Enrollment Restrictions
Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Department of Sociology, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student’s home program.

Course Description
This course provides an overview of the social structures that create racial/ethnic inequality in Canada and the United States. The core goals of this class are:

- Gain insights into the pattern and trends in racial/ethnic inequality in major social institutions like the educational system, labor markets, health care system, and housing market
- Identify the social structures contributing to and sustaining racial/ethnic inequality
- Apply insights obtained from sociological readings to gain a better understanding of current events (e.g., affirmative action, contentions in EDID policy, health care discrimination, collection of race-based data, redlining)

Students will be asked to read and critically evaluate the course material prior to class meetings. Class time will consist of lectures and structured class discussions employing the Socratic Method. Students will be asked to complete a weekly review of class discussion, write an op-ed, and a grant proposal on a project on racial/ethnic inequality. The weekly review of class discussion is intended to provide students the opportunity to hone the verbal skill sets necessary in the labor market and workplace. The op-ed is intended to provide students the opportunity to develop the writing skills necessary for life outside of academia. The grant proposal, which will follow the format of a SSHRC doctoral dissertation, is intended to help the student push their research agenda forward.

Learning Outcomes

**Broad outcomes**

- Critically assess social institutions, social norms, social processes, social relations, and various dimensions of social experience from a sociological perspective
- Synthesize and critically evaluate theoretical arguments and published research from a sociological perspective
• Analyze, evaluate, and utilize a variety of theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches in Sociology

• Demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the complexity of knowledge, the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines, and the limitations of one’s own work and of the discipline more generally

Practical outcomes

• Demonstrate an ability to present and discuss ideas clearly, concisely, and articulately through effective oral and written communication

• Demonstrate an understanding of results from both quantitative and qualitative research and the competent use of different quantitative and/or qualitative research methodologies and designs

• Apply sociological perspectives to real world problems.

• Demonstrate an ability to engage in scholarly discussion and debate in in formal and informal learning environments

Course Material(s)

Mandatory course materials


All other material will be available via jstor.org or scholar.google.com, which can be accessed via the Western Library or an IP belonging to Western (on-campus or VPN access).

Methods of Evaluation

Students can choose between two options of evaluations. Each assignment will be curved; and as such, the choice of Option A or B will not affect the students’ overall marks. The options are available to ensure that students have agencies in how they are being evaluated which incorporates their own comfort with risks and time availability. Students do not need to declare if they want to pursue Option A or B. They just need to turn in the book review by the beginning of the last class.

Option A:

  o Class participation (25%)
  o Op-ed (25%)
  o Grant proposal (50%)

Option B:

  o Class participation (20%)
  o Op-ed (20%)
  o Book review and interview (20%)
  o Grant proposal (40%)
**Class Participation:** All students are required to critically read before class, bring notes, and engage in active participation in class.

- All students must consistently ask and answer questions, reflect thoughtfully on the readings, and engage respectfully with the instructor and fellow students. During the discussions, the student must adhere to the following rules:
  - In line with Western policy, students must be respectful of all members of the course. Students must engage in professional and appropriate speech. What is and what is not appropriate will be determined by the instructor.
  - There have been wide observations from race scholars that one way racially prejudiced individuals (both conservative or liberals who identify as allies) obfuscate meaningful discussions of racial inequality is by over-talking about their emotions or trying to substitute personalized accounts instead of taking about the objectively documented facts of racial inequality. This is also a class about social structures fomenting racial/ethnic inequality. The student must substantiate your statements with empirical fact.
  - Concise and logical speaking are key requirements for success in higher education and the job market. Without prompting from the instructor, student statements are expected to last a maximum of 2 minutes (i.e., the maximum steady attention span of an average adult). Instructor will prompt students who are making valuable and insight contributions to class discussion to further elaborate.

- You will also be asked to complete and turn in a weekly inventory of your participation by the beginning of the following class. The inventory will require that you address the following questions?
  - Did you attend class?
  - What dimension of the class readings stood out the most and why?
  - What did you say in class?
  - What do you wish you would have said in class (cannot be something that someone else said unless you have a unique angle/perspective)
  - Indicate a statement made by a fellow student that you found particularly noteworthy in class. What dimension of their statement did you find noteworthy?
  - Rank order in descending order (i.e., 1 is the best) the participation grades that you wish to give all students that week.

- I will provide you with a participation grade twice in the course. Each participation grade will be comprised of 45% instructor assessment with verbal component of the course; 35% instructor assessment of written component of the course; 20% peer evaluations in the form of rank. The three-tier grading system is intended to (a) accommodate students with a fear of public speaking and (b) have multiple nodes of evaluation for participation.

- You will be graded in *relative terms*. I will provide a rubric of class participation on the first day of class.

**Additional comments**

- Absences: For each participation grade, the lowest grade will be dropped. Throughout the term, students can miss up to 2 days of class (i.e., 1 in the first half and the other in the last half) without specifying a reason and their grade will not be affected.
Students who engage in repeated disruption will receive a 0 on the class participation.

Some students assume that the minimum grade for continued attendance is an 80%. This is an incorrect assumption for a graduate-level class. Continued attendance is not a requirement of this class. Active participation is. If the technology is up to par, students have the option of attending class in-person or via zoom.

There will be a zero-tolerance policy against racist, xenophobic, and misogynist language of any kind. This is a class about sociological perspectives. The class also seeks to professional students so that they can be successful in the job market or in higher education. There will be a zero-tolerance policy against students who seek to use the class as a podium to advance political agendas (conservative, liberal, or otherwise).

**Opinion editorial**

- You must write an opinion editorial on a current event which can be a source of or may be exacerbating racial/ethnic inequality in Canada.
- Length: 800 words.
- Due date: November 1, 2023 at 1:30pm.
- Submitting information: E-mail it to kate.choi@uwo.ca
- Late assignments: You have a 120-hour grace period. After November 6, 2023 at 1:30 pm EST, I will not accept late assignments. Students with a valid and documented excuse (signed by the Department’s Chair, the Graduate Director, and the instructor) have the option of getting their grade reweighed to 33% Class Participation and 67% Grant Proposal.

- Review: I will provide up to 1 general review to see if you are in the right track. During this review, I will not write or edit your op-ed, nor will I guestimate your grade. This will ensure fairness with other students.

- You will be provided a rubric and will be graded in relative terms.

**Grant application**

- You must write a 10-page grant proposal describing a project that you wish to carry out. The grant proposal should follow the format of a SSHRC Doctoral Grant Proposal.
- I will adhere to their evaluation rubric when marking this assignment.
- Length: 10-pages (double-spaced).
- Due date: December 1, 2023 at 1:30pm. All students have a grace period of 120 hours. No penalty marks if you turn it in by December 6, 2023 at 1:30pm.
- Submitting information: E-mail it to kate.choi@uwo.ca
Late assignments: Given the grace period, I will not accept any late assignments. If a student has a valid and documented excuse, he/she/they have the option of writing a 10,000-word empirical study where you carry out an original empirical analysis of a paper on racial/ethnic inequality. You will adhere by the formatting guidelines of the *American Sociological Review*. You must turn it in by a date (which will be agreed upon in advance with the graduate director and the instructor) so that the “incomplete” does not turn into a “F”.

*Review*: I will provide up to 1 *general* review to see if you are in the right track. During this review, I will not write or edit your op-ed, nor will I guestimate your grade. This will ensure fairness with other students.

You will be provided a rubric and will be graded in *relative* terms.

**Book review**

- Students may choose to write a book review on a recently published book having to do with institutionalized forms of racial/ethnic inequality.

- As a condition of this option, students must prepare the review in a way that it adheres to the length and formatting guidelines of a sociological academic journal (Indicate target journal in the assignment).

- Due date: December 6, 2023 at 1:30pm.

  The book review will be evaluated by the instructor in *absolute* terms.

*Review*: I will provide up to 1 *general* review to see if you are in the right track. During this review, I will not write or edit your op-ed, nor will I guestimate your grade. This will ensure fairness with other students.

Students who cannot turn in their book review by December 6, 2023 will automatically default to Option A. No penalty for the switch.

**How contact me**: E-mail is the best way to contact me. During weekdays, please allow for 24 hours before e-mailing me again. During weekends, please allow for 48 hours before e-mailing me again.

Please do not show up to my office unannounced unless it is during office hours.

**Disputing a Grade**: Empirical research suggests that students who dispute grade are disproportionately more likely to be male, white, older, and coming from advantageous socioeconomic background. Research also suggest that racial minority female faculty are disproportionately more likely than their white and male peers to be asked to reevaluate grades as a way to delegitimize their authority.

I care a lot about my students and want all students to be fairly compensated for their efforts. To ensure that students are evaluated in a fair way and to ensure that even grade disputes are learning activities, I will not entertain verbal grade disputes. Instead, students who wish to dispute an assignment, exam, or course grade must write a one-page explanation justifying why their work should be re-evaluated. Such explanations should focus on the merit of the work itself. Such justification should point to specific sections and indicate “what the student said”, “what the answer was”, and “why they feel like they
deserve more marks on that section”. Work will not be re-evaluated on the basis that students were sick, feeling stressed when completing the assignment, have certain career aspirations, or need to meet parental demands and expectations. Work will also not be re-evaluated if the student just asks for a general review without identifying specific sections.

Please be advised that a student’s mark may go up or down upon re-evaluation. Please also be advised that if a student turns in a fellow student’s marks as evidence of why their grade should go up, then there is a non-negligible possibility that the fellow student’s marks will go down.

Due to privacy concerns, faculty cannot discuss or negotiate student grades with parents or legal guardians. Parents and legal guardians should communicate with their children about their grades.

**Recording Devices:** Some of the topics we discuss may be of a sensitive and personal in nature. To ensure that all members of the class can feel safe and actively participate, recording devices must not be used in this class.

**Lectures and Other Course Materials:** All materials created by the instructor are protected by copyright law and may not be copied or distributed in any form without the explicit permission of the instructor. Any unauthorized use of these materials constitutes an academic offence.

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

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**Course Schedule and Readings**

**Part I: Sociological Perspectives on Racial/Ethnic Inequality**

- September 13 - Introduction of the class
- September 20 - What is race? What is ethnicity? How do we measure race?
- September 27 - What social structures sustain racial inequality?

**Part II: Patterns, Trends, and Nature of Racism in Specific Contexts**

**Education and Labor Market**

- October 4 – Racial/ethnic inequality in education I
- October 11 - Racial/ethnic inequality in education II
- Affirmative action – what are the implications for EDID in the United States and Outside the United States
- October 18 – Racial/ethnic inequality in the labor market I

**Health care**

- October 25, 2023 – Health inequality I
- November 1, 2023- Health inequality II

**Housing**
November 15, 2023 – Housing I

Family

November 22, 2023 – Family I

November 29, 2023 – Family II

Conclusion

December 6, 2023

Note: Specific readings will be provided on the first day of class. Instructor reserves the right to change the schedule to accommodate student interests.

Important Policies

Policies for Assignment Deadlines
Please read the policies for assignment deadlines below each assignment.

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:
http://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).

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

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)

- This course deals with a sensitive material. If a student is repeatedly disruptive, the student will receive a written warning. If the student continues to be disruptive, the student will receive a 0 on their class participation after being issued a second warning. If the student continues to be disruptive after the student warning, the instruction will file for disciplinary action and recommend the immediate removal of the student.
• **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](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf)

**Accessible Education Western (AEW)**

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.

**Health/Wellness Services**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western
[http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/](http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.