



The University of Western Ontario  
**SOCIOLOGY 1026F-001**  
**Controversies in Sociology**  
**Fall 2022**

**Lectures: Tues 430pm to 620pm, A&HB 1R40**  
**Discussions: Tues 630pm to 720pm, A&HB 1R40**  
**MS Teams Channel: <https://bit.ly/3JSG7Xj>**

**Instructor:** Dr. Scott Schaffer

**Office Hours:** Weds 9am to 10am in-person, or by appointment on Teams

**Department of Sociology, Office:** SSC 5411

**Email:** [scott.schaffer@uwo.ca](mailto:scott.schaffer@uwo.ca)

---

**Course Description:** Conceptions of ourselves and society are often based on taken-for-granted meanings. This course critically analyzes these meanings in order to disclose what likely are their underlying economic, political, religious, educational and gender/sexual themes.

**Prerequisite(s):** None.

**Antirequisite(s):** Sociology 1020, Sociology 1020W/X, Sociology 1021E.

Unless you have either the prerequisites 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.

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:** By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Show comprehension of some of the key sociological ways in which societies classify its members and engage in differential societal processes on the basis of those classifications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which “race” is sociologically and societally constructed, operates in the background of everyday life, and the challenges it poses to the creation of a just society;
- Develop clear, well-thought, and increasingly sophisticated responses to questions posed;
- Display facility in and fluency with core sociological and theoretical concepts and utilise them in the development of oral and written arguments; and,
- Be able to discuss the challenges that racial/ethnic/national classification schemes pose to the creation of a just society.

**Course Material:** Students will be required to purchase the following ebooks — do not buy only the print version:

- Wade, *Terrible Magnificent Sociology* (WW Norton). ISBN: 978-0-393-87688-8.

- Webber and Bezanson (eds.), *Rethinking Society in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Critical Readings in Sociology*. ISBN: 978-1-55130-938-5.

**Communication:** For questions or messages that are very brief — in other words, you believe it will take no longer than three minutes to respond to — you can message Dr Schaffer or the TAs via the MS Teams channel (address is on page 1). For questions that will take longer to respond to but are not conversation-length discussions, please use email. For conversation-length discussions, please arrange an appointment or come by office hours.

**Method of Evaluation:**

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

Weekly work: InQuizitive (quizzes/exercises)	15% of course grade
Weekly work: Perusall (readings/discussion)	15% of course grade
Four take-home formative assessments (written)	40% of course grade
In-person essay final examination	30% of course grade – December Exam Period
Lecture attendance and course engagement	Discretionary non-negotiable adjustment of up to +/-3%

Please note the following with regard to marking in this course:

- We will be using standards-based assessment in this course, which means that you do not “lose marks” — marks are earned through the quality of the work submitted.
- There are no tests or exams in this course save for the final exam in December. The bulk of your mark will be based upon the work that you do each week in the course and the four “formative assessments.”
- To help ease you into the world of Schaffer, the first four weeks of the course will be a grade-free zone — in other words, we will be assessing on the basis of completion with some concern given to quality. You will receive feedback to guide you into thinking in terms of the Four Pillars.
- Weekly short-essay assessments will be peer reviewed by at least two students; you will have the opportunity to review each student’s feedback in terms of its helpfulness. The combination of the original assessment, your review of your peers’ feedback, and the reviews of *your* feedback will make up the mark for this assessment. Note that there are three different moments each week where you have to do something for this part of your mark. Members of the teaching staff will also review your work and provide feedback.
- Dr Schaffer’s evaluation of your performance throughout the course and the extent to which it is reflected in your course grade drive any kind of discretionary adjustment based on that performance (so if someone’s mark is a C+ but they clearly worked their ass off during the term, it could be adjusted by up to 3 marks). Note that requesting this discretionary adjustment will disqualify you from receiving it.
- There is no makeup for weekly work on InQuizitive or Perusall, though credit is given for the work done prior to the deadline.
- For the formative assessments: the weight of that assessment will be shifted to the following one (so if you miss the first, the second is worth 20% of your course grade). This can extend to the final exam,

which would make that worth 70% of your course grade, though I can tell you that in the past, that hasn't always worked out so well.

**Absences from Final Examinations:**

Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office and inform Dr Schaffer as soon as possible. Academic Counselling will determine eligibility to write a Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

**Note:** missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own. Students should check the Western website to see what directives for Covid are to be followed. Western has been and will continue to follow directives established by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. That directive will state whether students should or should not come to campus/class and any other requirements (e.g., masks are mandatory). Please check these directives on your own and do not email the instructor, the Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator or the Faculty of Social Science Academic Counselling Office.

**Course Schedule, Lectures, and Readings:**

The course reading schedule will be posted on Owl prior to the start of the course.

Lectures are as follows. Please note that the first two hours of each class session will be primarily lecture, while the third hour will be discussion and Ask Me Anything (AMA) time. Outlines will be distributed in advance for your note-taking.

W1: Sep 13. Sociology and the Things we study.

W2: Sep 20. Social structure and structural violence. *Weekly work in Perusall starts here. First formative assessment distributed.*

*Sun Sep 25/2022, 1205pm EDT — First assessment DUE on Owl*

W3: Sep 27. Social institutions, norms and the normal, and frames of reference.

W4: Oct 4. The role of theory in sociological work.

W5: Oct 11. The primary/cardinal sociological categories. Epistemology and the bases of sociological knowledge. *Second formative assessment distributed.*

*Sun Oct 16/2022, 1205pm EDT — Second assessment DUE on Owl*

W6: Oct 18. Social fields. Sociological processes. Ontological conceptions of the social.

W7: Oct 25: Personal, interpersonal, and interactional frames. Subjectivity. *Third formative assessment distributed.*

*Sat Oct 29/2022, 1205pm EDT — Third assessment DUE on Owl*

*Nov 1: Reading week. May it live up to its name.*

W8: Nov 8. Sociological concepts and measurement.

W9: Nov 15. Axiology and the fact/value debate. Questions about the truth of sociology. *Fourth formative assessment distributed.*

*Sun Nov 20/2022, 1205pm — Fourth assessment DUE on Owl*

W10: Nov 22. The four faces of sociology. Institutions, anomalies, social discourses and realities. Providing weapons, not lessons.

W11: Nov 29. Integration of the above. The sociological habits of mind. And coping. *Final examination prep sheet distributed and discussed.*

W12: Dec 6. What is to be done? Where you and we go from here.

### Important Policies

**Academic Consideration for Missed Work:** Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation in order to receive accommodation for missed work worth 10% or more of the final grade in the course. All required documentation for absences must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty. Individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds or for other reasons.

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). The student medical certificate is available at [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

**Religious Accommodation:** When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and the Academic Counselling office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at <https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>.

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 carefully consider 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.

**Accessibility Options:** Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD [http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html)), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). 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)

***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.

***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/>).

***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.

***Academic Counselling:*** Please visit the Social Science Academic Counselling webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters: [Academic Counselling - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](http://www.uwo.ca/academic_counselling/).

***GBSV:*** Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at [https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).