



The University of Western Ontario  
SOCIOLOGY 4420F  
Social Context of Racial Inequality  
Fall 2024

**Delivery Method - in-person**  
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**Department of Sociology**  
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*This is a DRAFT only. Please see the course site for the final version.*

**Course Description:** This course will examine sociological understandings of race and ethnicity. The focus will be primarily on Canada and the US, with comparisons made to other societies and transnational processes. The main question driving this course is: what are the sociohistorical contextual underpinnings of racial/ethnic inequality?

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

Unless you have either the prerequisites or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in the course, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**Anti-requisite(s):** Sociology 4485F/G.

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

1. Gain a foundational knowledge of how social scientists understand race and ethnicity
2. Show comprehension of key sociological concepts and discourses around race and ethnicity
3. Demonstrate an understanding how “race” is socially constructed and that it effects every facet of our everyday lives, following the latest knowledge in social science
4. Be able to discuss and present the sociological discourses of race and ethnicity in class
5. Display facility and fluency with core sociological concepts and discourses in oral and written assignments
6. Be able to apply sociological discourses of race and ethnicity in oral and written assignments

**Course Material:**

All required readings, assignment prompts, and other course materials will be made available on Brightspace. No textbooks need to be purchased for this course.

## **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.

## **Method of Evaluation:**

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

1. Class participation 10%
2. Facilitating discussion 20%
3. Weekly information probes 30%
4. Final paper 40% (due on the final day of the class – **December 2 to December 6, 2024, before 11:59PM**)

***Class Participation (10%):*** The success of this class is dependent on your active participation in class. This means that you need to consistently ask and answer questions, share your reflections on the readings, and engage respectfully with your colleagues. In class, students will be expected to ask and respond to questions about the material. This is a discussion-based course, so active participation will be required. To get the full mark you need to attend and actively participate in 8/10 classes.

***Facilitating Discussion (20%):*** All students will lead at least two discussions at some point in class (assignments will be discussed on the first day of class). If you miss your assigned date for facilitation, there will not be an opportunity to make up for it. Facilitators will have the following responsibilities:

Instructors are permitted to designate one assessment per course per term as requiring supporting documentation to receive academic consideration. For this course the following assessment has been designated as requiring supporting documentation: Facilitating Discussion, due dates vary by students' choice of the dates to facilitate the discussion (assignments will be on the first day of class).

1. In class, present a clear and concise summary of the assigned reading(s). Talk about the authors' main arguments, evaluate the evidence used to support it, and assess the overall effectiveness of the argument. Provide reflections on what you learned from the reading(s).
2. Discuss with class (lead the discussion) on how the reading material(s) relates (or does not relate) to the Canadian or Ontarian context.
3. Prepare thoughtful questions in advance to guide and facilitate the discussion among your colleagues.

***Weekly information probes (30%):*** Each week, identify a recent news article or relevant piece of information that connects to the topics we are covering in class, or find an additional academic article that the class should be aware of. Use the material for that week to analyze and interpret the news article, or if you choose an academic article, explain how it challenges or enhances the concepts discussed in class. Download the material and upload it to the class shared drive. In a paragraph or less, explain its relevance and how it relates to the assigned readings. In class, briefly introduce the material and lead a discussion on it. This should take no more than two minutes and

will help drive class discussion for the week. To earn full 30% of the grade for this component, you must complete 3/10 weekly contributions. Each contribution is worth 10% and must be submitted on time, with the material uploaded at least one day before class. Late submissions will not be accepted.

*This course has 10 weeks of lectures in which students can submit a weekly information probe. Only 3/10 weekly information probes will be counted towards your final grade. Please note that because the best 3/10 will count and students have the flexibility to choose which weeks to submit, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for late submissions.*

**Final Paper (40%):** For the final paper, students can choose to write either a research proposal or a policy proposal. Regardless of the option selected, the paper must accomplish the following: identify a specific area of racial or ethnic inequality (i.e., identify the problem), explore its implications, and propose potential mechanisms that explain this inequality using examples from the readings. If you choose to write a research proposal, you will develop a detailed plan for analyzing the identified inequality. If you opt for a policy proposal, you will propose and critically assess at least two policy options that could help address the issue. The paper should be 10-12 pages long (12-point Times New Roman font and double spacing). All final papers must be submitted via Brightspace between the last day of class and Friday of the same week (December 2 to December 6, 2024, before 11:59PM).

*Please note that because the submission deadline for this assessment (final paper) already includes flexibility in the form of a 5-day submission window, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments which are submitted following the end of the period of flexibility.*

### **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.

### **Course Schedule and Readings:**

Weekly readings will be provided on Brightspace.

### **Artificial Intelligence:**

1. *All assignments must be completed independently, without the aid of artificial intelligence (AI).*
2. *Within this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploring a topic, with students expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and avoiding plagiarism. Essays, written assignments and/or lab reports should reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work. Students should also generate their own figures (e.g., graphs, diagrams) rather than using AI generated ones. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and effective learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and all them to produce original written contributions. The same principles also apply to the use of translation software to support the writing the essays and other written assessments.*

### **Academic Policies:**

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

[https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic\\_Policies.pdf](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