



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 2107A-001
“Race,” Ethnicity, Nation
Fall 2022

Lectures: Weds 130pm to 320pm, SSC 2032
Discussions: Weds 330pm to 420pm, SSC 2032
MS Teams Channel: <https://bit.ly/3PXHg21>

Instructor: Dr Scott Schaffer

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

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Course Description: This course will examine ethnicity, nationalism, and race in contemporary societies, and how they can help understand social dynamics, policies, and trends. The focus will be primarily on Canada, with comparisons made to other societies and transnational processes.

Prerequisite(s): None.

Antirequisite(s): Sociology 2200E.

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.

Content and Conduct Advisory: This course will be addressing very pressing, poignant, and often painful issues for many of us in the course. My starting point in this course is that we all live in a racially-defined society that advantages some groups of people (like people who look like me) and disadvantages other groups for historically-defined and structuring reasons that we will discover in the course to be something other than we believe them to be. Or, to quote the sociologist Deadric Williams, “Race is racism structured” — and not the other way around.

Our task in this course will be to deal with these things sociologically — in other words, from a starting point of working toward an understanding of the large-scale patterns by which “race,” ethnicity, and nation operate, their implications for everyone’s lives, and the challenges they pose to how our society operates, claims to operate, and how we think it should operate. Some of the readings and issues we will discuss will cause you discomfort. Being uncomfortable is a challenge for you to understand that discomfort more fully, and not a challenge to you as an individual.

Here’s the other starting point for the course: I am an unfortunately-middle-aged, white, somewhat disabled, heterosexual cis-gendered male, who has a reasonably high position in our society due to my profession and education, but started off as a poor latch-key kid of a single mom living in an

agricultural town (that was a sundown town,” located next to a Native American reservation) in the desert. I have benefitted from growing up in this body, in this societal position, in this society — or at the very least, I have not been disadvantaged by my racial categorization. I haven't done anything to deserve that other than to be the biological offspring of two pink-skinned humans. And billions of people around the world have been severely disadvantaged by this same categorization scheme in systems in which I am culpable.

It may seem weird to have this pink-skinned punk in front of you talking about these issues and ideas — totally get that. My research and training have been in the fields of social theory, social ethics, resistance to forms of inequality and injustice, and social exclusion; and I have been working on issues relating to equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization for more than twenty years as a theorist, public sociologist, and as a practitioner in university communities. We will be alright working through all of this together. My contention is that by understanding how the classification scheme works, we can work to undo the structures that maintain and are maintained by these classification schemes as well as their impacts on all of us.

This course and this classroom are a safe space for persons, ideas, and intellectual arguments (not opinions — Schaffer will explain the difference). Respect, dignity, autonomy, and equity are the rules for this course. We are not here to attribute blame to individual people or types of people, but rather to examine the societal processes that shape people and convince us that the solution is to point fingers at people and to continue maintaining a social order that advantages a few and disadvantages many others. No disrespect, degradation of people's dignity or autonomy, and no challenges to people's humanity will be accepted or tolerated in this course.

Finally, some of the readings we will be doing in the course utilize particular terms or phrases to discuss people who have been subalternized due to “race” or ethnicity in our society. You should be aware that these texts were written in specific times and places wherein such language was either more commonly used (usually by dominant groups) or more acceptable. **Derogatory terms shall not be used in any situation relating to this course, whether formal or informal or in relation to the readings.**

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 utilize 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:

- Back and Solomos (eds.), *Theories of Race and Racism*, 3/e (Routledge). ISBN: 9781000567793.

- Das Gupta, James, Andersen, Galabuzi, and Maaka (eds.), *Race and Racialization*, 2/e (Canadian Scholars Press). ISBN: 9781773380179.

You are also welcome to purchase print copies if you prefer; however, please note that part of the weekly work requires working with the ebook versions, and the print copies will be a significant additional cost.

In order to complete the weekly work for this course, you will also need to purchase access to the Kritik platform (kritik.io) once you have set up an account. Access for this term will cost CAD\$24.

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 collaborative course readings via Perusall	33.3% of course grade
Weekly short-essay assessments via Kritik	33.3% of course grade
In-person essay final examination	33.3% of course grade – December Exam Period
Lecture attendance and course engagement +/-3%	Discretionary non-negotiable adjustment of up to

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.
- 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.
- 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 really 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.

- Late work is not penalized as long as it is within a week of its original due date. However, due to the nature of the weekly work on Kritik, submitting late work will delay multiple students. Thus, Kritik work that is a week late will receive a 0.

If you have to miss the final examination, 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 (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. Readings will be sorted into "tiers" based upon their importance to our core discussions. Students are asked to identify for themselves the tier-level work they wish to and are willing to perform each week, which will roughly correspond to the course grade they wish to work toward. Due to differences in experience with sociological thinking, reading original scholarly readings, and the material conditions in which you live and study, not every student has the ability or capacity to do all of the readings — we understand and respect this (as long as you don't take it overboard and treat this like a bird course where you do nothing). **Do not tell your TA or Dr Schaffer what tier you have chosen;** the point is to give you the latitude to complete what it is you can or want to complete each week without judgment.

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 14. Introduction, the Sociological Imagination, and Classification Schemes.

W2: Sep 21. The Core Ideas and their referents: "race," "ethnicity," "nation."

Weekly work in Perusall and Kritik starts here.

W3: Sep 28. The other Big Ideas: structures, agency, equalities, power, violence, and justice.

W4: Oct 5. The history of "race," "ethnicity," "nation."

W5: Oct 12. The processes, forms, and purposes of "race."

W6: Oct 19. Turning to the unmarked for insights: the construction of whiteness.

W7: Oct 26: Rethinking racial classifications: the expansion of whiteness.

Nov 2: Reading week. May it live up to its name.

W8: Nov 9. Optional ethnicities and national affiliations: *or*, how I'm Scottish, but Mexican cuisine is my comfort food, and I have a long list of countries I support in the World Cup in a particular order that usually starts with Morocco or Cameroon and almost always ends with France.

W9: Nov 16. What we call "racist" at the different levels of analysis: discrimination, prejudice, and bias, and where they all hide; or why there can't be "reverse racism" (again).

W10: Nov 23. Hidden forms of racialized violence: why "diversity," "excellence," "colour-blindness," and unequal policing based on "race" aren't all that different.

W11: Nov 30. Why the backlash?

W12: Dec 6. The anomaly and axiology: What do we do about all of this?

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.

For Academic Advising Issues: 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. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.