



**The University of Western Ontario**

**SOCIOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAM**

**PhD Professional Development Seminar**

**Fall 2025**

**Select Wednesdays**

**12:30-1:30pm**

**Professor Yoko Yoshida**

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## **Course Description**

Being a graduate student can be thought of as the entry-level job for a wide range of academic and non-academic positions. In this way, graduate school aims to help students develop a set of transferrable skills that can be applied to these future settings. The purpose of this professionalization seminar is to acquaint you with the structure, procedures, and expectations of our department's graduate program, as well as to familiarize you with the norms of the profession more broadly.

We will meet approximately every two weeks during the Fall 2025 and Winter 2026 terms. Specific dates and topics are listed in the schedule below.

## **Expectations**

The professionalization seminar is a required milestone of the PhD program, and we encourage our MA students to participate as well. Students are expected to (1) attend the scheduled meetings and (2) attend talks given through the department's colloquium series, job talks, and other events.

### *Attendance*

For students in the new PhD cohort (entering 2025-2026), you are expected to come to each of the professionalization seminar sessions in the schedule below, in addition to department seminars, talks, and events. To complete this required milestone, students will need to attend a minimum of 80% of the sessions during their first year in the program. Attendance will be taken at each seminar.

For students in prior PhD cohorts, you can attend as many sessions as you need to complete the milestone under the old policy (for cohorts entering 2022-23 or earlier, attendance at 8 professionalization seminar sessions over the course of your first 3 years in the program was required). You are also encouraged to attend any and all sessions that are of interest to you.

MA students are welcome to attend sessions they think will be helpful to them or on topics that they find interesting. The schedule below flags sessions that may be especially relevant to MA students. Additionally, in the winter term, I will set up sessions specifically focused on your MRPs; these will satisfy the MA Sociological Research Practicum milestone. More details to come.

### *Going to Talks and Other Professional Development Activities*

In addition to the professionalization seminar, graduate students are expected to become active citizens in our department's intellectual community. This means, in part, attending the wide array of research talks and other seminars put on by our department and others in the Faculty of Social Science. Seeing faculty members and fellow graduate students present their research is a core part of how we learn to think and talk about our own work. These opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- The Sociology Colloquium Series (the department invites about 3 faculty from other universities to present their work each term; generally held on Fridays at 11:00am)
- The Balakrishnan Lecture (the department hosts a distinguished researcher; this year's lecture will be on Friday November 1, 3-4pm, and will feature Zachary Zimmer from Mount Vincent University)
- Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Presentations (see your fellow PhD students present on their proposed dissertation projects; held twice a year)
- Job talks by faculty candidates
- Present a working paper at the Sociology Graduate Student Association's (SGSA) conference in the spring

## **Materials**

Many of the seminars are accompanied by a required reading from Dr. Jessica Calarco's phenomenal book, *A Field Guide to Grad School: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum*. While you are welcome to [purchase](#) a copy of her book, you can also access a free online version through Western's Library.

## Course Schedule

	Date	Topic	Readings	Audience
<i>Fall Term</i>				
1	Sept. 10	Program Timeline and Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What should you be focusing on, when?</li> <li>- What courses should you take?</li> <li>- What should you be doing during your summers?</li> <li>- How long should the program take?</li> <li>- When should you start the job search?</li> </ul>	Calarco, 5	PhD
2	Sept. 17	Applying for External Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When are the deadlines?</li> <li>- How do you prepare an application?</li> <li>- From whom, about what, when should you get feedback?</li> </ul>	Calarco, 6	PhD MA
3	Oct. 1	Assistantships: Research and Teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What can you expect from an assistantship?</li> <li>- What are your obligations?</li> <li>- What are some tips for balancing your assistantship work with working through your degree?</li> </ul>	<i>None</i>	PhD MA
4	Oct. 15	Work-Life Balance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do you manage all that's required of you in academia?</li> <li>- How do you set limits?</li> <li>- What can you do to avoid burning out?</li> <li>- Is there software that can help you be more efficient?</li> <li>- How can you organize all of your notes, data, etc.?</li> </ul>	Calarco, 12	PhD MA
5	Nov. 12	Building Your Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do you choose your supervisor?</li> <li>- What's the role of your supervisor?</li> <li>- What's the role of committee members?</li> <li>- How do you negotiate expectations?</li> </ul>	Calarco, 2	PhD MA
6	Nov. 26	Tips and Tricks for Academic Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do you structure your "writing days"?</li> <li>- When should you get feedback on written work, and from whom?</li> <li>- How are journal articles different from course papers?</li> <li>- How do you co-author a paper? With whom?</li> </ul>	Calarco, 4	PhD MA

***Winter Term \_ TBA***