The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLGY 4469G-001
Selected Topics in the Sociology of Work
Winter 2022
Thursday, 2:30-5:30pm, SSC5325

Instructor: Awish Aslam
Office Hours: by appointment
Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5438
Email: aaslam5@uwo.ca

Course Description:
This is a seminar course that explores key issues and trends in the sociology of work. Particular focus will be on the relevance of work to social inequality and social relations in a variety of social and historical contexts.

This course will examine how the social organization of work is fundamental to the (re)production of inequality and the stratification of social groups, with a focus on Canada. We begin by exploring important historical transformations to the nature of work. Next, we address the social processes and mechanisms that sustain inequalities as well as their personal and social ramifications. In the final part of the course, we cover how workers attempt to resist their exploitation and improve the conditions and overall experience of work.

Prerequisite(s):
Enrolment in fourth year of one of the Honours Specializations or Honours Double Majors in Sociology or Criminology, or in third or fourth year of the Media, Information and Technoculture Program/Module.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Antirequisite(s): None

Learning Outcomes:
1. Demonstrate a sociological understanding of the relationship between work and social inequality.
2. Synthesize, analyze, and critically evaluate theoretical arguments and evidence presented in published research.
3. Develop clear arguments and articulate ideas through written and oral communication.
4. Lead and participate in scholarly discussions and debates, while engaging with course materials.

**Required Text(s):**
All required texts and course materials will be made available on OWL.

**Class Format:**
Class will be run in an interactive manner. I will begin each week by introducing the topics covered in the readings. Following my introduction, a student will present on the week’s readings and lead an in-depth discussion. The schedule will be set on the first day of class. Your job is to attend, listen, and ask and answer questions. I will end class with a summary of the day’s discussion. I have provided an overview of the methods of evaluation below, but more details will be provided during the first class.

**Methods of Evaluation:**
Your course grade will be determined by the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Written Commentaries</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Before the start of each class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Discussion</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Presentation/Facilitation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>TBD on the first day of class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Written Assignment</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>The week following your presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Analytical Essay</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>April 7, 2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluation Breakdown:**

*Weekly Written Commentaries (20%):*
It is crucial that you complete the readings listed in the syllabus before each class. To help with this task, you must submit a one-page (double spaced) written response with your thoughts on the assigned readings before the start of each class. Your commentary should engage with the concepts, ideas, and arguments put forward, rather than summarize the content. You do not have to address all the readings, but you can draw on similarities or differences between them. You may also include your own questions about the content or present counterarguments. The thoughts and reflections included in your commentaries can also be raised during class discussions.

*Class Discussion (20%):*
Active participation in class discussion makes up a substantial part of your final grade. Class discussions are a fruitful and rewarding intellectual exercise when everyone does their part to facilitate a stimulating learning environment. You are expected to share your perspectives, ask questions, and build
and challenge one another’s ideas while engaging with the course material. Respect is crucial in creating an atmosphere of collegiality. You can be respectful by giving your undivided attention to your peers, refraining from interrupting or dominating the conversation, and approaching unfamiliar ideas with an open mind.

Class Presentation (10%):
All students will lead one seminar over the course of the semester. Presentations will include a (15 to 20 minute) summary of the readings, followed by a critical discussion on the points you found most important. You will need to prepare 3 to 4 questions to guide the discussion. The schedule will be set on the first day of class.

Short Written Assignment (20%):
The week following your presentation, you will submit a written assignment related to the readings. You may choose between three options: (1) write a summary and critical review of one of the readings assigned for your week; (2) analyze a contemporary case using the theories or concepts discussed in the weekly readings; (3) write an op-ed that presents the arguments in one of the readings in an interesting and accessible way that would appeal to a non-academic audience. All assignments must be 5 to 6 pages (double spaced) in length.

Final Analytical Essay (30%):
Students will write a final analytical essay on a topic of their choice, related to the content of this course. It should be 10 pages in length. You will need to let me know about the topic of your paper by February 17, 2022. During the last week of class, students will provide an informal presentation about their paper for feedback from their peers. The paper is due on April 7, 2022.

How to Contact Me:
You can reach me by email at aaslam5@uwo.ca. Please include the course code in the subject line. We can also set up a time to meet during office hours via Zoom.

How to get important information:
Information about the course will be available on OWL. Please check the site regularly.

Important Policies

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:**
All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for 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 (www.turnitin.com).

**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.

**Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness**
Western’s policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation: counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/academic_consideration.html.

**Academic Consideration for Missed Work**
Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a Self-Reported Absence (SRA) form online provided that the absence is **48 hours or less** and the other conditions specified in the Senate policy are met. Two important exceptions to this rule: SRAs will NOT be allowed for final examinations or assessments worth more than 30% of a given course. Students whose absences are expected to last **longer than 48 hours**, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a Student Medical Certificate (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds) to your Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.

www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf

**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 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an
accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar’s website: www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/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: 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 (www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

Course Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Seminar Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 6</td>
<td>Welcome, Introductions, Course Overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 13</td>
<td>Pre-industrial Work and Early Industrial Capitalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>Work Under Capitalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jan 27</td>
<td>Recent Changes to Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 03</td>
<td>The Meaning of Work: Identity or Alienation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>Occupational Segregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>Organizations and the (Re)Production of Inequality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb 24</td>
<td>READING WEEK – NO CLASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>March 03</td>
<td>Discrimination and Exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>Control, Autonomy, and Worker Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>March 17</td>
<td>Unions and Worker Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>March 24</td>
<td>Organizing and Mobilizing Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>Course Wrap Up/Final Paper Presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>