings: Chapter 9

Week 9: Inequality at work (March 13, 2017); YOUR TUTORIAL ASSIGNMENT IS DUE TODAY

- Who gets the good and bad jobs?
- How do different people experience work?
- Who gets ahead at work?

Readings: Chapter 10

Week 10: Local to global inequalities (March 20, 2017)

- Global income distribution and poverty
- Environmental effects at home
- Global environmental effects

Readings: Chapter 4

Week 11: Change through government and social movements (March 27, 2017)

- Policy to address inequality
- Role of the welfare state
- Individualism vs. collectivism
- Role of social movements

Readings: Chapter 12; Chapter 13 (pp. 364-367; 373-374)

Week 12: Applying what we learned, summing up and reviewing (April 3, 2017)

- How is inequality a social phenomenon?
- What are the roles of the state?
- What are the roles of individuals?

Readings: None