



The University of Western Ontario  
**SOCIOLOGY 1026F-650**  
**Controversies in Sociology**  
**Summer 2021**  
**Online**

**Instructor:** Lauren Barr

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**Course Description:**

Sociology seeks to introduce us to the non-obvious aspects of social relations and interactions. It teaches us to look beyond the taken-for-granted meanings of social living, to use common sense but also to go beyond it. In pursuing sociological knowledge, one encounters many vigorous debates and there is much controversy as participants to the debates all advance their own theories and explanations for the way things are. Because the issues we treat are so close to our conceptions of ourselves and our societies, controversies in sociology touch all of us in myriad ways. We all presume we 'know' what we are talking about so sociology problematizes ways of knowing and suggests that certainty may not always be that certain.

A distinctive feature of sociological thinking is its insistence on the claim that social behaviour is more socially structured than it is individually volitional. Human behaviour is just too patterned to be the result of happenstance, but this is not easily accepted by the population at large given the culture that socializes them to an individualistic ethic. In all of this the concept of ideology stands front and centre. As filters through which we grasp social reality, ideologies are mobilized belief systems and can come in the form of economic, political, religious, national, educational and even deeply held racial and gendered 'truths.' In this course we will explore some of these ideologies and the controversies they inform.

We will define sociology broadly as the study of social order, social disorder and social change, and in this context, we will critically examine ideologies and perspectives to better understand the complexity of it all.

***Prerequisite(s):*** None

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 be 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):** [Sociology 1020](#), [Sociology 1020W/X](#), [Sociology 1021E](#).

**Learning Objectives:**

- To encourage students to move beyond common sense understandings of their world
- To allow students to practice academic writing about issues of social importance
- To support students as they begin theoretical thinking
- To help students appreciate the importance of structural explanations of social behaviour
- To inspire students to practice self-reflection, open communication, and active listening

**Required Text(s):**

The material for this course will be provided on OWL. There is no textbook to purchase.

**Method of Evaluation:**

This course will be run completely asynchronously. No assessments will be timed, all will have flexibility to allow them to fit to your diverse lives and schedules.

Assessment	Weight	Due Date
<b>Critical Reflection &amp; Communication – Online Forum</b>	20 %	Ongoing (Weekly)
<b>Midterm</b> ( <i>take home</i> )	20 %	June 6
<b>Essay (done in phases)</b>	40 %	
	5 %	Part 1: May 23
	10 %	Part 2: June 20
	25%	Part 3: July 11
<b>Final Exam</b> ( <i>take home</i> )	20 %	July 29
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%	

**Evaluation Breakdown:**

***Critical Reflection & Communication Online Forums\_Collaborative Knowledge Building***

Knowledge development is interactive. Active and informed discussion helps students engage consistently as they learn new material. You learn from your peers and use each other to challenge your

own thinking. This will help us create an environment of critical academic reflection, in professional work this is called a “Community of Practice”. The purpose of these online forums is to generate conversation and push thinking, so keep that in mind as you engage. Your final mark will reflect your consistent participation, as well as the quality of your contributions. An assessment outline and former student examples will be provided on OWL.

### ***Examinations:***

You will have two “take-home” exams during Week 5 and Week 13 (each worth 20%). Each exam will cover specific content (not cumulative). They will be run asynchronously to allow for different schedules. They will be available for a few days. They will include a combination of short answer, analysis and reflection questions.

### ***Essay:***

This is an essay course. As noted above, this means that it is mandatory to complete a major writing assignment of significant length and depth. This is also a great opportunity to learn how to think and write academically. The writing assignments are ultimately worth 40% of your mark. These assignments are divided into smaller phases, giving you opportunity to learn, receive feedback, develop and change as you work to complete your final essay. You cannot (by nature of the course breakdown) leave this work to the last minute. A full outline outlining each phase will be provided online and we will go through this process throughout the term.

\*Senate regulations require that an essay course be structured so that passing the course is dependent upon passing the “essay component”. What this means for this course is that (1) you must turn in your essay and (2) **your unweighted average grade for the essay must be 50% or higher.** In other words, if you fail to turn in an essay before the end of the term, or if your average essay grade is less than 50%, you will not pass the course regardless of the grades you receive on the other components listed.

### **How to Contact Me:**

**OWL Messages** – Use this as the primary way to reach me regarding our course. You will find this on the left navigation bar on our course website

**Email:** [lbarr2@uwo.ca](mailto:lbarr2@uwo.ca) – for urgent communication only

**Facebook Messenger** – optional, but students find this to be a quick way to reach me. ProfLauren Barr

### **How to get important information:**

#### ***Communication Guidelines & Expectations:***

- Messages and email will be returned within 24-48 business hours (unless announced otherwise).
  - That means you may not receive a response during the evening or on the weekend.
- Be patient, avoid emailing multiple times.

- Make sure your tone and correspondence in all communication is professional

Our **OWL Course site** will be set up to allow you to navigate week to week in a consistent way. It will be available Wed April 28. An announcement will be sent out when it is live.

The **Homepage** will have key instructions on where to find information.

The **Announcements** will be Used for Regular Communication or Urgent Messages

The **Calendar** will be used regularly to let you know when assessments are due.

The **Assignments** will have all course assessment outlines and instructions on what to do if you have questions.

## Important Policies

### *Policies for Assignment Deadlines:*

*If you know that you have a problem with a due date or an exam (conflict, sick, etc), let's talk about it as soon as possible. If you talk to me ahead of time, we can determine together whether a formal accommodation request should be filed or whether we can work out another arrangement.*

*If you do not or are not able to let me know ahead of time, then you will be asked to go through the formal academic accommodation process. If you miss an exam due to illness or for any other unforeseen reason, please notify me **within 24 hours** of the missed exam. You then must provide notification and documentation 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 at a later date.*

**If a student misses a test with legitimate reason, you will be assigned an accommodated test online.** In cases where there is no approved justification for the absence, the student will receive a grade of zero on the exam.

**If an assignment is late with no communication,** there will be a 5% late penalty per day for up to 10 days past the due date. At that point, assignment will no longer be accepted. If a student anticipates an issue with an assignment, they are recommended to speak to their Professor and / or TA as early as possible to discuss options.

### *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 (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).

### ***Policies on Examinations***

All examinations for this course will be done from home on your own time. They are not timed. You may use any electronic devices or programs you need in order to be successful. No proctor software or process will be used for this course. Instructions will be provided with each assessment. If you have questions, please ask.

### ***Policy on Electronics/Phones for Class:***

- ***Recording or Image Captures*** of lectures, tutorials, Examinations or Virtual Meetings without the explicit consent of the Professor, TA and students involved is ground for academic discipline.
- ***Course content created by a faculty member is considered the faculty member's intellectual property***; it should not be distributed, shared in any public domain, or sold by a student or other third party without prior written consent of the faculty member.

### ***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](http://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:

[https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical\\_accommodation.html](https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.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 a self-reported absence, 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](http://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](http://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: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](https://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/index.html](http://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html)) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

### **Course Schedule and Readings:**

A schedule and all content will be found in COURSE CONTENT on OWL.

Each week the Content will appear by 12:00pm EST Monday.