



**The University of Western Ontario**  
**SOCIOLOGY 2261A Section 650**  
**Contemporary Social Problems**  
**6-week Summer 2022**

**Course Dates:** May 9 – June 17; Exam dates June 18 & 19

**Instructor:** Lauren Barr

**Office Hours:** by appointment

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

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

---

**Course Description:**

Today's society is plagued 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 contemporary social problems.

**Mode of Delivery:** asynchronous distance learning

**Technical Requirements:**



Stable internet connection



Working microphone



Laptop or computer



Working webcam (suggested)

**Antirequisites:** Sociology 2140.

**Learning Objectives:**

**At the end of the course, students will:**

1. Recognize the complex 'wicked' nature of social problems
2. Apply sociological theory and research to the discussion of social problems
3. Communicate clear, focused, and informed ideas about social problems
4. Listen actively, with an open mind to a variety of perspectives, issues, and challenges
5. Construct viable, informed suggestions using course material to improve social problems

## Required Text(s):

*Social Problems: A Canadian Perspective*. 5th Edition. 2020. Lorne Tepperman, Josh Curtis, and Rachel La Touche. Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press. Available through Campus Bookstore at Western. 2.

Additional readings may be posted on OWL

## 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. 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 reach out.

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

In this course you will be given the option of choosing your evaluation process.

### **Evaluation Breakdown: Option 1: with Assignment**

Engagement	15 %	Ongoing
Midterm Exam	30 %	May 27 – 28
Assignment	25 %	June 12

Final Exam	30%	TBD (June 18 or 19)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	

***Evaluation Breakdown: Option 2: Mainly Exams***

Engagement	20 %	Ongoing
Midterm Exam	40 %	May 27 – 28
Final Exam	40 %	TBD (June 18 or 19)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Evaluation Breakdown:**

***General Statement on All Assessments:***

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 assessments 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](#)

## **Examinations:**

All examinations may include a combination of m/c, short answer, or essay style questions. A breakdown will be provided before each test. The exams will consist of questions drawn from lectures, and all assigned course material. The final exam will be held during the June examination period (June 18 & 19). It is the student's responsibility to ensure that you are prepared and have reserved time to complete the exam within the scheduled window.

## **Assignment: Social Action Plan (optional)**

Students will be asked to choose a social problem that they are interested in learning more about and ultimately helping to improve. Students will conduct a research review and create a final project that analyzes a social problem and ultimately offers an informed action plan, using sociological material from our course to inform and design it. There will be room for personal creativity, but also guidelines provided on OWL.

## **Engagement:**

**Learning is better 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 throughout the course online through the forums and course content pages. The goal is to create a community that is comfortable, critical, and connected.

## **How to Contact Me: Lauren Barr**

**OWL Messages** This is *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. I will check this regularly. Students posting here allows me to keep courses separate and centralize all communication.

**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:**

- Messages and email will be returned 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 mid 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 with Prof Barr to establish a plan**

### **Missed Examinations:**

- If a student applies and is approved for Academic Accommodation (formal) or uses an SRA to miss an exam, the student will be offered 1 make up opportunity within 1 week of the original date. If they are unable to write the makeup exam, the overall student mark will then be distributed between the other forms of assessment. The student is responsible for discussing all arrangements with the instructor in the preferred communication method as soon as possible after the missed exam.
- \*if the instructor is concerned about the amount of work completed by a student, they will notify Academic counselling and the student is expected to follow up immediately to determine next steps.

### ***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 Material:***

- **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.