



**Western University**  
**SOCIOLOGY 1027A-001**

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

**Fall 2018-19**  
**Mon 12:30-2:30, UCC 146**

**Instructor: Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann**  
Office Hours: Thursdays, 9-11am  
Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5430  
Email: [wlehmann@uwo.ca](mailto:wlehmann@uwo.ca)

**Teaching Assistants:**  
TBA

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**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 Sociology: An Introduction with Readings*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

## **Method of Evaluation**

Midterm Exam	October 22, 2018	30%
Final Exam	During December Exam Period	40%
Tutorial Assignment	Due: November 12, 2018	20%
Tutorial Participation		10%

## **Evaluation Breakdown**

**Midterm and Final Exams:** Both exams will be made up of multiple choice questions and are not cumulative. The exams will test all materials covered in the lectures and the readings.

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](mailto:wlehmann@uwo.ca)

## **How to Contact Your Teaching Assistants**

- TBA
- TBA
- TBA

### **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 as soon as possible, but no later than 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 (this includes make-up exams) due to illness or for any other unforeseen reason, please notify me (Dr. Lehmann) within 24 hours of the missed exam. No documentation is required when you notify me, but I need to know that you missed the exam within 24 hours. You then must provide notification and documentation 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***

There will be one makeup date set by the Department for students needing to write a make-up exam (with approved accommodation from your academic counseling office). This makeup exam may or may not be in the same format as the original exam.

If a student misses a make-up exam due to sickness or another documented reason, then the weight of the mid-term will be added to the weight of the final exam. In cases where there is no approved justification for the absence, the student will receive a grade of zero on the exam.

### ***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 [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://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](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](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: [www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](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/index.html](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, class means are expected to fall in the range of 68-72%.

## **Course Schedule and Readings**

### **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

#### **Week 1: Introduction (September 10, 2018)**

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

#### **Week 2: Sociological Reasoning about Inequality (September 17, 2018)**

- 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)***

### **PART II: SOCIAL GROUPS**

#### **Week 3: Social class, status and inequality (September 24, 2018)**

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

***Readings: Chapter 3***

#### **Week 4: Race, ethnicity and inequality (October 1, 2018)**

- Social construction of race; multiculturalism vs anti-racism
- Race in education and at work
- Immigration

***Readings: Chapter 5***

#### **READING WEEK (October 8, 2018)**

#### **Week 5: Gender, sexuality and inequality (October 15, 2018)**

- Social construction of gender and heteronormativity
- Gender in education and at work
- Sexual violence as power

***Readings: Chapter 6***

#### **Week 6: MIDTERM EXAM (October 22, 2018)**

**PART III: EFFECTS OF INEQUALITY IN LIFE EXPERIENCES**

**Week 7: Deviance and Health Outcomes: (October 29, 2018)**

- Understanding crime sociologically
- Social determinants of health

*Readings: Chapter 11*

**Week 8: Inequality in Education (November 5, 2018)**

- Who does well in school and why?
- Role of school structures and curriculum

*Readings: Chapter 9*

**Week 9: Inequality at work (November 12, 2018); TUTORIAL ASSIGNMENTS DUE TODAY**

- How do different people experience work?
- Who gets ahead at work?

*Readings: Chapter 10*

**PART IV: LOCAL AND GLOBAL EFFECTS AND RESPONSES**

**Week 10: Local to global inequalities (November 19, 2018)**

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

*Readings: Chapter 4*

**Week 11: Change through government and social movements (November 26, 2018)**

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

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

**Week 12: Applying what we learned, summing up and reviewing (December 3, 2018)**

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

*Readings: None*