



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 2144A-001
Sociology of Education
Fall 2024

Delivery Method: in-person

Instructor: Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann

Office Hours: by appointment
Department of Sociology

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This is a DRAFT only. Please see the course site for the final version.

Course Description:

A comprehensive study of educational institutions in modern society. The focus of this course is on the sociological study of education in Canadian society. Applying different empirical and theoretical perspectives on education, we will do the following throughout this course:

- trace the historical development and organization of education in Canada,
- investigate patterns of educational participation,
- discuss the socialization function of schools,
- debate the relationship between school and work,
- analyze the role of education in the reproduction of social inequality, and
- learn about contemporary challenges facing education systems.

Prerequisite(s): None

Anti-requisite(s): None

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

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

- Interpret historical conditions that have led to the development of current education systems and institutions.
- Challenge common-sense assumptions about school success and failure.
- Compare and contrast different sociological and theoretical perspectives regarding the schooling experiences and outcomes of different social groups.
- Analyze the relationships between educational institutions and wider social structures.
- Evaluate critically different reasons for educational reform.

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Course Material:

Lehmann, Wolfgang (Ed). 2016. *Education and Society: Canadian Perspectives*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Communication:

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL Brightspace site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/login>) 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. You can contact me:

- In person: by appointment in SSC 5430
- By telephone: 519-661-2111 x85385
- By email: wlehmann@uwo.ca

Email is the preferred method to contact me.

Method of Evaluation:

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

Application of knowledge	Best of two submissions (for deadlines, see below)	20%
Midterm Exam	Date October 10, 2024 (in class) (Make-up exam date: TBD)	35%
Final Exam	During December Exam Period (Make-up exam date: TBD)	45%

Evaluation Breakdown

Application of Knowledge: You select a news item (from a newspaper, news magazine, news website) related to issues of education. The choice is yours. With the school term beginning in September, there are many news stories about education in September and October. They could be about the use of cell phones in class, about the use of AI, about the cost of education, about streaming or destreaming, and so forth. You are expected to do the following:

- 1) briefly summarize the content of the news story (please add a link to the story, website, video, or whatever you chose to analyze);
- 2) take one concept you learned about in class and apply it to the story (e.g., if it is a story about streaming, you could apply what you learned about the relationship between stream placement and class or race);
- 3) talk about what the article gets right and what it may be missing, from a sociological perspective.

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You are expected to upload **TWO (2)** submissions, but only one of the two (the one with their higher mark) will be used in the calculation of your final grade. This will give you flexibility to improve this portion of your grade after your first submission. It is important to note, however, that the two submissions have to use different news items and apply different concepts learned in class. Also, because of the flexibility built into this assignment, no accommodations are provided and you **cannot** use your self-attestation.

Submission 1: deadline for submission is **Thursday, September 26, 9am**. There is, however, a no penalty one-week grace period until Thursday, October 3, 9am. The mark will be zero if the submission has not been uploaded to Brightspace by October 3, at 9am. Since a one-week grace period is provided, there is no accommodation of any kind, and the grace period covers all extensions provided by Accessible Education.

Submission 2: deadline for submission is **Thursday, November 14, 9am**. There is, however, a no penalty one-week grace period until Thursday, November 21, 9am. The mark will be zero if the submission has not been uploaded to Brightspace by November 21, at 9am. Since a one-week grace period is provided, there is no accommodation of any kind, and the grace period covers all extensions provided by Accessible Education.

Details and submission guidelines to be provided in class and on Brightspace.

Midterm Exam: The exams will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions. The exam will test all material (lectures, readings, textbook) covered up to and including October 10. The exam will take place in person during class time in our regular classroom. It will start at the beginning of class (9:30am) and be 60 minutes long. There is no class following the exam.

Final Exam: The exam will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions. The exam will focus on material (lectures, readings, textbook) covered between after October 10 (the midterm). It is NOT a cumulative exam. The exam will be 120 minutes long and take place in person during the April exam period.

All exams are in-person, closed-book exams.

Important Information about Missed Exams

As per a new policy, students can now use one self-attestation per course per term. Final exams are excluded from this policy. Instructors can also exclude assignments from this new policy. I have not excluded either midterm. This means, you can use your self-attestation for one of the two midterm exams. Please log into the Student Absence Portal as soon as possible, but not later than 48 hours after the exam, to enter your self-attestation. No documentation is required. You can write a make-up exam at the date specified in this course outline. If you have already used your self-attestation for the first midterm exam, but need accommodation for the second midterm (or the final exam), medical documentation will be required. Follow the same procedures. If your accommodation request is approved, you can write a make up exam at the date specified in the course outline. The date for the

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make up exams are set by the department and are not open to negotiation. The course professor or teaching assistant(s) will not be available to respond to questions during the makeup exam.

If you miss a midterm exam and its make up exam, the weight of the missed midterm will be added to the final exam. Students who write a re-weighted final exam will have to write a different exam that includes question from the missed midterm.

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.

Student Absences:

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

University policy on academic considerations are described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation. Further information about academic considerations, and information about submitting this self-attestation with your academic consideration request may be found here. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.”

Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#). Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the central academic consideration portal. Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically schedule during the last week of the term. Students should also note that the instructor may designate one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described elsewhere in this document. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor of this course, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness should use the [Student Medical Certificate](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam. Course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup exam. Students should 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.

Standards of Professional Behaviour

It is the responsibility of all of us in this class to adhere to and promote standards of professional behaviour that support an effective learning environment. These include:

- **Respect for others** both in and out of the classroom through words and actions (be professional, fair, and respectful in interactions with people on-line and in-person; understand and respect differences among classmates and colleagues; avoid disrupting the learning environment; respect others' expectations of confidentiality and privacy)
- **Active engagement in learning** and commitment to quality (being prepared for classes; participating and listening actively to other; using technology and social media appropriately, striving to do your best)
- **Personal integrity** (following through on commitments; doing own work)

Discrimination and Unconscious Bias

- **Zero-tolerance** for discrimination. I encourage students to “call out” comments or content that may be marginalizing, oppressive, or discriminatory. If students are uncomfortable raising concerns in class, please speak to me immediately about any discriminatory conduct.
- **Unconscious/implicit bias.** We all have unconscious biases. Yes, everyone! Our brains unconsciously process huge amounts of information without us even being aware of it. This can include snap judgements about people we meet and situations we encounter. People have unconscious preferences for people who are similar to them and situations that are familiar. This unconscious bias can exclude, marginalize, and discriminate against minorities. As sociologists, it is our duty to use our sociological imaginations to combat unconscious bias.
 - **Here is some additional information and tips to combat unconscious bias:**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GP-cqFLS8Q4>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKHSJHkPeLY>

Students should also be aware of the **UWO Student Code of Conduct** found at <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>

Course Schedule and Readings:

Course Schedule

Course Introduction	September 5, 2024
1) Historical Development and Current State of Education <ul style="list-style-type: none">• From elite to mass education• Structure of Canadian education• Enrolment trends <i>Lehmann Chapter 1</i>	September 12, 2024
2) Functions and Benefits of Education <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Socialization and social cohesion• Skill development• Social mobility <i>Lehmann Chapter 3 (intergenerational transfer of advantage)</i>	September 19, 2024
3) Experiences in Schooling I <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School rules and school safety• What we learn (curriculum debates) <i>Lehmann Chapter 13 (cyberbullying)</i>	September 26, 2024
4) Experiences in Schooling II <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How learning is organized• Integration vs segregation <i>Lehmann Chapter 2 (achievement gaps)</i>	October 3, 2024
<i>Midterm Exam</i>	<i>October 10, 2024</i>
READING WEEK	<i>October 17, 2024</i>
5) Experiences in Schooling III <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does your socio-demographic situation affect your schooling experience?• Issues of class, gender and race <i>Lehmann Chapter 8 (indigenous education)</i>	October 24, 2024
6) The Family-School Relationship and Transitions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The role of family and parental education• Bourdieu: a very important sociologist of education <i>Lehmann Chapter 6 (parent school engagement)</i>	October 31, 2024

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6) Post-secondary Education I

November 7, 2024

- Different forms of post-secondary education (PSE)
 - Enrolment trends, access and experiences in PSE: class, gender and race
- Lehmann Chapter 4 (transitions of marginalized youths)*

7) Post-secondary Education II

November 14, 2024

- A critical view on meritocracy and social mobility: social congestion/closure and credential and extra-credential inflation
- Lehmann chapter 7 (education and career aspirations of immigrant youths)*

8) Post-graduation

November 21, 2024

- Relationship between education and work:
 - Labour market benefits of education, and continued inequalities in employment
- Lehmann Chapter 5 (LM outcomes disability)*

9) Future Challenges

November 28, 2024

- The role of education in tackling environmental decline
 - Populism and decline of social cohesion: can education make a difference, or does it cause it?
 - Is education making us sick? How can we improve mental health of children and young adults?
- Lehmann Chapter 14 (online learning and MOOCS)*

10) Last class: spillover and summing up

December 5, 2024

No readings today

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
- Course Selection
- Absence from Course Commitments
- Missed Tests and Exams
- Religious Accommodations
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health
- Gender-Based and Sexual Violence statement