Course Description
This course provides a general coverage of the literature and issues related to the sociological study of youth by contrasting a critical perspective on youth with more conservative, descriptive perspectives in terms of mass education, the workplace, the family, technological influences, youth culture, and politics and public policy. In each case, the relevant debates and issues in the youth studies field will be examined. The critical perspective examines how the period of youth is a socially constructed age status that serves dominant interests at a macro level, with both positive and negative consequences for youth at a micro level. As such, the critical perspective provides a useful point of view of how young people are located in terms of the ‘big picture’ in the economics and politics of contemporary society.

Although there are no prerequisites for this course, student MUST have a university-level reading capacity and vocabulary—along with a desire and willingness to improve their vocabulary—in order to pass this course. Students CANNOT pass the tests in this course merely by studying the PowerPoint slides.

Prerequisite(s)
None.

Antirequisite(s)
None.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, if students have put in sufficient effort to the required readings AND attending lectures, they should be proficient at:

- appreciating the importance of threshold concepts, especially those that apply to this course.
- understanding the origin and perpetuation of stereotypes about youth
- knowing the difference between critical and conservative approaches
• grasping the connection between institutional re-structuring the transition to adulthood, including the education system, workplace, and family

• developing an appreciation of the risks associated with the transition to adulthood and the role of youth culture and new technologies in the transition

• gaining insights into how consensus is manufactured, especially though popular culture

• acquiring an understanding of how political engagement and public policy could enhance the lives of youth

• acquiring an understanding of how public policy could enhance the lives of youth

Required Text(s)
Côté, James (2014). *Youth Studies: Fundamental Issues and Debates*. Palgrave. (Purchase from the bookstore or from Amazon.ca as a Kindle Edition)

Several articles and book chapters made available as PDFs in the resources file on OWL.

Required will be available for download on the course OWL. Several recommended readings will also be made available, but will not be tested; they will however help you to understand the lectures better.

Method of Evaluation
Two midterms and an essay will determine the final course grade. Each midterm will have only 40 multiple-choice questions, but each is carefully constructed to assess your comprehension of key concepts and theories. The essay is to be handed in through OWL as an inline submission that will be checked for plagiarism by Turnitin.com. The exams will be based on lecture material, class discussions, and assigned readings.

If you are taking this course because you think it is an “easy A” or a “bird course,” you should be aware of the standards of the Sociology Department. The following are the grade-distribution guidelines faculty members must follow in the Department of Sociology for courses at this level:

2100 and 2200 level: A’s not to exceed B’s; Means in the range of 66-70%

As a matter of full disclosure, the following figure shows the grade distribution from last year’s first midterm in this course:
Please note carefully: If you have trouble with multiple-choice tests, or have issues with this being the main assessment method, this is not the course for you. I do not need to hear later in the course, or on teaching evaluations, that other testing methods should have been used. Furthermore, I am the final arbiter as to whether or not a particular question is “fair.”

Because of the amount of material, the 2-hour tests could not possibly have enough questions covering everything. Accordingly, the selection of test questions constitutes a sampling of concepts, facts, theories, theorists, and statistics. Thus, all materials covered in the readings and lectures are ‘fair game’ for test questions. You need to have your own study strategies for approaching these tests.

The advice I give is that when studying from the readings, you should retain what you would need to know to explain with authority in 5-10 minutes some theory or line of research to someone (think of how you might explain convincingly to your parents how much you’ve learned about something you are really interested in). When explaining something with authority, you must have supporting statistics and facts available for immediate recall, so it is not unreasonable that you should know these things for tests. Someone with a good working knowledge of the material will know what statistics need to be retained for recall in explaining something with authority.

While multiple-choice questions may not always assess your knowledge at the broadest level (e.g., the characteristics of a specific theory), they will assess your knowledge of the facts associated with that knowledge.

**Evaluation Breakdown**

Each midterm test is worth 40%. The essay is worth 20%.

Both midterms are in-class and multiple-choice format. Your essay writing skills will be evaluated on the basis of a “take-home essay” assignment, with your 500-word (+/- 50 words) answer based on material from weeks 11 and 12 that is to be applied to the course topics covered in the first nine weeks of the course. The essay question will be released at the end of the class (and online) on week 12 (Nov. 28 and is due by 6:00 PM a week later, on Dec. 5 (there is no class that day to ensure you have time to complete this assignment).

The multiple-choice questions for the midterms are drawn roughly 50% from classes and 50% from readings, with some overlap. Practice questions will be provided before the first midterm.

**How To Contact Me**

E-mail: cote@uwo.ca

**How to get important information**

Course OWL website
Important Policies

**Make-up exams**
You should note that make-up exams are not routine in this course. All make up exams will be essay format. Moreover, I will not agree to provide make-ups so students can go on family holidays, attend weddings, go to other people’s graduations, or otherwise pursue various personal/hedonistic activities.

**Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness**
Western’s policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html. Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation.

**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 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar’s website: http://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: http://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/) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

**Course Schedule and Readings:**
My lectures assume that students have completed the readings listed below for each week in advance of class. To help in preparation and note taking, by 4:00 PM on the day before each weekly class, the PowerPoint slides for that class will be posted on the course OWL site, both in PPT and PDF. You should print out a copy of one of these and bring it to class. The PDF version will have three slides per page with lined spaces on which to make crib notes. I will pace the lectures assuming that everyone has hardcopies of the slides in front of him or her.

When both of these things are done, in class you should then listen to what I have to say and if I say additional things that you would like to retain, you should write these on the respective printed slide. I will pace the lectures assuming that everyone has hardcopies of the slides in front of them, so do not
attempt to write down everything I say during lectures. The format also leaves ample time and opportunity for questions. If you do not understand something in the readings after giving it serious, independent thought, the best time to bring it up is during classes, or beforehand by sending me an email. **Do not wait until the end of the course to bring up matters like this with me.**

*Laptop use:*

Schools at all levels that once embraced laptops—even supplied them to students—have been dropping them over the past few years. At the university level, professors have been banning them from their classrooms because they are distractions to other students, to teachers, and to the students using them, who can’t resist checking their e-mail and Facebook. Research shows that students who use laptops tend to get lower grades (by 5%, or one half of a letter grade)

In the past, I have tried to accommodate laptops in this large, lower-level class, but have always had students abuse the privilege, so **NO LAPTOPS ARE ALLOWED IN CLASS UNLESS YOU HAVE PERMISSION FROM ME or SSD.** If you want permission from me, we will arrange an interview to discuss it.

**It should go without saying that cell phones should be turned off and put off the desk, and that no texting should be done during class.**

*Lecture schedule*

TBA