



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 2140
Social Problems
Summer 2021
Online, Asynchronous

Instructor: Lyn Hoang

Office Hours: By appointment on Zoom
Department of Sociology
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Course Description:

This course will explore issues and theories in the study of social problems with particular attention to contemporary Canadian society. Social problems, such as racism, sexism, poverty, prejudice and discrimination, crime and violence, and drug or alcohol addiction are common in most societies and many of you may have encountered or experienced some of these issues first-hand, through someone you know, or through televisions or movies. Throughout this course, you will gain a robust understanding of the causes and correlates of various social problems and the effects that these problems have on society.

The materials (lesson videos, readings, films, podcasts, and industry videos) explored in this course will enable you to examine the diverse range of social problems and how these disparities impact your lives and the lives of others.

The course is designed to enhance your critical thinking skills by applying sociological concepts, theories, approaches, and ideas, to a range of social problems. To accomplish these objectives, you will use your sociological imagination to conceptualize social problems as both a personal problem with individual solutions, and as a societal problem with collective solutions.

Prerequisite(s): None

Antirequisite(s): None

Learning Outcomes:

1. Define social problems and explain how they differ from personal issues
2. Examine a range of social problems confronting Canadians
3. Contextualize social problems within the broader Canadian history, politics, law, and culture
4. Explore theoretical perspectives used to understand social problems
5. Apply key concepts, ideas, and theoretical paradigms within sociology to the study of social problems, power, and inequality.
6. Critically evaluate the individual and collective strategies being utilized to reduce inequalities and social problems
7. Apply new learning to evaluate media portrayals of social problems

Required Text(s):

- **Social Problems: A Canadian Perspective. 5th Edition** (2020) by Lorne Tepperman, Josh Curtis, and Rachel La Touche. Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.
 - Available through Campus Bookstore at Western.
 - For e-text: <https://www.vitalsource.com/en-ca/products/social-problems-lorne-tepperman-josh-curtis-v9780199032792>

Note: there are four previous editions of this book. Student's may purchase an older edition, but they assume all responsibility for any material missed or inconsistent with the fifth edition. It is strongly recommended that students purchase the fifth edition

- Additional weekly readings and materials will be posted on OWL in the “Resources” tab

Method of Evaluation:

Evaluation Breakdown:

Description	Weight	Due Date
Participation in Online Discussion Forums	20%	Weekly
Proposal	5%	May 24 2021
Midterm	20%	June 7 2021
Critical Film/TV Show Analysis	25%	July 12 2021
Final Exam	30%	July 26 2021
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100%		

Evaluation Details:

Online Participation in Discussion Forums (20% of your final grade): Students are expected to proactively participate in online discussions pertaining to course material. Students are also expected to complete all required readings and resources each week in order to participate in the online forum discussions available under the “Forums” tab in OWL.

The forums will be organized according to each week. There will be several discussion questions for each week, and you are expected to contribute by creating at least one unique post to address the question(s), and at least one unique reply to one of your classmate's post (bringing in new, relevant material/insights rather than simply agreeing with/regurgitating what your peers may have already said). There are 11 weeks' worth of discussion forums, and you will be expected to both respond to, and critically engage with, the material and your peers for 10 out of 11 of the weeks. The week will begin on Monday at 12:05AM and will end on Sunday at 11:55PM. Late submissions will **not** be accepted, as you have 7 days to complete this task (respond to the question and reply to your classmates).

Please be kind and respectful of one another, particularly when there are sensitive topics/issues discussed or when differing opinions emerge (it is completely fine to play “devil’s advocate” even if it is not your direct opinion, but you should still remain respectful when doing so).

Class participation will be measured through my assessment of the quality of your contribution in addition to your preparedness based on reading course material, raising interesting questions, applying key concepts, engaging with your peers. Class participation is NOT solely based on a quantitative measurement of your contributions (e.g. how much or often you post). You will also be evaluated based on the quality of your contributions, as well as your ability to professionally engage with others in the course.

Proposal (5%) and Critical Film/TV Show Analysis (25% of your final grade)

Students will work individually and select a popular film or TV show and complete a critical analysis that applies sociological concepts, theories, or approaches to representations of inequality or social problems examined within the film/show. This assignment is broken up into two parts. Students will work independently and write a 1-page proposal and a 5-page paper (double-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman, normal margins) about how media represent social problems within their selected film and students will compare and contrast two theoretical theories to examine these social problems and media portrayals. More instructions will be distributed on OWL.

Late assignments will be docked at 5% per day.

Midterm (20%) and Final Exam (30% of your final grade):

There will be two examinations in this class – a midterm and final exam. These will be written online via OWL. These exams will be multiple choice and essay/short answer format, open-book and completed online. Feel free to use any resources at your disposal. For each examination, students will have 3 hours after they have opened the assignment to submit their completed exam. Students must submit their exam within this three-hour period.

Any technical issues are the sole responsibility of the student. Please save your work often, as the loss of data is not an acceptable reason to fail to submit. More directions will be distributed on OWL as soon as they are available.

The midterm will cover material from weeks 1 to 5. The final exam will cover material from weeks 7 to 12.

How to Contact Me:

The best way to contact me is through email (lhoang3@uwo.ca). I will usually respond within 24 hours.

How to Get Important Information:

Visit our course OWL site, see the course outline, and key dates and class materials. You should be checking the course OWL site at least three times a week in order to properly engage in the discussion forums.

Technical Requirements:

- You must have access to a laptop/computer capable of handling OWL (including uploading papers, streaming lesson videos, participating in online discussion, and recording audio/video). If you do not have access to these technologies, please let me know prior to the first class.
- Stable internet connection
- If meeting with me for my office hours over Zoom: You will need a working microphone (*required*) and working webcam (*suggested*)

Technical Support:

If you are experiencing problems with OWL, please contact the WTS Help Desk at (519) 661-3800. For hours and additional contact information please visit www.uwo.ca/wts/helpdesk/.

Troubleshooting and help information is available for students: <https://owlhelp.uwo.ca/>

Important Policies

Policies for Assignment Deadlines:

Tests must be completed in the time allotted for doing so.

All assignments **MUST** be submitted on OWL under the assignment tab by the deadline, unless a formal extension or accommodation has been granted. Assignments will not be accepted via email unless special accommodations have been made.

Late assignments are subject to grade reductions of 5% a day.

If you miss the 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.

Please note that computer problems are not an excused circumstance. You are expected to follow good computer practices, including backing up your work.

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

Electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examination. Examinations will consist of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions and will be open book.

Please be aware that the exam's multiple-choice section may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

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: 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 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:

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) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

Course Schedule and Materials:

Week	Topics	Required Readings and Resources
1	Introduction to Social Problems	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 <p>Videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brene Brown on Empathy - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ewgu369Jw • Talks at Harvard College – Pawan Dhingra “Why You Should Use Your (Sociological) Imagination” - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3W-PDIUsE
2	Wealth and Inequality	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2 <p>Videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ted Talk: Richard Wilkinson “How Economic Inequality Harms Society” - https://www.ted.com/talks/richard_wilkinson_how_economic_inequality_harms_societies/up-next • Ted Talk: Rutger Bregman “Poverty isn’t a lack of character, it is a lack of cash” - https://www.ted.com/talks/rutger_bregman_poverty_isn_t_a_lack_of_character_it_s_a_lack_of_cash
3	Race, Culture, and Marginalization	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3 • Pager, D., Western, B., & Bonikowski, B. 2009. “Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment.” <i>American Sociological Review</i> 74: 777-799. <p>Videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ted Talk: Peggy McIntosh - “How to recognize your white privilege – and use it to fight inequality”. https://www.ted.com/talks/peggy_mcintosh_how_to_recognize_your_white_privilege_and_use_it_to_fight_inequality
4	Gender and Sexualities	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4 • Chapter 5 <p>Videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ted Talk: Paula Stone Williams “I’ve lived as a man & a women – here’s what I learned” - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrYx7HaUIMY

5	Crime and Violence	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 6 • Chan, J., Chuen, L., & McLeod, M. 2017. “Everything you were never taught about Canada’s prison systems: A primer on Canada’s urgent human rights crisis”. http://www.intersectionalanalyst.com/intersectional-analyst/2017/7/20/everything-you-were-never-taught-about-canadas-prison-systems
6	MIDTERM	
7	Health Inequalities	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 7 <p>Videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ted Talk: David R. Williams – “How Racism Makes Us Sick” https://www.ted.com/talks/david_r_williams_how_racism_makes_us_sick/up-next • Ted Talk: Claire Pomeroy – “Social Determinants of Health” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyKD-2AXKIU
8	Colonialization of Indigenous People	<p>Videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada’s Dark Secret: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=peLd_jtMdrC <p>Podcast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing and Murdered: Season 2 Finding Cleo Episode 1 • Thunder Bay: Season 1 Chapter 1: “There is a Town in North Ontario” https://www.canadaland.com/shows/thunder-bay/
9	Families	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 9 • Bartley, S.J., Blanton, P.W., & Gilliard, J.L. 2005. “Husbands and Wives in Dual-Earner Marriages: Decision-Making, Gender Role Attitudes, Division of Household Labor, and Equity”, <i>Marriage & Family Review</i>, 37(4): 69-94
10	Education and Schools	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 11 <p>Videos:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ted Talk: Geoffrey Canada “Our Failing Schools. Enough is Enough!” - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mABIBvhsgQ4

11	Workplaces and the Division of Labour	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 12 • Kang, S.K., DeCelles, K.A., Tilcsik, A., & Jun, S. 2016. “Whitened Resumes: Race and Self-Presentation in the Labor Market,” <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> (April): 1-34.
12	Digital Inequalities	Videos: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Guardian</i> – Cambridge Analytica whistleblower: ‘We spent \$1m harvesting millions of Facebook profiles’? - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXdYSQ6nu-M&t=334s • Ted Talk – Jim Seviers “Bridging the Digital Divide” - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzokRz1pgb0 Podcasts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hustled: When your boss is an app – Season 1 Episode 4: “Pandemic” - https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/hustled/id1505587581
13	FINAL EXAM	