



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 3317B: 001
Problems of Mass Higher Education
Winter 2023
Wednesday, 1:30-4:30, Room B&GS 0153
Delivery Method - in-person

Instructor: Lauren Barr
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Course Description: This course examines the problems that emerge when post-secondary education is provided on a mass scale. These problems include student disengagement and grade inflation, corporatization and the consumer model, and stress experienced by students and professors.

Prerequisite(s): registration in third year or above

Anti-requisite(s): none

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

Course Material: All material required for this course will be provided by the Instructor on OWL in the Course Content.

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.

Engagement	15	Ongoing throughout
Group Research Project	30 total	
Presentation	15	Mar 29
Final Report	15	Apr 5
Midterm Exam	25	Feb 15 (in class)
Final Exam	30	April exam period - TBD

General Statement on All Learning Interactions:

All forms of communication (verbal, written, visual) formal and informal, are evaluated based on level of critical analysis, succinct arguments, use of reputable academic material and overall organization of your thoughts. All course material is a foundation and a motivator for critical reflection. I expect that you will move beyond the course material, expanding and offering new ways of thinking about sociology that relate to our course.

All activities that are graded 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	Not demonstrating competence required to pass

Midterm (25%) and Final Examination (30%):

- Both examinations will be completed in-person, closed book
- They will be 2 hours in length
- They may include a combination of m/c, short answer, or essay style questions. A breakdown will be provided before each exam.
- They will consist of questions drawn from lectures, and all assigned material.
- The final exam will be held during the April examination period and the date and time will be set by the Registrar's Office.
- No devices or learning aids will be permitted in the exams

- *with the exception of students with approved accommodations that have spoken with the instructor and pre-made arrangements with SSD*
- Students with a formally approved absence (through Academic Counselling) will be required to write a makeup exam on the date provided by the instructor following the original exam.
 - Please note, the course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup exam.
 - Students should also 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.

If you are unsure of material, you will be given many opportunities to ask for support. It is up to you to take advantage of them.

Group Research Project (30% total):

Students will work in groups of 4-5. As a group, you will select an issue in higher education that you believe is essential to address. Using research and sociological support, you will design a research project that examines what the problem is, why it matters and seeks answers on how to address it.

- **We will have a poster day in class on March 29** where your group will ‘present’ your work to your peers.
 - There are no extensions or late days for this work. Time will be given in class to work on this project throughout the term.
- **A final report will be due at the beginning of class April 5th.**
 - late submissions without discussion with the instructor will result in a penalty of 10% / day for up to five days.

A more detailed outline will be provided on OWL to guide your thinking and decision.

Engagement (15%):

Learning is deeper and more meaningful when you are an active participant. Listening to someone ‘lecture at you’ is not enjoyable for anyone, so be prepared to be an active member of our community.

Opportunities for engagement will be offered each week in a variety of ways. You will also be involved in a detailed self-evaluation process. This will be taken into consideration when feedback and grades are provided. The goal is to create a community that is comfortable, supportive, and connected. If you have questions, I am here to support you.

It is expected in a third-year course that students will attend and engage in class consistently. Any absences or issues should be communicated to the instructor as soon as possible.

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 assignments that are worth 10% and more, documentation (medical or otherwise) is required, it can *only* be collected by the student's Dean's Office Academic Counselling unit.

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.

Course Schedule and Readings:

Will be found on OWL in the Course Content section of our online learning environment.

Teaching the "Whole Student" I am **always** available to discuss life with you. I do my best to create and maintain an inclusive and supportive learning environment. If you ever want to see me, drop into my office hours, find me after class or schedule an appointment and let me know if there are external factors that are influencing your success in our course or just things on your mind that you would like to talk about.

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.