The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 1027B-001
Life Is Not Always Fair
How social institutions and processes affect individual lives

Winter 2014-15
Mon 12:30-2:30, SEB 1200

Instructor: Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9-11am
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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
Sociology 1020, Sociology 1021E
**DRAFT OUTLINE**

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Challenge common-sense assumptions about social live by applying sociological reasoning.
- Describe and examine a range of key sociological concepts and theoretical approaches.
- Contrast the different perspectives outlined above 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 (e.g., qualitative versus quantitative) are used to answer different types of sociological questions.
- Demonstrate the skills necessary to engage in further sociological studies.

**Required Text(s)**

There is no textbook for this class. Each week, articles and book chapters will be assigned as readings. These are made available on Sakai (OWL) and through a reading package available at InPrint.

**Method of Evaluation**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam:</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam:</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorial presentation/participation:</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class quizzes (best three of four):</td>
<td>15%</td>
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**Evaluation Breakdown**

The midterm exam will be made up of multiple choice and short answer questions. The final exam will use a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions, and might also contain a short essay. The short answer and the essay in the final exam are cumulative (not the multiple choice section). All exams will test materials covered in the readings, lectures, tutorials, films, and class/tutorial discussions.

**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

**How to get important information**

Make sure to check the course OWL site regularly for course updates, cancellations, and other course-related postings.
**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 at least 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 (or assignment due date) due to illness or for any other unforeseen reason, you must provide notification of and documentation for the reasons for your circumstances 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). There is no accommodation for missed quizzes, as we are counting the best two out of three quizzes.

**Make-up Exams**
All make-up exams are scheduled on Fridays only. Unless illness or a lengthy absence from campus make this impossible, the make-up exams will be scheduled for the Friday immediately following the regularly scheduled exam. Early make-up exams (i.e., make-up exams before the regularly scheduled exam) will not be granted. There will be no make-up exams for the in-class quizzes, as we are counting the best two out of three quizzes.

**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.

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

**Plagiarism Checking:**
Students may be required to submit their assignments to turnitin.com on the class WebCT website after they are completed. These papers will be subject to submission for textual originality.

**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.
DRAFT OUTLINE

Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness
Western’s policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at
https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm. 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

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 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information
regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar’s website:
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:
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://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/) 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, the number of A’s is not to exceed the number of B’s, and class means are
expected to fall in the range of 65-68%.
Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1: Introduction
The purpose of this class: common sense vs. sociological reasoning

Week 2: Who Gets Ahead?
Is the success of people shaped by their individual talent or by social forces?
Readings:
- Gladwell: Chapter 1 from Outliers
- Brown: Education, opportunity and the prospects for social mobility

Week 3: Foundations of sociological reasoning: research methods
How sociologists conduct research that is rigorous, scientific and ethical? Understanding the difference between quantitative and qualitative sociological research.
Readings:
- Krahn & Taylor: Resilient Teenagers: Explaining the High Educational Aspirations of Visible-MinorityYouth in Canada
- Taylor & Krahn: Living through our children: exploring the education and career ‘choices’ of racialized immigrant youth in Canada

Week 4: Childhood poverty: early experiences of inequality and its long reach
How does poverty shape the lives of children and adult?
Readings:
- Ridge: Childhood poverty and social exclusion
- Prentice: Less Access, Worse Quality: New evidence about poor children and regulated child care in Canada

Week 5: Schooling: does it level the playing field or make inequality worse?
It’s not just about “smarts”: how sociologists explain differences in educational attainment.
Readings:
- Calarco: "I Need Help!" Social Class and Children's Help-Seeking in Elementary School
- Lehmann: Habitus Transformation and Hidden Injuries: Successful Working-class University Students

Week 6: Transitioning from school to work
How do sociologists explain how people get from school to work?
Readings:
- MacLeod: Ain’t No Makin’It: Leveled Aspirations in a Low-income Neighborhood
- Lehmann: Extra-credential experiences and social closure: working-class students at university

Week 7: MIDTERM EXAM
Week 8: Working: who does what and why?  
How do sociologists explain occupational hierarchies, discrimination and experiences at work?  
Readings:  
- Skaggs and Bridges: Race and Sex Discrimination in the Employment Process  
- Nath: Aesthetic and emotional labour through stigma: national identity management and racial abuse in offshored Indian call centres

Week 9: Being healthy: not just a choice  
How do sociologists explain why some people lead healthier lives than others?  
Readings:  
- McDaniel: Understanding Health Sociologically  
- Korp: Problems of the Healthy Lifestyle Discourse

Week 10: The Law: are we all equal under it?  
Why are some people more likely to become victims or perpetrators of crime?  
Readings:  
- Something from PPP  
- Violent girls (Sociology compass)???

Week 11: Social breakdown: the problems with corporations and capitalism  
How sociologists can study the role corporations play in shaping our lives.  
Readings:  
- Bakan: The Corporation: The pathological pursuit of profit and power (Chapter 3: The Externalizing Machine)  
- Shin: The Shareholder Value Principle: The Governance and Control of Corporations in the United States

Week 12: Social breakdown: environmental crises  
What are sociological explanations of the causes and consequences of environmental decline?  
Readings:  
- Haluza De-Lay and Davidson: The Environment and a globalizing sociology  
- Reid: Disaster and social inequalities

Week 13: Overcoming inequality: income redistribution and changing institutions  
Can we find solutions to the problems of inequality we discussed in this class?  
Readings:  
- Sharpe and Capeluck: The Impact of Redistribution on Income Inequality in Canada and the Provinces, 1981–2010  
- Rothschild: Workers’ Cooperatives and Social Enterprise A Forgotten Route to Social Equity and Democracy

Note: Individual weekly readings are still subject to minor change. Final course outline will be distributed at beginning of class