



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 3312B - 001
Wrongfully Convicted
Winter 2023

Wednesdays, 1:30-4:30PM, Room 3M 3250

Delivery Method – in-person

Instructor: Brenda Kobayashi

Office Hours: by appointment

Department of Sociology

Email: bkobaya@uwo.ca

Course Description: The course critically explores the phenomenon of wrongful convictions with an emphasis on systemic bias and the intersection of race, gender, class, age, and mental disability; causes of wrongful convictions, eyewitness testimony, informants, expert testimony; forensic evidence; tunnel vision, interrogation techniques; and biases of police, prosecution, and the judiciary.

Prerequisite(s): Registration in third year or above.

Unless you have either the requisites 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.

Anti-requisite(s): none

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- identify and examine the many contributing factors that contribute to wrongful convictions.
- bring together sociological, criminological, and legal research and thinking as well as innocence scholarship and case-law examples to situate the issue of miscarriages of justice.
- develop an understanding of the philosophical and ethical underpinnings of decisions that result in miscarriages of justice.
- enhance critical thinking skills through participation in presentations, class discussions and completion of course assignments.
- examine cases of wrongful convictions to understand the factors linked to wrongful convictions.
- critically evaluate the impacts that wrongful convictions have on individuals involved and society.

Course Material:

The following books are required and available at the University Bookstore.

Campbell, K. M. (2018) "Miscarriages of Justice in Canada: Causes, Responses and Remedies". University of Toronto Press.

Anderson and Anderson (2009) "Manufacturing Guilt". Fernwood Press.

Maidment (2009) "When Justice Is a Game" Fernwood Press.

Note: Additional readings may be uploaded to Owl.

Communication:

Your first sources of information are the course syllabus and the OWL class site. Students are required and expected to read the course syllabus, and any additional handouts in their entirety. Students are also required and expected to check Owl on a regular basis to ensure they are kept up to date on new and revised course content and announcements.

If you have a question or would like to discuss course content please see me before, during, or after class, or during office hours. Outside of class and/or office hours email (bkobaya@uwo.ca) is my preferred method of contact. Please note, I do not discuss matters of grades or course content (e.g., definitions of concepts, theoretical perspectives, etc.) via email. Prior to emailing me, please read the course outline, announcements, and any other supplementary material posted on Owl in their entirety to see if your question has already been answered.

Emails are to be professionally prepared, spell- and grammar-checked, and not written in "text message" format. Students are expected and required to be professional and courteous in their email. Emails must be written from your UWO account. The subject heading must read the course title and section. Sign the email with your full name and student number. You can expect a response within 24-48 hours on Mondays to Fridays between 9-5PM (EST). Please be patient and avoid emailing multiple times within the 24-48 hour window. Instructors and TAs reserve the right not to respond to emails that do not adhere to the above stated practices.

Method of Evaluation:

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

Midterm Exam: 40% - February 15, 2023

Participation: 15%

Group Presentation: 25%

Critical Reflection Paper: worth 20%

Midterm Examination

There will be one in-class mid-term exam scheduled on **Wednesday, February 15, 2023**. The exam will be based all material includes lectures, readings, speakers, discussions, and any supplementary material provided from the week of January 11, 2023 up to and including the week of February 8, 2023. The mid-term examination may include multiple-choice, true and false, fill-in-the blank, and/or essay questions. Details regarding the exam format will be provided in the lecture prior to the exam. If you do not attend these lectures, it is the student's responsibility to reach out to a classmate to catch up on what you have missed. Please do not email the instructor or the TA for this information as these emails may not be answered. N.B. **The makeup examination will be essay format only.**

Missed Evaluations and Makeup Examinations

If you miss an examination or evaluation due to illness or for any other unforeseen reason, please notify me within 24 hours. Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible.

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.

N.B. Makeup exams will be essay format and granted with approved accommodation only. Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam. There will be only **one makeup examination** for the mid-term examination and will be written with Department Makeup Exam on **Friday, March 10, 2023 at 12:00PM (EST) location TBA**. Students who fail to obtain an academic accommodation and/or fail to write their makeup examination will receive a "0" on the examination.

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. **Makeup exams for this course will be essay format only.**

Electronic devices will not be allowed during the quizzes. Computer-marked multiple-choice quizzes and/or exams may be subject to subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patters that may indicate cheating.

Group Presentation

Students will do one in-class presentation that draws upon the assigned/required course readings scheduled for that week and is relevant to the course. Additional information and sign-up for presentations will be provided during the first lecture. Presentations will begin on **Wednesday, March 1, 2023**.

Critical Reflection Paper

One week after the presentation each presenter will submit a critical reflection paper. Expectations will be provided during the first lecture. The due dates will vary depending on the week you present. The papers will be due at the start of class (1:30PM EST). Students must submit a hardcopy of their paper at the start of class (1:30PM EST) the day their reflection paper is due and upload a copy to Turnitin via the Assignment tab on Owl.

Class Participation

This course meets for 3 hours per week. Students are required and expected to attend all classes and to come prepared having read all the required readings. It is mandatory that students play an active role during class lectures, discussions, and presentations.

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.

Grading Guidelines

Grades (except the final exam and year-end mark) will be posted to OWL as they become available. Due to privacy regulations, I do not provide grades or discuss issues regarding grades via email. If you wish to discuss your grade(s) please contact or speak with me to set up an appointment during office hours.

All evaluations are guided by Western's Undergraduate Grading Guidelines:

University-wide grade descriptors

A+ 90-100: One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level

A 80-89: Superior work which is clearly above average

B 70-79: Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory

C 60-69: Competent work, meeting requirements

D 50-59: Fair work, minimally acceptable

F below 50: Fail

For more information about the university grading standards, see the Registrar's Handbook: Grading Standards

N.B. To ensure the fair treatment of all students so that no one individual receives any consideration or special treatment because of verbal complaints (e.g., arbitrary bumping up of grades) that is not equally received by others, there are no make-up assignments for low evaluation scores or to enhance a final grade; nor will requests to change a grade because it is needed for a future program be considered.

Assessment Re-evaluation

Any request of assessment re-evaluation is to be done within two weeks of the mark being released. Students who seek a re-evaluation of grades must justify in detail and in writing why they feel that a mark is not justified. The request must be based on reasons rooted in the specific course content and keeping in mind my expectations for the class. The assessment will be re-graded in its entirety, not simply the portion the student believes were scored improperly. Note, in the course of remarking an assessment the instructor may discover errors or defects that were not originally detected and as a result it is possible that a student's revised mark may go down, rather than up. The instructor reserves the right to adjust the mark both upwards and downwards. **The revised mark stands.**

Classroom Conduct and Additional Information

This class will conduct itself on the principles of academic and intellectual freedom and mutual respect. Some readings and content will include topics about sensitive, difficult, and/or challenging issues that may be triggering or upsetting. I ask all students to help create an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity during the lecture and discussion periods. Racist, sexist, or other derisive comments, intentional or otherwise, will not be tolerated. Due to the sensitive nature of this course, participants are not permitted to record the sessions.

A laptop can be an effective tool for taking notes in class. However, it is distracting to the instructor, TA, and the other students when students use their laptops or cellphones to access the Internet and/or make personal calls and/or send and receive messages during lectures. Students who use their laptop and/or cellphone during the class for any reason other than to take lecture notes are considered to be engaging in disruptive behaviour under the Student Code of Conduct. Students caught violating this policy may be asked to leave the class lecture.

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.