



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 2133B-001
Public Opinion
Winter 2023
Mondays 1:30-4:30, SSC2024
In-person delivery

Instructor: Dr. Amanda Zavitz

Office Hours: Mondays 12-1 pm **Department of Sociology, Office:** SSC #5209

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Course Description:

The formation of public opinion by governments, corporations, third sector organizations, and special interest groups. Particular attention will be paid to the role of the mass media. Other topics include: socialization, polling, public relations, propaganda, advocacy, and electioneering.

Prerequisite(s): none

Anti-requisite(s): none

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

Course Material:

Required Text: Paul Nesbitt-Larking, 2009. **Politics Society and the Media**, second edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

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.

Method of Evaluation:

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

Midterm exam: 25% (February 27, 2023)

Final exam: 25% (April Final Exam Period)

Presentation: 20% - students will begin presentations starting in week two of the class

Essay: 15% (due- March 27, 2023)

Assignments: 15%

Midterm exam: the midterm exam will consist of multiple-choice questions, short answer, fill in the blank, and essay questions. The exam will be administered in class. There are no notes or electronic devices allowed during the exam. The exam is 3 hours in length.

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam. 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.

Final exam: the final exam will consist of multiple-choice questions, short answer, fill in the blank, and essay questions. The exam will be administered during the final exam period. There are no notes or electronic devices allowed during the exam. The exam is 3 hours in length.

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam. 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.

Presentation: Students will be assigned to presentation groups on the first day of class. Each presentation group will conduct a one-hour presentation that includes both sides of a debate about a popular public opinion today. The presentation will outline and provide evidence for both sides of the public opinion, and will include class participation as well as the submission of online quiz questions to the Professor only, not to the other students in the class. Multiple choice questions and any other materials related to the presentation are due in the dropbox before the presentation begins.

Essay: Students will complete an essay describing a prominent social opinion today and they will analyze this social opinion from a critical and social structural perspective, using their sociological imagination. The essay will be ASA format and 5-6 pages in length. The essay is due in the dropbox on March 27, 2023.

Assignments: Students will be given a number a small assignments or mini/quiz each week, based on the material covered in class. Students are required to complete these assignments or mini-quizzed and submit them on OWL by midnight the day before class the following week.

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.

Winter 2023: Important Dates

Monday January 9, 2023: Winter Term classes begin.

January 17, 2023: Last day to add a second-term half course.

February 18-26, 2023: Spring Reading Week. Family Day April 20.

March 7, 2023: Last day to drop a second-term half course without academic penalty.

Friday April 7, 2023: Good Friday. No classes.

Monday April 10, 2023: Winter Term classes end.

April 13-30, 2023: Final examination period.

No exams or tests can be scheduled in the last 3 weeks of the course: Monday March 20th - Friday April 7th.

At least 15% of final grade must be provided to students by end of day Friday March 3rd (3 days before deadline to drop a course) in 1000 and 2000 level courses only.

Department Makeup exams:

- Midterm; Friday March 10 12:00-3:00pm Location TBA
- Final: Monday May 1st 12:00-3:00pm Location TBA

Student Absences:

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

Assessments worth 10% or more of the overall course grade:

For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible.

If students miss an assignment for a legitimate and documentable reason, an extension will be granted.

Assessments worth less than 10% of the overall course grade:

Course Assignments:

If a student misses a course assignment due date, they can submit the assignment when they are well (or the issue has been resolved), so long as they contact me before the assignment due date to let me know that they have a documentable reason for missing the due date.

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 (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 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 and Readings:

Date	Course Content	Class Readings
Week one Jan. 9, 2023	Course introductions Presentation guidelines Presentation groups/assignment	
Week 2 Jan. 16, 2023	Chapter 1 Presentation #1	Nesbitt-Larking, Chapter 1
Week 3 Jan 23, 2023	Chapter 2- Presentation #2	Nesbitt-Larking, Chapter 2 Mini quiz/Assignment #1 due before class
Week 4 Jan. 30, 2023	Chapter 3- Broadcasting History Presentation #3	Nesbitt-Larking, Chapter 3 Mini quiz/Assignment #2 due before class
Week 5 Feb. 6, 2023	Chapter 4, Culture, Ideology and the Media Presentation #4	Nesbitt-Larking, Chapter 4 Mini quiz/Assignment #3 due before class
Week 6	Chapter 5, Political Economy	Nesbitt-Larking, Chapter 5

Feb. 13, 2023	Presentation #5	Mini quiz/Assignment #4 due before class
Week 7 Feb. 20, 2023	Study Week	Study week
Week 8 Feb. 27, 2023	Midterm Examination- 3 hours, in class No notes or aids permitted	Mini quiz/Assignment #5 due before class
Week 9 March 6, 2023	Chapter 6, Regulation of the Media Presentation #6	Nesbitt-Larking, Chapter 6
Week 10 March 13, 2023	Chapter 7, Constraints of Media Presentation #7	Nesbitt-Larking, Chapter 7 Mini quiz/Assignment #6 due before class
Week 11 March 20, 2023	Chapter 8, Decline of the American Empire Presentation #8	Nesbitt-Larking, Chapter 8 Mini quiz/Assignment #7 due before class
Week 12 March 27, 2023	Chapter 9, Mass Consumption and Confusion Presentation #9	Nesbitt-Larking, Chapter 9 Mini quiz/Assignment #8 due before class ESSAY DUE- March 27, 2023
Week 13 April 3, 2023	Chapter 10, Deconstruction Chapter 12, Lies and Public Opinion Presentation #10	Nesbitt-Larking, Chapters 10 and 12 Mini quiz/Assignment #9 due before class
Week 14, April 10, 2023	Chapter 13- Gatekeeping and Agendas Chapter 14- Social Responsibility Presentation #11	Nesbitt-Larking, Chapters 13 and 14 Mini quiz/Assignment #10 due before class Mini quiz/Assignment #11 due April 10, 2023, by midnight

Final exam	The final examination in this course will be held in the final examination period April 13-30, 2023	TBA
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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 https://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.