Western University
SOCIOLOGY 9147A-001

Social Inequality
Fall 2021
Wednesday 9:30 am to 12:30 pm
Location: SSC 5230
Professor Sean Waite
Office Hours: Wednesday 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm
Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5401
Email: swait3@uwo.ca

Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapēewak (Len-ahpay-wuk), and Attawandaron (Add-a-won-da-run) peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. With this, we respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We also acknowledge the historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (e.g., First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through teaching, research, and community service.

Course Description
This graduate seminar course explores the extent, causes, and consequences of social inequality in Canada and abroad. We start the course by discussing recent trends in income inequality and some foundational social stratification theories. We then move on to specialized topics, such as the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19; black lives matter and the criminal justice system; race, residential segregation, employment discrimination; colonization and the Indigenous peoples in Canada; the gender wage gap; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit+ (LGBTQ2+) labour market inequality; disability discrimination; and intersectionality.

Technical Requirements and Schedule
This course will be delivered in person. If you are unable to attend in person, remote access will be available. See OWL “Zoom” tab for Zoom meeting links. A password is required to join. The following are required for remote attendance.

- Stable internet connection. Check your internet speed [here](#).
- Laptop or computer
- A working microphone
- A working webcam (preferred)
Course Organization

Class time will consist of structured class discussions and presentations. Each week there will be four articles or book chapters assigned. Students will be assigned readings and asked to provide a short five-minute summary of their article and facilitate class discussion for roughly 15 minutes/article. Students not presenting an article will submit a summary and reflection of that week’s readings. The course culminates with a final term paper submission and a 15-minute “conference-style” presentation.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- understand different dimensions of social inequality, including their causes and consequences
- synthesize and critically evaluate theoretical arguments and published research from a sociological perspective
- critically evaluate and apply current research and scholarship within sociology and in one’s area(s) of specialization
- demonstrate an understanding of results from both quantitative and qualitative research
- demonstrate an ability to present and discuss ideas clearly and articulately through effective oral and written communication

Required Text

Articles or book chapters assigned in the detailed reading list, excluding optional readings.

Methods of Evaluation

| Participation and discussion facilitation: | Throughout term | 15% |
| Summaries & reflections: | Throughout term | 20% |
| Term paper proposal: | October 13, 2021 | 10% |
| Abstract: | November 24, 2021 | 2.5% |
| Conference presentation: | December 8, 2021 | 10% |
| Term paper: | December 8, 2021 | 42.5% |

Participation and discussion facilitation

Participation is worth 15% of your final grade. Students are expected to participate in class discussions by sharing their thoughts, opinions and, most importantly, making connections between the readings. Each week, four students will be assigned one of the weekly readings and asked to provide a five minute summary of their article and facilitate class discussion for 15 minutes. Students should avoid reading directly off their page during their summary and discussion. A good discussion should feel natural for the presenter and audience.

Summaries and Reflections

Weekly summaries and reflections are worth 20% of your final grade. Each week, all students, with the exception of the weekly presenters, will submit a 4-5-page double-spaced summary and reflection on the articles covered that week. When summarizing articles, students should consider the strengths and weakness of their articles and the intersections of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability. You should also consider how these readings fit within the larger social inequality literature that we have discussed in class. Students are encouraged to critically engage with the readings and consider how the topics/reading can contribute to their own research. Students may also pose questions/topics they would like to raise during class discussion.
Term Paper Options
The term paper is worth 42.5% of your final grade. Students have two options – an empirical paper or a research paper.

a) Empirical paper
I encourage Ph.D. students to write an empirical term paper using either qualitative or quantitative methods. MA students are encouraged to write a research paper (see below). Due to time constraints, students using qualitative methods will not be able to obtain ethics approval to conduct their own interviews but could analyze previously gathered interview data. Because of these challenges, I encourage students to use secondary data. ODESI is a wonderful site for downloading many public use Canadian data sets. Although I encourage students to challenge themselves with advanced methods, basic descriptive statistics (mean, mode, median) are also acceptable.

This should be formatted like an academic journal article. Empirical papers must include an abstract, introduction, literature review, data and methods section, results, and discussion/conclusion. The purpose of this exercise is to write an original research paper that could be developed into a publishable paper.

b) Research Paper
Alternatively, students can write a research paper on any topic related to social inequality. Ideally, students will choose a topic that complements their MRP/thesis/dissertation research. Research papers should be roughly 25 double-spaced pages, excluding reference pages.

Proposal
Students will be asked to submit a two-page research proposal, which will be worth 10% of your final grade. Proposals should demonstrate that you have selected a relevant topic and have started conducting preliminary research. If you are writing an empirical paper, be sure to mention the research questions, data, and methods that will be used.

Abstract
To be scheduled as a presenter at the Unequal Opportunities and Outcomes: Social inequality in Canada and abroad annual conference (more information below), students must submit a term paper title and abstract. Abstracts should be no more than 200 words and are worth 2.5% of your final mark. Helpful information on how to write an abstract can be found here. If a student fails to submit an abstract, they will not be scheduled to present at the conference and receive a zero for this component of the course.

Conference Presentations
On the last day(s) of class, we will hold a conference entitled Unequal Opportunities and Outcomes: Social inequality in Canada and abroad. Students will prepare a 15-minute conference presentation and share their research with the class. This component of the course is worth 10% of your final mark.

Conference presentation peer-review
Your peers will evaluate your conference presentation and provide me with their feedback and grade. This feedback and the average grade from your peers will be considered when determining your conference presentation mark.

Submitting your paper and TURNITIN
All papers must be submitted via email. You must also submit your paper to TURNITIN through OWL. This is done by submitting your paper on OWL in the “assignments” tab.
Assignment format requirements
Marks may be deducted if you do not follow these instructions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Times New Roman font</th>
<th>1 inch (2.54cm) margins on all sides</th>
<th>Papers should be double-spaced.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-point font size</td>
<td>Pages should be numbered in the right side of the footer starting on the first page of text, not the title page</td>
<td>Your full name should appear in the right side of the header.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All papers need to be submitted through TURNITIN on OWL.</td>
<td>All papers must be submitted via email.</td>
<td>ASA (American Sociological Association) style.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication

- In person during office hours: Wednesday 1:30pm to 3:30pm. Office hours are held in-person or by zoom on a first-come first-serve basis. Please refer to the Owl Zoom tab for office hour zoom links. Passcode: Fall2021
- By telephone: 519-661-2111 x.87689
- By email: swaite3@uwo.ca

I typically respond to emails within 24 hours but I will not respond to questions where the answer can be found on the course outline. Similarly, I will not respond to questions that require a considerable amount of detail to answer. These are questions that should be asked in class or during office hours. I only respond to emails sent to swaite3@uwo.ca.

Make sure to check the course OWL site regularly for course updates, cancellations, and other course-related postings. You are also responsible for any emails I send to your Western email account. Please be sure that you can receive and access emails from this account.

Important Policies

Late / Missed Assignments or Presentations
There are no late penalties. The consequence for not submitting a proposal or term paper is an incomplete grade for this course. **Those who are absent on their assigned class discussion day will not be reassigned. Instead, you will need to submit a detailed summary and reflection on each of the articles assigned that week, i.e. 4 articles x 5 page summary and reflection each = 20 pages.** Be sure to discuss how the readings fit within the larger social inequality literature. Alternatively, you are able to switch your article and presentation day with a peer. Students who miss their conference presentation dates will be assigned a make-up conference date. Students will receive an incomplete grade on their transcript until they complete the course conference presentation.

A Note on Plagiarism
Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence. See Scholastic Offences (below) for the link to Scholastic Discipline regulations.

Plagiarism Checking
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 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

**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/appeals_discipline/index.html

**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.

**Recording Devices**
No recording devices can be used in class. Some of the topics we discuss may be sensitive. If students wish to share personal stories or experiences they should not worry that they are being recorded. If you require a recording device for medical or other reasons, please see me.

**Absence from Course Commitments**

**Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences**
In the interest of the health and safety of students and health care providers, you are no longer required to seek a medical note for absences this term. If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness you should use the [Illness Reporting Tool](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/appeals_discipline/index.html). This tool takes the place of the need to submit a medical note and the Self-Reported Absence System formally used by undergraduate students.

You are required to self-report every day that you are ill and unable to complete course commitments. Details about when you should submit missed work, the format of the missed work can be found in the Section 7. Evaluation above. Students should communicate promptly with their instructor and use this tool with integrity.

**Accommodation**
Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

**Completion of Course Requirements**
Course requirements must be completed by the end of the term in which the course is offered (Fall-December 31; Winter-April 30, Summer-August 31). Only in exceptional circumstances may a student take additional time to complete the course requirements. In such a case, the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to request permission to carry the incomplete. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the Sociology graduate program office. More details regarding
incompletes are outlined in the Graduate Handbook:  
http://www.sociology.uwo.ca/graduate_handbook/course_information.html

**Mental Health**
Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Health and Wellness Western for a complete list of options to obtain help:  
http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

**Health and Wellness**
As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. 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 chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. *The Wellness Education Centre (lower level UCC)* assists students in finding mental health and other related resources best suited to their needs:  
http://se.uwo.ca/wec.html  
Western’s School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies’ *Living Well* website provides tips for thriving at grad school and other helpful information:  
http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/living_well/index.html

Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in *Western’s Campus Recreation Centre*:  
http://www.westernmustangs.ca/index.aspx?path=ims#  
Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Also, we encourage you to check out the Faculty of Music web page  
http://www.music.uwo.ca/  
and our own McIntosh Gallery  
http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/.

**Standards of Professional Behaviour**
It is the responsibility of all members of the Department of Sociology to adhere to and promote standards of professional behaviour that support an effective learning environment. These include:

- **Respect for others** both in and out of the classroom through words and actions (be professional, fair, and respectful in interactions with people on-line and in-person; understand and respect differences among classmates and colleagues; avoid disrupting the learning environment; respect others’ expectations of confidentiality and privacy)
- **Active engagement in learning** and commitment to quality (being prepared for classes; participating and listening actively to other; using technology and social media appropriately, striving to do your best)
- **Personal integrity** (following through on commitments; doing own work)

Students should also be aware of the UWO Student Code of Conduct found at  
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf

**Discrimination and Unconscious Bias**
- **Discrimination.** I encourage students to “call out” comments or content that may be marginalizing, oppressive, or discriminatory. If students are uncomfortable raising concerns in class, please speak to me immediately about any discriminatory conduct.
- **Unconscious/implicit bias.** We all have unconscious biases. Yes, everyone! Our brains unconsciously process huge amounts of information without us even being aware of it. This can include snap judgements about people we meet and situations we encounter. People have unconscious preferences for people who are similar to them and situations that are familiar. This unconscious bias can exclude, marginalize, and discriminate against minorities. As sociologists, it is our duty to use our sociological imaginations to combat unconscious bias.
  - **Here is some additional information and tips to combat unconscious bias:**  
    - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GP-cqFLS8Q4  
    - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKHSJHkPeLY
Disputed Grades
Student who wish to dispute the grading of an assignment must write a one-page explanation and justification for having their work re-evaluated.

Extraordinary Circumstances
In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University or instructor’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Course Schedule and Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Sept. 15 | Introductions and the course outline  
|      |        | Does inequality serve a purpose? The Davis-Moore theory.               |
| 2    | Sept. 22 | Recent trends in social inequality                                     |
| 3    | Sept. 29 | Class analysis                                                          |
| 4    | Oct. 6   | The socioeconomic impact of COVID-19                                   |
| 5    | Oct. 13  | Inequalities in education                                               |
| 6    | Oct. 20  | Inequalities at the extreme and new classes                             |
| 7    | Oct. 27  | Black lives matter and the criminal justice system                       |
| 8    | Nov. 3   | Reading week – no class / office hours                                  |
| 9    | Nov. 10  | Race, residential segregation, and discrimination                       |
| 10   | Nov. 17  | Colonization and the genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada           |
| 11   | Nov. 24  | Gender and sexuality in the labour market                               |
| 12   | Dec. 1   | Beauty premiums, disability, and intersectionality                      |
| 13   | Dec. 8   | Class conference presentations                                          |
Detailed Reading List

WARNING: Some readings may contain language and/or content that some readers may find offensive. I encourage students to raise this issue during class discussion. Do you think that the educational benefits from these readings outweigh the offensive language, or should these readings be shelved?

Week 1: September 15, 2021 – Does inequality serve a purpose? The Davis-Moore theory.


Optional Readings:


Week 2: September 22, 2021 – Recent trends in social inequality


Optional readings:


Week 3: September 29, 2021 – Class analysis


Optional readings:


**Week 4: October 6, 2021 – COVID-19 and Social Inequality**


**Optional readings:**

Choi, Kate, Patrick Denice, Michael Haan, and Anna Zajacova. 2020. “Studying the social determinants of COVID in a data vacuum.” *SocArXiv*


**Week 5: October 13, 2021 – Inequalities in education**


**Week 6: October 20, 2021 – Inequalities at the extreme and new classes**


**Optional readings:**


**Week 7: October 27, 2021 – Black lives matter and the criminal justice system**


**Optional readings:**


**Week 8: November 3, 2021 – Reading week – no class/office hours**

Please use this week to rest, recharge, and catch-up on course work.

**Week 9: November 10, 2021 – Race, residential segregation, and discrimination**


Optional readings:


Week 10: November 17, 2021 – the genocide of Canada’s Indigenous peoples


Optional readings:


**Week 11: November 24, 2021 – Gender and sexuality in the labour market**


**Optional readings:**


**Week 12: December 1, 2021 – Beauty premiums, disability, and intersectionality**


**Optional readings:**


Turcotte, Martin. 2014. Persons with disabilities and employment. Minister of Industry: Ottawa, Canada (Cat. No. 75-006).


**Week 13: December 8, 2021 – Conference presentations**

*Conference program will be circulated prior to class.*