



**The University of Western Ontario**  
**SOCIOLOGY 1026F Section 650**  
**Controversies in Sociology**  
**Summer 2022**

**Instructor: Lauren Barr**

**Office Hours:** TBD and by appointment

**Virtual:** Office Link on OWL    **When in person:** SSC 5432

**Email:** [lbarr2@uwo.ca](mailto:lbarr2@uwo.ca)

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**Course Description:**

Sociology seeks to introduce us to the non-obvious aspects of social relations and interactions. It teaches us to look beyond the taken-for-granted meanings of social living, to use common sense but also to go beyond it. In pursuing sociological knowledge, one encounters many vigorous debates and there is much controversy as participants to the debates all advance their own theories and explanations for the way things are. Because the issues we treat are so close to our conceptions of ourselves and our societies, controversies in sociology touch all of us in myriad ways. We all presume we 'know' what we are talking about so sociology problematizes ways of knowing and suggests that certainty may not always be that certain.

A distinctive feature of sociological thinking is its insistence on the claim that social behaviour is more socially structured than it is individually volitional. Human behaviour is just too patterned to be the result of happenstance, but this is not easily accepted by the population at large given the culture that socializes them to an individualistic ethic. In all of this the concept of ideology stands front and centre. It filters through which we grasp social reality, ideologies are mobilized belief systems and can come in the form of economic, political, religious, national, educational and even deeply held racial and gendered 'truths.' In this course we will explore some of these ideologies and the controversies they inform.

We will define sociology broadly as the study of social order, social disorder and social change, and in this context, we will critically examine ideologies and perspectives to better understand the complexity of it all.

**Mode of Delivery:** asynchronous distance learning

**Technical Requirements:**



Stable internet connection



Working microphone



Laptop or computer



Working webcam (suggested)

**Antirequisites:** Sociology 1020, Sociology 1020W/X, Sociology 1021E

**Learning Objectives:**

**At the end of the course, students will be able to:**

1. Move beyond common sense understandings of their world and appreciate the importance of structural explanations of social behaviour
2. Think critically, using the sociological imagination to ask new, deeper questions
3. Practice clear, supported academic writing about issues of social importance
4. Incorporate social theory and research into their thinking, and communication
5. Consistently practice self-reflection, open communication, and active listening

**Required Text(s):**

There is no required text for this course. All material will be provided on OWL in the course content.

**Student Success in this Course:**

***Professor Barr's Basic Needs Statement:*** We learn as whole people and your safety and wellbeing are more important to me than anything else. I am always available to listen and help you find the proper supports you need to be successful and healthy. If you want or need support, even if it is merely someone to listen without judgement, reach out and let me know. *This includes physical, mental, spiritual, social, and intellectual health.* There are many resources at Western and in our community. If I cannot provide the support you need, I will help you find the right resources that can.

**Brave and Inclusive:** We will have challenging, essential conversations about “hard topics” throughout this course. All academic perspectives will be honoured with space to be heard. However, we will maintain an inclusive space that celebrates diversity and protects every person’s

need for inclusion and belonging. **If at any point something happens that makes you question this or feel unsafe**, please come speak to Prof Barr immediately.

**Professional students:** post-secondary education is the early part of your professional career. I encourage you to treat it as such. You are here to be successful. To do this you have to show up, be here fully, focus on growth and present yourself as a professional student (prepared, constructive, communicative, and accountable).

**We are a Team & Communication is key!**

All students are responsible for keeping up with communication for the course and reaching out to Prof Barr when situations arise that will influence your ability to participate properly. Please do this as early as possible when ‘life happens’. I cannot know or support you if you don’t communicate with me, so please make it a habit to attend office hours and reach out.

**Method of Evaluation: (SO HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO THIS??)**

Assessment Form	Weight	Due Date
Critical Reflection & Engagement	15	Ongoing
Assignment: (phases)	35	Part 1: May 29 (Sun) Part 2: July 3 (Sun) Part 3: July 29 (Fri)
<b>Examinations</b>		
Midterm	20	June 19-20
Final exam	30	Aug Exam period (Aug 4)

**Evaluation Breakdown:**

***General Statement on All 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:***

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](#)

***Critical Reflection & Communication Online Forums\_ Collaborative Knowledge Building***

Knowledge development is interactive. Active and informed discussion helps students engage consistently as they learn new material. You learn from your peers and use each other to challenge your own thinking. This will help us create an environment of critical academic reflection, in professional work this is called a “Community of Practice”. The purpose of these online forums is to generate conversation and push thinking, so keep that in mind as you engage. Your final mark will reflect your consistent participation, as well as the quality of your contributions. An assessment outline will be provided on OWL.

***Examinations:***

You will have two exams. Each exam will cover specific content (not cumulative). They will be run asynchronously to allow for different schedules. They will be available for 36 hours. They may include a combination of short answer, analysis, and reflection questions.

***Assignment:***

This is an essay course. As noted above, this means that it is mandatory to complete a major writing assignment of significant length and depth. This is also a great opportunity to learn how to think and write academically. The writing assignment is ultimately worth 35% of your mark. This assignment is divided into smaller phases, giving you opportunity to learn, receive feedback, develop, and change as you work to complete your final assignment. You cannot (by nature of the course breakdown) leave this work to the last minute. A full outline outlining each phase will be provided online and we will go through this process throughout the term.

## How to Contact Me: Lauren Barr

**OWL Messages** – Use this as the primary way to reach me regarding our course. You will find a place to message on the left navigation bar on our course website

**Email:** [lbarr2@uwo.ca](mailto:lbarr2@uwo.ca) – for urgent communication only (Add course name / number in title + brief description of issue in subject)

## Important Information: Course Communication

### Communication Guidelines & Expectations:

- I will try to reply to messages and email within 48 business hours (unless announced otherwise).
  - That means you may not receive a response during the evening or on the weekend.
- Be patient, avoid messaging multiple times.
- Make sure your tone and correspondence in all communication is professional

### Where do you Find Course Information? OWL!!

- Our **OWL Course site** will be set up to allow you to navigate week to week in a consistent way. It will be available early May. A welcome announcement will be sent out when it is live.

Homepage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Key instructions on where to find information</li><li>• Prof Barr's contact information</li></ul>
Course Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Weekly lessons will be here</li><li>• All information about assessments are posted here</li></ul>
Announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Used for Regular Communication or Urgent Messages</li></ul>
Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use this to reach Prof Barr instead of email</li></ul>

OWL will be used regularly to let you know what is happening, check it several times each week.

### Course Schedule and Readings:

- A weekly schedule and all content will be found in COURSE CONTENT on OWL.

## Important Policies

### Prof Barr's Class Policies for Deadlines and Missed Assessments

**If you know that you have a problem with a due date or an exam (conflict, sick, etc.), let's talk about it as soon as possible.** *If you talk to me ahead of time, we can determine together whether a formal accommodation request should be filed.*

**If you do not or are not able to let me know ahead of time, then you will be asked to go through the appropriate academic accommodation process.** *(see policy below)*

#### Missed Assignment deadlines:

- **If an assignment is late with no communication**, there will be a **5% late penalty per day for up to 5 days past the due date**. At that point, assignment will no longer be accepted without formal academic accommodation.
- **If an SRA is used**, students are expected to submit the assignment within 48 hours of the original due date.
- **If formal accommodations are required, students will communicate through OWL messages with Prof Barr to establish a plan**

#### *A Note on Academic Misconduct (cheating, plagiarism, theft of intellectual property, privacy):*

Students must do their own work following the instructions of each individual assessment. All assessments submitted will be evaluated with the assumption that students have been informed of the expectations and have followed them responsibly.

**Plagiarism:** Many opportunities to practice and understand the rules and processes around Academic writing will be provided in class. Academic misconduct, including plagiarism, are major scholastic offences and will be addressed directly with the appropriate institutional process (TA, Professor, Department Chair, Dean) (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed below).

#### *Plagiarism Checking:*

All required writing may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism (Turnitin). 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/>).

#### *Recording and Sharing Course Information:*

- **Recording** (video, audio, images) of lectures, tutorials or virtual Meetings or online course content without the explicit consent of the Professor, TA and students involved is ground for serious academic and or legal discipline.

- All course content created by a faculty member is considered the faculty member's intellectual property; it should not be distributed, shared in any public domain, or sold by a student or other third party without prior written consent of the faculty member

## **Institution-Wide Policies:**

### ***Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness***

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at [www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation:

[https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/academic\\_consideration.html](https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/academic_consideration.html).

### ***Academic Consideration for Missed Work***

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a *Self-Reported Absence (SRA)* form online provided that the absence is **48 hours or less** and the other conditions specified in the [Senate policy](#) are met.

Two important exceptions to this rule: SRAs will NOT be allowed for final examinations or assessments worth more than 30% of a given course. Students whose absences are expected to last **longer than 48 hours**, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used a self-reported absence, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a [Student Medical Certificate](#) (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds) to your Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

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.

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_illness.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf)

### ***Accessibility Options:***

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an

accommodation. 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)

### ***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.