



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 2229B-200
Global Inequality
Winter 2024

DRAFT

Hybrid: In-person & four virtual synchronous classes on Zoom

Instructor: David Calnitsky

Office Hours by appointment

Department of Sociology

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TA office hours by appointment

Technical Requirements:



Stable internet connection



Laptop or computer



Working microphone



Working webcam

The hybrid mode:

This is a 200, hybrid designated class – this means that most of the classes will be in-person, but four will be done over Zoom. The Zoom mode has worked really well in the past because the class is small enough and participation can work easily. Attendance at synchronous Zoom sessions is required, and **webcams must be on**, it makes communication much easier.

There are four scheduled Zoom classes:

Feb 1;

Feb 8;

Mar 14;

Apr 4

Otherwise, class is in person.

Course Description: This course introduces students to the study of social inequalities on a global scale both between and within nations. It examines the causes and consequences of this inequality.

Prerequisite(s): NA

Anti-requisite(s): Antirequisite(s): Sociology 2239

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

The object of this course is to introduce and examine capitalism, inequality, and poverty on a global scale.

Policy on laptops and phones during in-person classes:

For our non-Zoom classes: I do not allow the use of any electronic devices during in-person classes, which includes cell phones, laptops, ipads, and other devices. The World Wide Web is just too tempting. And all the current research shows that laptops reduce learning outcomes for in-person classes. Your cell phones should be off, not just set to vibrate. I promise this is not meant to be mean or punitive. Even if you are trying hard to pay attention, devices will distract you and your classmates around you. In exchange for this, I will post any slides I use to the course website on OWL, which should minimize the notes you'll need to take. Exceptions will be made for students who require a laptop for accessibility reasons or who see the laptop as essential to their work. Students in the latter group will need to get in touch with me and provide a compelling reason.

Course Material:

This class uses readings available under "Resources" (and then in the readings folder) or under "Course Readings" on OWL. Check both places. There should also be a course pack for these readings, available at the bookstore.

Communication:

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) on a regular basis for 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.

Evaluation Breakdown:

Weekly reading memos	30%
Midterm exam	30%
Final exam (During final exam period, TBD)	40%

Reading

All readings listed in the syllabus are mandatory, and they should be completed before class. Completing the readings will take time, but they are essential to success in this class.

Weekly memos

Every week you will submit a short, paragraph long memo on the readings that week. The weekly memo—three sentences or so, and yes that means full sentences—is basically there to convince me you’ve done the reading. You don’t have to cover each specific reading (although you can, and you can comment on differences between them), but you have to write something thoughtful about what you’ve just read. This can be a reflection directly on readings, an objection to a claim that is made, or something stated by the author that you agree with. It does not need to be long; again, three sentences works.

These will be graded, each week, on a very rough three-point scale: 3 points means you clearly did the reading and engaged with it directly and thoughtfully in your comment, and 1 point means you wrote something down that’s highly general, not specific to reading, and didn’t really persuade us that you’ve engaged with the material. 2 points is somewhere in between.

The best kind of memo is one that focuses on something *specific* from the reading, say, a specific argument, rather than something general. We’ll be trying to find ways to detect AI written memos, but this is a work in process. Of course, it will be important to know the content, so reading and writing yourself will also be beneficial.

Finally, to get marks for the memo it must be submitted in dropbox on OWL *BEFORE* class starts each week. Make sure title your memo with the correct week.

Attendance

Class attendance is required for success in this course. To receive a passing grade in the course, you must attend at least 80% of the class meetings. This will only be waived in exceptional circumstances, with documentation.

Mid-term exam (Feb 29) and final exam (During final exam period, TBD)

There will be one mid-term and one final exam at the end of the semester held during exam time. They will be closed book. The exams will assess whether you have paid attention in class, and thought about the material seriously. The content will cover lecture material. Exams will *not* be cumulative.

The mid-term will happen in class on Feb 29th and we will have the full three hours of class time, 9:30-12:30pm. The final exam will be during the exam period. Both will consist of short answer definition questions and longer form essay questions. More information will be provided as we go along.

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, in this case, the memos, I will offer a make-up opportunity for one memo. Additionally, the lowest memo grade will be dropped.

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. In the case of valid medical or supporting documentation I will offer a make-up opportunity for exams.

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:

Jan 11 – Introduction and class overview

- Wright, E. O. (1994). “Inequality,” in *Interrogating Inequality*. London: Verso.

Jan 18 – Inequality: Concepts and trends

- Milanovic, Branko. *Global inequality: A new approach for the age of globalization*. Harvard University Press, 2016. “Ch. 1 The Rise of the Global Middle Class and Global Plutocrats” PP. 10-45.

Jan 25 – The rise of inequality and the world before inequality

- Scheidel, Walter. *The Great Leveler: Violence and the History of Inequality from the Stone Age to the Twenty-First Century*. Princeton University Press, 2018. “Ch. 1. Rise of Inequality”

Feb 1 – *ON ZOOM* – Theorizing inequality

- Wright, E.O. (1997). *Class Counts*. Cambridge University Press. “Ch. 1 - Class Analysis”, pp. 1-34.

Feb 8 – *ON ZOOM* – The rise of capitalism and understanding capitalism

- Bowles, S., Edwards, R., & Roosevelt, F. (1993). Capitalism shapes the world” in *Understanding capitalism*. Harper Collins College. ISBN: 9780190610937, pp. 3-21 [19 pages]
- Allen, R, *Global Economic History: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. 1-52.

Feb 15 – Arguments for and against capitalism

- Chibber, V. 2022. “The basic structure” in *Confronting Capitalism*. Verso Books.
- Wright, EO. 2019. Ch. 1 & 2 in *How to be an anticapitalist in the twenty-first century*. Verso Books.
- Cowen, T. 2018. “Introduction” & “Wealth Makes the World Go Round,” in *Stubborn Attachments*. P. 12-47. Stripe Press, San Francisco, CA.

Feb 22 – Reading week

Feb 29 – Midterm exam, in class

Mar 7 – Cross-national comparisons

- Milanovic, Branko. *Global inequality: A new approach for the age of globalization*. Harvard University Press, 2016. “Ch. 3”.
- Milanovic, Branko. Global income inequality: Time to revise the elephant. Dec 5. 2022. *Social Europe*. <https://socialeurope.eu/global-income-inequality-time-to-revise-the-elephant>

Mar 14 – *ON ZOOM* – Causes and consequences of inequality

- Pickett, K., & Wilkinson, R. (2010). *The Spirit Level*. Penguin UK. Chapters 1-3. Pp. 3-45.
- Kenworthy, Lane. (2017). "Why the surge in income inequality?." *Contemporary Sociology* 46(1): 1-9.

Mar 21 – From colonialism to globalization

- Piketty, T. “The Heritage of Colonialism and Slavery,” in *Brief History of Equality*. Harvard University Press, 2022. Pp. 48-67.
- Allen, R, *Global Economic History: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. 53-63.

Mar 28 – Social democracy and the future of capitalism

- Kenworthy, Lane. (2019). *Social Democratic Capitalism*. In Speth, Oxford University Press. Pp. 3-11.
- Sunkara, B. *Socialist Manifesto*. “Chapter 5: The God that Failed,” Pp. 99-119.

Apr 4 – *ON ZOOM* – TBD

Academic Policies:

Please review the Department of Sociology “[Important Academic Policies](#)” document

https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf for additional information regarding:

- Scholastic Offences
- Plagiarism
- Copyright
- Academic Accommodation
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health