



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 4426G-001
Protest and Contentious Action
Winter 2025
Method of delivery: in-person
Instructor: Professor Howard Ramos

Department of Sociology
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Course Description: This course will focus on the study of contemporary protest, contentious action and mobilization in pursuit of social change. Students will be introduced to theoretical perspectives and critically examine actual current and historical forms of protest or contentious action.

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

Anti-requisite(s): None.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

Students will learn about contemporary forms of extra-institutional politics and their historical origins. The class will focus on understanding #BlackLives Matter, Indigenous Resistance, and Environmental mobilization through social movement studies. Students will also learn how to systematically find and document academic material, synthesize debates, and write an academic paper that offers an original contribution to the area.

Course Material:

Selected peer-reviewed academic readings will be available on the class OWL site. Each week students will be expected to read 30 to 60 pages of material.

Optional: Staggenborg, Suzanne and Howard Ramos. 2023. Social Movements (4th edition). Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Communication:

Students are responsible for checking their Western email for information on the course as well as the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) for news and updates.

Method of Evaluation:

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

Project portfolio (PP) (60%)

All portfolio tasks need to be submitted on the submission week in order to be graded. No exceptions are made for those deadlines. Complete the two assignments that add to 60% of your final grade. Additional detailed information will be provided on each portfolio assignment.

Portfolio 1 -due week 4 - January 29th (30%)

Choose a social movement, protest or contentious action. Using at least three articles from class as well as material you find on your own, in no more than three pages explain it from the perspective of those challenging power.

Portfolio 2 -due week 8 – February 26th (30%)

Using the same social movement, protest, or contentious action of your choice, use at least three articles from class as well as material you find on your own to, in no more than three pages, explain it from the perspective of the power holders.

Probe 20%

Each week students are expected to map the arguments of the assigned readings. In doing so, they should identify key concepts, assumptions behind them, key people and the mechanisms that help protest and contentious action. Each week students should also identify the etymology of schools of thought or be able to position the assigned reading against other material in the field.

For this probe assignment, students should identify at least one additional outside peer-reviewed article that will help others understand the assigned material for a given week. Students should also download the additional reading and share it with the class through the class shared drive. Additionally, in a paragraph or less explain why the material is relevant to the class and to the given week you choose and link it to the assigned readings for that week.

In class, take no more than 5 minutes introduce the material and animate discussion of it. Students should be ready to continue discussing the probe throughout the class for the week it is submitted. All students are expected to complete one probe for 30% of the grade for this component.

There will be a sign up sheet to determine which week a probe will be presented. Each contribution is worth 10% and must be completed in real time and material should be submitted no less than one day (24 hours) before class.

Take home exam 20%

Students will be given a take home exam in week 11 ((March 19th) and asked to submit it in-class in the last class on week 13 (April 2nd). It will be cumulative for all material covered in the term. To prepare for it students should be able to summarize all perspectives on protest and contentious action covered in the class and the three cases discussed during the term.

No late assignments will be accepted

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.

Academic Policies:

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

Plagiarism: Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

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

Students are expected to retain all research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, your instructor may ask you to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against you.

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.

Copyright: Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

Absence from Course Commitments: Students must familiarize themselves with the Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

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 in the course outline. 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

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.

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 Academic Counselling Office.

Missed Tests and Exams: Students with an approved absence from an in-class test will be required to write a make-up test. 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 professors may not be available to respond to questions during the make-up test/exam slots.

Students with an approved absence from a final exam in December or April will be required to write a makeup exam known as a Special Examination. Permission to write a Special Examination may be granted on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documentation provided to the student's Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

Students who fail to write a make-up test or special examination will receive a grade of zero on that assessment. No other make-up opportunities will be provided unless further academic consideration is granted by the student's Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

Religious Accommodation: Students should review the policy for [Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#) . Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

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 Brightspace 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.

Accessibility Options: Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) http://academicssupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disab

[ilities.pdf](#) . Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:
www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/examinations/accommodated_exams.html .

Mental Health: Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western
<https://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence: Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website
https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html .To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca .

Additional resources:

Registrar Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <http://westernusc.ca/services>

Course Selection: Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any antirequisite courses they may have taken.

If a student enrolls in a course for which they do not have the prerequisites, they may be removed from the course and have it deleted from their record. This decision may not be appealed. A student will receive no adjustment to their fees in the event that they are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

If a student takes a course that is antirequisite to a course previously taken, they will lose credit for the earlier course, regardless of the grade achieved in the most recent course.

Please visit your Home Faculty Academic Counselling webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters:
https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html .

Bookstore: Search for Textbook availability and cost <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search>

Course Schedule:

1. What is protest and how does it differ from other contentious actions?

Week 1: January 8

2. Collective Behaviour: #BlackLivesMatter

Week 2: January 15

3. Resource Mobilization: #BlackLivesMatter

Week 3: January 22

4. Political Opportunity: #BlackLivesMatter

Week 4: January 29

5. Eventful protests: Indigenous resistance

Week 5: February 5

6. Collective Identity: Indigenous resistance

Week 6: February 12

7. Reading Break

Week 7: February 19

8. Media frames: Indigenous resistance

Week 8: February 26

9. Movement networks and diffusion: Environmental movement

Week 9: March 5

10. Counter Movements: Environmental movement

Week 10: March 12

11. Radical movements: Environmental movement

Week 11: March 19

12. Protest as normal politics?

Week 12: March 26

13. Does protest still matter?

Week 13: April 2