



**The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 9268B**

Social Inequalities in Health

Winter 2023

Tuesdays 1:30-4:30 SSC 5235

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Office Hours: By appointment

Department of Sociology

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We acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-ah-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (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 in 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

In this seminar, we will examine how a sociological perspective can assist us in understanding inequality in health. Health in adulthood is the result of lifelong experiences that begin at conception, and therefore we will focus on the mechanisms that maintain and magnify disparities in physical and mental health over the life course. The study of health inequality is multidisciplinary, cross-fertilization has occurred across disciplines, and the literature is vast; therefore this course focuses on an introduction to the major sociological conceptual frameworks and empirical research from Canada and the U.S. examining social inequalities in health.

Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this course successfully will be able to:

- * Synthesize and critically evaluate theoretical arguments, current research and scholarship relating to social inequalities in health.
- * Demonstrate an ability to present and discuss ideas clearly and articulately through effective oral and written communication.
- * Demonstrate an ability to engage in scholarly discussion and debate.

Course Organization

Details regarding the logistics of virtual class meetings will be discussed on the first day of class. See OWL for necessary details for each week and Zoom links to class meetings.

Course Material(s)

There is no textbook for this course; all of the following required readings are available electronically from Western Libraries, the course OWL website, or will be provided in class.

Methods of Evaluation

Each component is described below.

Participation	20%	
Weekly Reflections	15%	
Leading seminar discussion	20%	
Final paper:	45%	Due April 14, 11:55pm

Participation

This course is organized as a seminar. Class periods will include a mix of lecture and student-led discussion. It is critical that everyone read the assigned readings each week and come to class ready to actively participate in the discussion—to ask questions, speak to debates in the literature, challenge what class members (including me) have said, and relate the material to your own research. The more you participate, the more you will get from the class and the more interesting it will be for all of us. Participation will be evaluated both on the quality and frequency of contribution.

Weekly Reflections

Each week students (except for the discussion leader) will submit a reflection paper on the articles covered that week (approximately 2 double-spaced pages). You should not summarize the articles but reflect on how they 1) relate to the topic of the day or other topics covered in the course, 2) how they relate to your own research interests, and 3) how they inform our understanding of the effects of Covid-19 on health inequality. For #3 you can bring in news or academic article related to COVID-19. Reflection papers should be emailed to me at our class OWL website by 9 a.m. the day of class. You are not required to submit questions on the day of your presentation, and you may skip two submissions.

Leading seminar discussion

Students will sign up to lead one seminar session during the semester. This involves carefully studying the assigned readings, preparing a set of questions to stimulate discussion, and assisting with keeping the dialogue moving during that session's discussion. It is important to understand that the purpose of the presentation is not to provide a summary of the readings to the class, but instead to engage the class in a critical analysis that synthesizes, compares, critiques, and draws conclusions about what we know of the topic based on the readings.

Final Paper

The paper should draw upon and extend course material or apply course material to your research interest. The form of the paper is a critical review paper. You must inform me of your topic by submitting a 2-3 page (double-spaced) description in the 6th week of the course.

Communication

I aim to respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays. Please check the course outline and OWL course site for information before you email with those questions. If your question requires a considerable amount of detail to answer, I will suggest we meet.

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

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 (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).

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>).

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. This includes recoding class Zoom discussions. If you require a recording device for medical or other reasons, please see me.

Lectures and Course Materials

Instructor generated course materials are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright is an academic offence.

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

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>

Policies for Assignment Deadlines

To receive full credit, all assignments must be submitted on the date they are due. Accommodation will not be granted automatically, and if you must submit an assignment late in the case of medical illness or the death of a family member, it is your responsibility to contact me in advance to make alternate arrangements.

Accommodation

Only in exceptional circumstances may a student be provided special accommodation in the completion of a course requirement (i.e., exams, papers). To request special accommodation(s), the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to discuss options. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the Sociology graduate program office.

Completion of Course Requirements: Course requirements must be completed by the end of the term in which the course is offered. 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