



The University of Western Ontario  
**SOCIOLOGY 4466F-001**  
**Professionals and their Work**  
**Fall 2024 - DRAFT**  
**In Person**

**Instructor: Professor Tracey L. Adams**

**Office Hours: TBD**

**Department of Sociology**

**Email: tladams@uwo.ca**

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

**Official Course Description:** This course examines the nature of professions and professional work in Canadian society and elsewhere in the world. Attention will be paid to the structure of professional work, and workers' experiences within professions, as well as inequalities within and across professions.

**Detailed Course Description:** This course examines professions, professionals, and their work within Canadian society and elsewhere in the world. Attention will be paid to the structure of professional work, and workers' experiences within professions, as well as intersectional inequalities within and across professions in varying social-historical contexts. Among the topics explored are the following: Professions and mental health, technological change, education and training, finding a job and launching careers, professional misconduct, and workplace change.

**Prerequisite(s):** Registration in third year or above in any Department of Sociology module, or fourth year in any Faculty of Social Science 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):** None.

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, students should:

- \* Understand the characteristics of professions, and their implications for society.
- \* Be aware of various theoretical accounts of professions.
- \* Be able to reflect critically on professions, professionals and expertise.
- \* Understand the changing nature of professions and professional work.

### **Course Material:**

There will be a variety of articles and book chapters assigned to students throughout the course. All materials will be accessible, either through the Western Library system or our OWL course site.

### **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.

If you want to reach me, please do so through email: [tladams@uwo.ca](mailto:tladams@uwo.ca)

### **Method of Evaluation:**

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

Class attendance & Participation	All weeks	20%
Lead Class discussion	Selected Weeks	10%
Critical Review Paper	October 9	30%
Research Synthesis Paper	December 4, 2024	40%

### **Evaluation Details:**

*Class Attendance:* Attendance at in-person classes is expected. If you cannot attend a class due to illness or other reasons please inform Professor Adams ahead of time. You will not be penalized for absences due to illness and other extenuating circumstances. Grades are for both attending class and participating in class discussions in a manner that demonstrates understanding of the readings.

*Lead Class Discussion:* Every student is asked to (co-)lead class discussion during one week. This will require preparing 5-6 questions for class discussion, and posing those questions in class. Students will be asked to select a date to lead discussion during the first week of classes.

*Critical Review Paper:* Choose one article or a chapter of an assigned book. Summarize the major arguments of that book, and provide some critical reflection on it. Papers should be approximately 6 pages double-spaced with 2-3 or so pages devoted to summary, and the remainder devoted to critical reflections, including the following considerations: What did you like or dislike about the article. Are there arguments you think are important or convincing? Why or why not? How does it relate to other material you have read in the course? More details will be provided later. Papers should be 5-8 pages double-spaced (12-point Times New Roman font). The official

deadline for the paper is October 9<sup>th</sup>, but papers can be handed in before this date, or within 72 hours of it without penalty. Papers should be submitted via OWL Brightspace. *A late penalty of 2% per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade for papers submitted beyond the 72 hour mark.*

*Research Synthesis Paper:* Students will be asked to write a research synthesis paper (length approximately 8 pages, double-spaced, plus a works cited page). Papers will synthesize the existing research on a topic covered in the class related to professionals and their work, drawing on course readings and supplementary readings provided for this project. Papers should summarize the state of research in the area, identify gaps in the literature, and make recommendations for future research and policy in the area. The official deadline for papers is December 4<sup>th</sup>, but papers can be handed in within 72 hours of the deadline without penalty. Papers should be submitted via OWL Brightspace. *A late penalty of 2% per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade for papers submitted beyond the 72 hour mark.*

**To pass the course you must complete all course components.**

### **Student Absences:**

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

It is understood that sometimes students cannot attend class due to illness or other extenuating circumstances. In such instances you are expected to notify the instructor ahead of time. These extenuating circumstances will be considered when finalizing participation and attendance grades.

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.

### **Artificial Intelligence:**

*All assignments must be completed independently, without the aid of artificial intelligence (AI).*

### **Academic Policies:**

Please review the Department of Sociology “[Important Academic Policies](https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf)” 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

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

#### **September 11                      Week 1: Introduction to course – what are professions? Theories of Professions**

Adams, T.L. (2020). Professions. *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*. G. Ritzer and C. Rojek, eds. John Wiley and Sons Ltd.

#### **September 18                      Week 2: Professions Historically**

Paul Starr. (1982). *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (excerpts)

Brockman, J. (1995). “Exclusionary Tactics: The History of Women and Visible Minorities in the Legal Profession in British Columbia.” In *Essays in the History of Canadian Law*, Volume VI: British Columbia and the Yukon. H. Foster and J.P.S McLaren, eds. (pp 508-61). Toronto: Osgoode Society.

**September 25**                    **Week 3: Professional Education and Training**

Beagan, B.L. (2001). Even if I don't know what I'm doing I can make it look like I know ..." *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 38(3): 275-291.

Bliss, J. (2016). Professional Identity – Formation of Lawyers. *The Practice*, March/April, pp 1-17

Schleef, D.J. (2006). *Managing elites: professional socialization in law and business schools*. Rowman and Littlefield. (excerpt).

**October 2**                        **Week 4: Careers**

Nelson, R.L., Dinovitzer, R., Garth, B.G., Sterling, J.S., Wilkins, D.B., Dawe, M., & Michelson, E. (2023). *The Making of Lawyers' Careers*. University of Chicago Press. Excerpts.

**October 9**                        **Week 5: No Class; complete critical review paper**

**October 16**                      **READING WEEK**

**October 23**                      **Week 6: Inequalities in Professions Explored 1**

Friedman, S., Laurison, D. & Miles, A. (2015). Breaking the 'Class' Ceiling? Social Mobility into Britain's Elite Occupations. *The Sociological Review*. 63(2), 259-289.

Ashley, L. & Empson, L. (2016). Understanding social exclusion in elite professional service firms: field level dynamics and the 'professional project'. *Work, employment and society*, 31(2), 211-229.

Ballakrishnen, S. (2019). Intentional Invisibility: Professional Women and the Navigation of Workplace Constraints. *Sociological Perspectives* 62(1): 23-41.

**October 30**                      **Week 7: Inequalities in Professions Explored 2**

Marom, L. (2018). Under the cloak of professionalism: covert racism in teacher education. *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 22(3), 319-337. Doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2018.1468748

Ballakrishnen, S.S. (2023). Rethinking Inclusion: Ideal Minorities, Inclusion Cultures, and Identity Capitals in the Legal Profession. *Law & Social Inquiry*, 48(4), 1157-1180. Doi:10.1017/lsi.2022.96

Beagan, B.L., Bizzeth, S.R., Sibbald, K.R., Etowa, J.B. (2024). Epistemic racism in the health professions: A qualitative study with Black women in Canada. *Health*, 28(2), 203-215. Doi: 10.1177/1363459322114160

**November 6**                      **Week 8: Knowledge, Expertise & the Crisis of Expertise**

Eyal, G. (2019) *The Crisis of Expertise*. Polity Press (excerpts).

**November 13**                      **Week 9: Workplace Change & precarious work**

Allan, SM, Faulconbridge, JR and Thomas, P. (2019). The fearful and anxious professional: partner experiences of working in the financialized professional services firm. *Work, Employment and Society* 33(1), 112-130.

Siebert, S. (2018). Eroding 'Respectability': Deprofessionalization through organizational spaces. *Work, Employment and Society* 32(2), 330-347.

Leicht, K. and Fennell, M. (2023) *Crisis in the Professions*. Routledge (excerpts)

**November 20**                      **Week 10: Technological Change**

Faulconbridge, J., Sarwar, A., Spring, M. (2023) How Professionals Adapt to Artificial Intelligence: The Role of Intertwined Boundary Work. *Journal of Management Studies*, doi.10.1111/joms.12936

Chiarello, E. (2023). Trojan Horse Technologies: Smuggling Criminal-Legal Logics into Healthcare Practice. *American Review of Sociology* 88(6): <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312242312094>

**November 27**                      **Week 11: Professional Misconduct**

Adams, T.L. (2020). 'This Happens All the Time': Organizations, Rationalization and Ethical Dilemmas in Engineering. *Work, Employment & Society* 34(6), 985-1003. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017020902968>

Dinovitzer, R., Gunz, H, and Gunz, S. (2014). Unpacking client capture: evidence from corporate law firms. *Journal of Professions and Organization* 1(2), 90-117.

**December 4**                      **Week 12: Mental Health**

Wallace, J.E. (2010). Mental health and stigma in the medical profession. *Health* 16(1), 3-18.

Stelnicki, A.M et al. (2020). Associations between burnout and mental disorder symptoms among nurses in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research* (Dec), pp10: DOI:10.1177/0844562120974194

Cech, E.A. & Trimble O'Connor, L. (2017). 'Like second-hand smoke': the toxic effect of workplace flexibility bias for workers' health. *Community, Work & Family* 20(5), 543-572.