



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 2261A- 001
Contemporary Social Problems
(In-person)
Fall 2022
Mondays, 6:30pm to 9:30pm, SSC 2032

Instructor: Lyn Hoang

Teaching Assistant: TBD

Office Hours: In-person: Mondays, 5:30pm – 6:20pm OR Zoom: By appointment

Department of Sociology, Office: TBD

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Course Description:

Today's society is beset by many contentious social problems (e.g. racial/ethnic discrimination, sexual assault, poverty & inequality & the decline of the middle class). In this course, students will use a sociological perspective to examine the causes, consequences, and solutions to some of society's most troubling social problems.

This course will explore contemporary social problems affecting modern societies with particular attention to the Canadian context. Social problems, such as racism, sexism, poverty, prejudice and discrimination, inequity in the workplace, and drug or alcohol addiction are common in most places. 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 these problems have on society. You will learn how to apply sociological concepts and theories to make sense of these problems and you will apply your knowledge to identify potential solutions.

The materials (lectures, readings, films, podcasts, and industry videos) explored in this course will enable you to examine the diverse range of social problems impacting 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

Anti-requisite(s): Sociology 2140

Course Objectives and 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

Course Material:

- **Required Text(s):** There is **NO required** textbook for this course.
 - Weekly readings and video/audio materials will be posted on OWL in the corresponding “Lessons” tab
- **Recommended Text(s): Social Problems: A Canadian Perspective, 5th Edition (2020)** by Lorne Tepperman, Josh Curtis, and Rachel La Touche. Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.
 - Print and digital text available through Campus Bookstore at Western.
 - Another resource for digital text: <https://www.vitalsource.com/en-ca/products/social-problems-lorne-tepperman-josh-curtis-v9780199032792>

Communication:

- How to contact me: The best way to reach me is through email: lhoang3@uwo.ca. Emails will be monitored daily; students will typically receive a response in 24 – 48 hours. Please note: Messages to me sent via OWL “messages” tool or discussion forum may not receive timely responses.
- How to get important information: You should be checking the course OWL site at least three times a week to properly engage in the discussion forums and to view any new announcements.
- Any important information regarding this course, changes to office hours, or exam information will be posted to OWL announcements
- This course will use OWL forums for discussions
- The discussion forums will be monitored weekly by instructors or teaching assistants. Please ensure responsible use, and respectable behaviour in the discussions.

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/>

Method of Evaluation:

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

Evaluation Breakdown:

Description	Weight	Due Date
Participation in Online Discussion Forums	10%	Weekly
Midterm	25%	Oct 24, 2022
Critical Film/TV Show Analysis	30%	Nov 21, 2022
Final Exam	35%	December Exam Period
<hr/>		
100%		

Evaluation Details:

Online Participation in Discussion Forums (10% 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 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 8 out of 11 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 remain respectful when doing so).

Class participation will be measured through an 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.

Critical Film/TV Show Analysis (30% 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. Students will write a 5–7-page paper (double-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman, normal margins) about how media represents social problems within their selected film and students will apply two theoretical frameworks to understand these social problems. More instructions will be distributed on OWL.

A digital copy of the paper will be submitted online to Turnitin.com to check for plagiarism.

Late assignments will be docked at 5% per day.

Midterm (25%) and Final Exam (35% of your final grade):

There will be two examinations in this class – a midterm and final exam. The midterm will be written in class (see schedule below), and the final exam will be scheduled during the December Exam Period. These exams will be multiple choice and essay/short answer format. For each examination, students will have 3 hours to complete the examination.

The exams are NOT cumulative! The midterm will cover material from weeks 1 to 5. The final exam will cover material from weeks 7 to 12.

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

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.

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.

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 \(uwo.ca\)](#).

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.

Course Schedule and Materials:

Week	Topics	Readings and Resources
1 Sept 12, 2022	Introduction to Social Problems	<p>Required: Watch -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brene Brown on Empathy - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw Talks at Harvard College – Pawan Dhingra - Why You Should Use Your (Sociological) Imagination https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3W-PDIIUsE <p>Supplemental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 1 of textbook
2 Sept 19, 2022	Theorizing Social Problems - Theory in Action	<p>Required: Watch -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Hunger Games https://ocul-uwo.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991044755570005163&context=L&vid=01OCUL_UWO:UWO_DEFAULT&lang=en&search_scope=OCULDiscoveryNetwork&adaptor=Local%20Search%20Engine&tab=OCULDiscoveryNetwork&query=any,contains,the%20hunger%20games
3 Sept 26, 2022	Wealth, Inequality and Workplace Inequities	<p>Required: Read -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kang, S.K., DeCelles, K.A., Tilcsik, A., & Jun, S. - Whiteness resumes: Race and self-presentation in the labor market. Grusky, D.B., & Weeden, K. - Why is there so much poverty? <p>Watch -</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 <p>Supplemental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 2 and 12 of textbook
4 Oct 3, 2022	Race, Culture, and Marginalization	<p>Required: Read -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pager, D., Western, B., & Bonikowski, B. - Discrimination in a low-wage labor market: A field experiment. <p>Watch -</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 <p>Supplemental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 3 of textbook
5 Oct 10, 2022		Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class

6 Oct 17, 2022	Gender and Sexualities	<p>Required: Read -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lorber, J. – Gender and sexuality as a social construct. • Bengtsson, T.T. - Performing hypermasculinity: Experiences with confined young offenders. <p>Watch -</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 <p>Supplemental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4 and 5 of textbook
7 Oct 24, 2022	MIDTERM (In-class Exam)	
8 Oct 31, 2022	Fall reading week – No Class	
9 Nov 7, 2022	Colonialization of Indigenous People	<p>Required: Watch -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada's Dark Secret: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=peLd_jtMdrc <p>Listen -</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/
10 Nov 14, 2022	Education and Schools	<p>Required: Read –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downey, D.B., & Condrón, D.J. - Fifty years since the Coleman Report: Rethinking the relationship between schools and inequality. <p>Watch -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ted Talk: Geoffrey Canada - Our Failing Schools. Enough is Enough! - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mABIBvhsgQ4 <p>Supplemental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 11 of textbook
11 Nov 21, 2022	Health Inequalities	<p>Required: Watch -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ted Talk: Claire Pomeroy – Social Determinants of Health https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qykD-2AXKIU <p>Listen –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vaping Fix: Episode 1 – Playing with fire https://wonderly.com/shows/the-vaping-fix/episode/8944-playing-with-fire/ <p>Supplemental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 7 of textbook
12 Nov, 28, 2022	Families	<p>Required: Read -</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correll, S., Benard, S., & Paik, I. – Getting a job: Is there a motherhood penalty? • Laureau, A. - Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life. <p>Supplemental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 9 of textbook
13 Dec 5, 2022	Digital Inequalities	<p>Required:</p> <p>Watch -</p> <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 Seviens - Bridging the Digital Divide - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzokRz1pgb0 <p>Listen -</p> <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
FINAL EXAM (TBD)		

Important Academic Dates:

September 8, 2022 (Thurs)	Fall Term classes begin.
September 16, 2022 (Friday)	Last day to add a full course, a first-term half course, a first-term full course, or a full-year half course on campus and Distance Studies
October 10, 2022 (Monday)	Thanksgiving Holiday.
October 31 - November 6, 2022	Fall Reading Week.
November 12, 2022 (Saturday)	Last day to drop a first-term half course or a first-term full course on campus and Distance Studies without academic penalty
December 8, 2022 (Thursday)	Fall Term classes end.
December 9, 2022 (Friday)	Study Day
December 10 -22, 2022	Mid-year (December) examination period.