



Western
UNIVERSITY · CANADA

The University of Western Ontario

SOCIOLOGY 1027A-001

Life Is Not Always Fair:

How social institutions and processes affect individual lives

Fall 2022

Thursdays, 9:30am-12:30pm, HSB-40

Delivery Method: in-person

Instructor: Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann

Office Hours: by appointment

Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5430

Email: wlehmann@uwo.ca

Course Description: In this introductory sociology course, we will challenge commonly held assumptions about individual success, talent and merit. 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.

Prerequisite(s): None

Anti-requisite(s): Sociology 1020, Sociology 1020W/X, Sociology 1021E.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

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 is affected when the environment declines?
- What are your chances of being socially mobile?

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.

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

- Challenge common-sense assumptions about success and failure.
- Compare and contrast different sociological perspectives regarding the life experiences and outcomes of different social groups.
- Analyze the relationships between a range of social institutions and wider social structures.
- Evaluate critically different possibilities for social programs and reform.

Course Material:

Corrigall-Brown, Catherine. 2016. *Imagining Sociology: An Introduction with Readings*. Second Edition. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

NOTE: it is important that you purchase the second edition, as it includes a few chapters that are assigned as essential readings, but are not in the first edition. You can purchase either the physical book or the e-book.

Communication: Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class You can contact me:

- In person: by appointment in SSC 5430
- By telephone: 519-661-2111 x85385
- By email: wlehmanna@uwo.ca

Email is the preferred method to contact me.

Teaching Assistant(s): to be determined

Method of Evaluation:

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

Midterm Exam	Date October 13, 2022 (in class) (Make-up exam date: Friday, November 11, 2022)	40%
Final Exam	During December Exam Period (Make-up exam date: Friday, January 13, 2023)	60%

Evaluation Breakdown

Midterm Exam: The exam will consist of multiple-choice questions. The exam will test all material (lectures, readings, textbook) covered up so far. The exam will take place in person during class time in our regular classroom. It will start at the beginning of class (9:30am) and be 90 minutes long. There is no class following the exam.

Final Exam: The exam will consist of multiple-choice questions. The exam is NOT cumulative and will only test material (lectures, readings, textbook) covered since the midterm exam. The exam will be two hours long and take place in person during the December exam period.

Both exams are closed-book exams. Students with an approved absence from an exam will be required to write a makeup exam. The make-up exam dates are November 11 for the midterm exam and January 13, 2023 for the final exam. This date is set by the department and not open to negotiation. The course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test.

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.

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning: In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

Student Absences:

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

Absence from the Midterm Exam: If they cannot write or miss the midterm exam, students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible. Students with an approved absence from the midterm exam will be required to write a makeup exam. The make-up exam date for the midterm exam is November 11. This date is not negotiable. If you cannot write the midterm make-up exam, the same rules that guide the regular midterm exam apply.

Absences from Final Examinations: Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible. Academic Counselling will determine eligibility to write a Special Examination. 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). The make-up exam date for the final exam is January 13, 2023. This date is not negotiable. If you cannot write the final make-up exam, the same rules that guide the regular final exam apply.

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 on your own and do not email the instructor, the Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator or the Faculty of Social Science Academic Counselling Office.

Standards of Professional Behaviour

It is the responsibility of all of us in this class to adhere to and promote standards of professional behaviour that support an effective learning environment. These include:

- **Respect for others** both in and out of the classroom through words and actions (be professional, fair, and respectful in interactions with people on-line and in-person; understand and respect differences among classmates and colleagues; avoid disrupting the learning environment; respect others' expectations of confidentiality and privacy)
- **Active engagement in learning** and commitment to quality (being prepared for classes; participating and listening actively to other; using technology and social media appropriately, striving to do your best)
- **Personal integrity** (following through on commitments; doing own work)

Discrimination and Unconscious Bias

- **Zero-tolerance** for discrimination. I encourage students to “call out” comments or content that may be marginalizing, oppressive, or discriminatory. If students are uncomfortable raising concerns in class, please speak to me immediately about any discriminatory conduct.
- **Unconscious/implicit bias.** We all have unconscious biases. Yes, everyone! Our brains unconsciously process huge amounts of information without us even being aware of it. This can include snap judgements about people we meet and situations we encounter. People have unconscious preferences for people who are similar to them and situations that are familiar. This unconscious bias can exclude, marginalize, and discriminate against minorities. As sociologists, it is our duty to use our sociological imaginations to combat unconscious bias.
 - **Here is some additional information and tips to combat unconscious bias:**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GP-cqFLS8Q4>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKHSJHkPeLY>

Students should also be aware of the **UWO Student Code of Conduct** found at <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>

Course Schedule and Readings:

Week 1: Introduction (September 8, 2022)

Week 2: Sociological Reasoning about Inequality (September 15, 2022)

- Some examples of inequality: individual vs social explanations
- In sociological terms: functionalist versus conflict perspectives
- How do sociologists research these issues?

Practice: how to read an academic article and distill complex information

Reading: Chapter 1

Week 3: Social class, status and inequality (September 22, 2022)

- Social class, status, and poverty
- The problem with social mobility
- COVID-19 and essential workers: the role of class

Practice: How to conduct library research and review academic literature

Reading: Chapter 4

Week 4: Race, ethnicity and inequality (September 29, 2022)

- Social construction of race; multiculturalism vs anti-racism
- Immigration
- COVID-19 and its racial impact

Practice: how to interpret tables, figures and charts

Reading: Chapter 5

Week 5: Gender, sexuality and inequality (October 6, 2022)

- Social construction of gender and heteronormativity
- Gender and sexuality in education and at work
- COVID-19 and gender roles

Practice: how to prepare for a multiple-choice exam

Reading: Chapter 6

Week 6: MIDTERM EXAM (October 13, 2022)

Week 6: Inequality in Education (October 20, 2022)

- Who does well in school and why?
- Role of school structures and curriculum
- COVID-19, learning loss: who is affected most?

Practice: how to avoid plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct

Reading: Chapter 9

Week 8: Inequality at work (October 27, 2022)

- How do different people experience work?
- Hiring discrimination
- Who gets ahead at work?

Practice: how to maximize your student experience

Reading: Chapter 10

READING WEEK (November 3, 2022)

Week 9: Inequality in Health Outcomes: (November 10, 2022)

- Social determinants of health
- Challenging the healthy lifestyle discourse

Practice: grades, grade inflation and what employers really want from new employees

Reading: Chapter 11

Week 10: Local to global inequalities (November 17, 2022)

- Global income distribution and poverty
- Local and global environmental effects at home

Practice: investigating career and post-graduate education options

Reading: Chapter 12

Week 11: Change through government and social movements (November 24, 2022)

- Policy to address inequality
- Role of the welfare state

Practice: integrating your sociological knowledge into everyday life

Reading: Chapter 13

Week 12: Applying what we learned, summing up and reviewing (December 1, 2022)

Practice: what else is there in sociology

Readings: None

Week 13: No class (December 8, 2022)

Use today for reflection and preparing for your exams.

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. The student medical certificate is available at 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 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.

Accessibility Options: Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD 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

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

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

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/).

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. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

2022-2023