



The University of Western Ontario  
**SOCIOLOGY 4426F-001**  
**Protest and Contentious Action**  
**Fall 2022**

**Wednesdays at 16:30pm-19:30pm, SSC-5406**

**Method of delivery: in-person**

**Instructor:** Professor Howard Ramos

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 16h30 to 17h30

**Department of Sociology, Office:** SSC 5316

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**Course Description:** This course will focus on the study of contemporary protest, contentious action and mobilization in pursuit of social change. Students will be introduced to theoretical perspectives and critically examine actual current and historical forms of protest or contentious action.

***Prerequisite(s):*** Registration in third year or above in any Department of Sociology module, or fourth year in any module.

***Anti-requisite(s):*** None.

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

Students will learn about contemporary forms of extra-institutional politics and their historical origins. The class will focus on understanding #BlackLives Matter, #IdleNoMore, #MeToo, Environmental activism, the Arab Spring, the Umbrella movement and Right Wing and Antifa movements through social movement studies. Students will also learn how to systematically find and document academic material, synthesize debates, and write an academic paper that offers an original contribution to the area.

**Course Material:**

Selected peer-reviewed academic readings will be available on the class OWL site. Each week students will be expected to read 30 to 60 pages of material.

**Communication:**

Students are responsible for checking their Western email for information on the course as well as the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) for news and updates.

**Method of Evaluation:**

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

**Project portfolio (PP) (70%)**

- 1) Proposal, justification research question 20% -due October 5

Using a protest or action covered in an assigned class reading, draft a short proposal for an original paper on it and/or some element of mobilization related to it. The paper should use at least one reading from class and two others from outside it. The assignment should be double spaced and no longer than 3 pages in length. One is expected to cite all relevant sources and include a full bibliography of works cited. The bibliography is not included in the page count.

2) Available literature and evidence 20% -due November 9

Building upon the first portfolio, using the same issue and/action that you picked for your initial proposal, engage at least three more articles that address them empirically. Incorporate your own views on how you think the theoretical and empirical research could be improved and see researchers use data to derive conclusions in the field. The assignment should be double spaced and no longer than 3 pages in length. One is expected to cite all relevant sources and include a full bibliography of works cited. The bibliography is not included in the page count.

3) Essay on an issue relating to a social movement 30% -due December 7

Combine elements of the previous two project portfolio assignments to write an original sociological paper on protest and contentious actions. The paper should incorporate feedback from the original portfolio evaluation and should critically examine the same issues engaged in previous assignments, highlighting your own observations, and situating them in a dominant literature. The paper should support its conclusions with secondary evidence. The paper should include the six or more sources identifies in the first two portfolio assignments as well as other reading. One is expected to cite all relevant sources and include a full bibliography of works cited. The assignment should be double spaced and the suggested page length is 10 to 15 pages.

**Original Response and Question papers (ORAQs) 30%**

Over the course of the term complete at least 10 ORAQs worth 3% each. These should be no more than 500 words. The first 10 submitted will be graded. All ORAQs are due via email on the Tuesday before class each week. The subject line of the email should note "SOC 4426 ORAQ" as well as the week and your last name. They should correspond to the reading assigned for a given 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.

**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 less than 10% of the overall course grade:***

For work worth less than 10% of the total course grade, the instructor is empowered to grant academic considerations without referring the student to their academic counsellors. If an instructor chooses to do so, the mechanism for dealing with missed work (e.g., an extension, make-up opportunity, or reweighting) must be specified on the course outline to ensure fair treatment for all students. Note that 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. Clearly define how the absence will be handled (e.g., an extension, make-up opportunity, or reweighting).

***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

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](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](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](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](http://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](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](http://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](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](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

## Course Schedule and Readings:

### 1. What is protest and how does it differ from other contentious actions?

Week 1: September 14

### 2. Collective Behaviour: #BlackLivesMatter

Week 2: September 21

### 3. Resource Mobilization: #BlackLivesMatter

Week 3: September 28

Snow, David A., and Dana M. Moss. 2014. "Protest on the fly: Toward a theory of spontaneity in the dynamics of protest and social movements." *American Sociological Review* 79.6 (2014): 1122-1143.

Tillery, Alvin B. 2019. "What kind of movement is Black Lives Matter? The view from Twitter." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity and Politics* 4(2): 297-323.

### 5. Collective Identity: #MeToo

Week 4: October 5

### 5. Political Opportunity: Indigenous resistance

Week 4: October 12

### 6. Media, Frames, and Echo Chambers: Wet'suwet'en and environmental advocacy

Week 6: October 19

### 7. Counter Movements: Anti-environmentalism

Week 7: October 26

### 8. Fall Reading Break

Week 8: October 31 to November 6

### 9. Tactical Innovation: Arab Spring

Week 8: November 2

## **10. Eventful protests: The Umbrella Movement**

Week 10: November 9

## **11. Conservative movements: The Freedom Convoy**

Week 11: November 16

## **12. Protest as normal politics? Social Movement Organizations**

Week 12: November 23

## **13. Workshopping protest and action**

Week 14: November 30

Open class to workshop final papers. All students will be asked to workshop their final paper in class.

## **14. Does protest still matter?**

Week 13: December 7

Review previous readings and your ORAQs