



**The University of Western Ontario
Department of Sociology**

SOCIOLOGY 1027A-001

**Life is Not Always Fair
Fall 2026**

In-Person

Instructor: Robert Nonomura

Email: rnonomur@uwo.ca

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

Course Description:

This introductory course challenges commonly held assumptions about individual success, talent and merit. Students will be introduced to underlying patterns and important debates about the nature of power and inequality, and how they shape issues such as work, family, education, the economy, and the pursuit of justice.

Pre-requisite(s): None

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This 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 1020, Sociology 1020W/X, Sociology 1021E.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Apply a social scientific perspective in explaining and examining social inequalities across institutions such as education, health, and employment.
- Recognize similarities and differences between sociological perspectives and the perspectives of other academic and non-academic ways of knowing.
- Evaluate sociological and individual explanations for patterns of inequality in society.
- Interpret the results of sociological studies conducted using qualitative and quantitative research methods.

- Apply multiple social theoretical perspectives to explain the causes and consequences of social change.

Course Material:

The required textbook for this course is:

Corrigall-Brown, Catherine. 2023. *Imagining Sociology: An Introduction with Readings*. **Third Edition**. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

The book is available for purchase in [hard copy](#) (\$134.65) or [ebook rental](#) (\$58.00) formats through the bookstore.

Other reading assignments may consist of an assigned course text journal articles, book chapters, and knowledge mobilization resources. Links to PDFs, websites, and library resources will be provided via Brightspace.

Students will also use the Perusall platform for an optional (bonus!) exercise on Week 11. Access links to this software are available through Brightspace.

Communication:

Students are responsible for checking the course [OWL Brightspace](#) site on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students enrolled in the course.

Please refer to the Week 1 lecture slides for guidelines on email correspondence. In particular, ensure that course-related messages contain our course code (Soc 1027) in the subject heading.

Course Schedule and Readings:

The reading list and weekly schedule are available on the course OWL Brightspace site.

Method of Evaluation:

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

I recognize that students may be enrolling in this course with various long-term objectives, with different external responsibilities, and with diverse learning styles. In the interest of supporting

students' agency, equity, and success, this course offers a choice between two evaluation "tracks" that you can choose.

Option A: Default Test-Based Track

Midterm (40%)

Final Exam (50%)

In-Class Applied Learning Exercise (10%)

Option B: Applied Research Track

Midterm (33%)

Final Exam (42%)

In-Class Applied Learning Exercise (10%)

Sociological Inquiry Project (15%)

In essence, everybody writes the exams and participates in the in-class activities; the choice lies in whether a student wishes to distribute some of the grade to an additional guided research project.

By default, students will be graded on the Test-Based Track (Option A). To opt in to the Applied Research Track (Option 2), students must complete all three components of the Sociological Inquiry Project (see below).

Information and course policies on all components of the course grade are summarized below. Further details about these assessments will be provided in class on Week 1.

Midterm Exam

The Midterm Exam will be administered **during class time on November 4. The exam location will be announced in class and on Brightspace.** The test will consist of multiple-choice questions. All course materials covered prior to the midterm will be eligible for testing.

Students will be expected to arrive on time for the exam. Students who arrive later than 30 minutes past the start of the Midterm will not be admitted into the examination room. Students will not be permitted to leave the exam room until 30 minutes has elapsed and attendance has been taken.

Use of electronic devices and other written aids (notes, outlines, etc.) will not be permitted during the examination, unless otherwise stated.

Instructors are permitted to designate one assessment per course per term as requiring supporting documentation to receive academic consideration. For this course the November 4 Midterm has been designated as requiring supporting documentation.

Accommodations for the make-up exam date will be provided only with approval from an Academic Counsellor. Students with an approved absence from the Midterm will be required to write a makeup exam during the departmental Midterm make-up midterm exam period (location and date TBD). The 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. If an approved accommodation extends beyond the designated make-up dates, either an alternate date or a re-weighting of the Midterm grade to the Final Exam will be determined at the discretion of the course professor.

Final Exam

The Final Exam will be administered during the **Final Exam Period (location TBD)**. The exam will consist of multiple-choice questions.

As with the Midterm, use of electronic devices and other written aids (notes, outlines, etc.) will not be permitted during the examination unless otherwise stated. Students with an approved accommodations for the final exam will be required to write a makeup exam during the departmental Final Exam make-up period (Location TBA). The 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.

Note: 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. *This applies to quizzes, the midterm, and the final exam.*

Applied Learning Exercise

During class on Weeks 2–6 and 8–12, students will participate in small group discussions relating to the week's topic. I will pose a critical analysis question that invites students to explore real-world connections to core course concepts.

Students will discuss the question in groups of 3–5. A group representative will upload the group's conclusions in a written response (along with the names and emails of group members) to Gradescope. The submissions are due by 4:30pm on the day of class and will be marked out of 3. This assignment uses a flexible grading scheme: the mark for this course component will be based on the student's top 8 scores earned throughout the term.

It is each student's responsibility to ensure that the group's work is submitted and credited. All group members should obtain their group representative's name and contact information *each week* so that I or a TA can look up the submission if there are any record-keeping issues. Since this assignment provides flexibility for students who may miss class for health, compassionate, or extra-curricular reasons, there are no opportunities for "make-up" submissions. Exceptions will be made only for extenuating circumstances in which Academic Accommodation has been

provided. *If you require an extended absence (two or more weeks) on medical, religious, or compassionate grounds, consult with me ASAP so we can discuss a fair solution for your grade.*

Note: These assignments are designed to promote *in-class* discussion. Only students present for the week's activity are eligible for the grade. Submitting work for an activity you were not actually present for, and/or submitting the name of a classmate who was not in attendance, is an academic offence under the Senate's [Scholastic Discipline for Undergraduate Students](#), "3. *Submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials.*" Students found to have committed this offense will receive a 30% deduction from the overall assignment grade for their first offence, an *additional* 50% deduction for a second offence, and an official report for Scholastic Discipline submitted to the Department Chair for any further offences.

Sociological Inquiry Project

Students who choose the "Applied Research Track" (Option B) will complete a guided series of short writing and research assignments. Below are the three "parts" comprising this project. Full instructional details and assignment rubrics are available on Brightspace.

Part 1: A 1-page personal reflection on the factors motivating your interests in the course topic and subject matter: social inequality. (Pass/Resubmit format; Due Sept. 21)

This assignment provides an entry point into our course topic by asking you to write a critical reflection discussing two societal issues that interest or concern you. The Pass/Resubmit format prioritizes open-ended intellectual risk taking over rule-following. As long as you do your best, you'll probably get a "Pass" on the first submission. And even if you don't, you will have one opportunity to resubmit it. Resubmissions will be due within 7 days of receiving instructor feedback.

Part 2: A 1–2-page application of sociological concepts to a subject of interdisciplinary concern. (40% of project grade; Due Oct. 9)

Students will examine an issue of interest that bridges Soc 1027A/B and another course they are currently taking. You will write a critical analysis of how the topic might be addressed sociologically, and you will pose two (2) sociological research questions that can guide the next part of the project.

Part 3: A 2–3-page review of scholarly literature investigating a research question on your chosen topic. (60% of project grade; Due Nov. 20)

This is the capstone component of the Sociological Inquiry Project. In this assignment, you will independently investigate scholarly literature on an issue of social inequality that interests you, and then you will report the findings of your investigation.

Late Submissions: A 48-hour grace period will be in effect to accommodate minor logistical problems. After that, late Part 1 assignments will be treated as "Resubmissions," and late Part 2 and Part 3 assignments will be deducted 5% per day from the original deadline. Assignments will not be accepted 7 days past the original deadline without official academic accommodation.

Notes and Policies on the Applied Research Track Opt-In: By default, students will be graded on the Test-Based Track (Option A). To opt in to the Applied Research Track (Option B), students must complete all three components of the Sociological Inquiry Project. This means:

- The project is not a “bonus” or a “grade boosting” assignment—it is a learning and assessment tool for students who wish to incorporate a written component in the course grade.
- Students cannot retroactively opt in to the Applied Research Track simply to compensate for a poor performance on the Midterm. The Part 1 and Part 2 deadlines will have already passed.
- By submitting Part 3, students effectively complete the project and opt in to the Applied Research Track. Students will be bound to this grade weight configuration and may not revert back to the Test-Based Track.
- If you start the project and do ok on Parts 1 and 2 but then do *amazing* on the Midterm, you’re not obligated to do Part 3. You could strategically choose to stay on the Test-Based Track by just not completing Part 3.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):

The faculty has drafted the following statement to appear on Course Outlines:

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.

To avoid confusion regarding interpretation of this policy, the following course-specific standards will be enforced:

- Use of AI-generated text in assessments (including Applied Learning activities and Sociological Inquiry Projects) is not permitted under any circumstances.
- Use of grammar and spellcheck programs like Grammarly are permitted for basic copyediting purposes only.
- The above statement about “information gathering and preliminary research purposes” applies to general inquiry only. Compilation of bibliographic sources and supporting evidence for the Sociological Inquiry Project should be conducted according to guidance provided in the course and without the use of AI tools.
- You may use library resources or AI tools to assist in formatting the References section of your work to ASA or APA style guidelines; however, all in-text citations—*especially page number references*—should be done by you. You are responsible for cross-checking the accuracy and completeness of any references you cite in your work (as well as links and DOIs).
- Students should be aware of the propensity of generative AI to produce “hallucinations” such as fabricated information and sources. Fabricating evidence in any course assignment constitutes a form of research falsification and will be subject to investigation for academic misconduct, per Senate policy. I reserve the right to request copies or direct links to any materials cited in the assignments you submit.
- If you think you have a justified purpose for incorporating AI-generated material in your submissions, I’m open to making reasonable accommodations, but you must consult with me first.

Electronic Devices:

Use of electronic devices is permitted in class, but notifications and ringers should be turned off.

Per university policy, recording class proceedings is prohibited without special permission. This includes use of AI summarization or transcription software. If you have accessibility reasons for using audio recording technologies, I am happy to work with you to find an appropriate solution, but please consult with me first.



Department of Sociology
Effective September 1, 2026.

Academic Policies

Scholastic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the [Scholastic Offences](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf) Policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.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 the 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 Western University and 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.

Prior to any examination, students must turn their cellphones off and store them in their bags/coat at the front of the room. The use (or possession) of cellphones or other communications technologies during examinations is strictly prohibited. Those caught using a cell phone or other communication technologies, or even the physical possession of these technologies during an examination, will result in a zero on the examination in question. Similarly, the use (or possession) of these technologies during examination breaks (bathroom breaks during an exam) will also result in a zero. Intent does not matter. Forgetting to put away your cellphone or other communication technologies, whether during the examination or on examination breaks (bathroom breaks), are not justifications. It will result in a zero on the examination in question. In sum, your cellphones should never be seen or heard during an examination and should always be stored in your bags/coats at the front of the room.

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.

Code of Student Conduct: Every student is expected to comply with the provisions of the Code of Student Conduct. Sanctions for non-compliance range from a warning or reprimand to expulsion from the University. It is the responsibility of every student to read the Code and familiarize themselves with its contents. The Code is available at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/code_of_conduct.pdf.

Student Responsibility: Students in a degree program must select courses in accordance with the published requirements. Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded. Students must ensure course prerequisites have been completed successfully or special permission from the Dean is obtained. Students who fail to do so will be removed from the course without adjustments to fees. The decision may not be appealed.

Student Responsibility for Course Selection:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/academic_counselling.pdf

Registration and Progression:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/registration_progression.pdf

Graduation Requirements:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/graduation.pdf

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 regularly scheduled course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request using the Student Absence Portal (SAP) https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html. 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 scheduled 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. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness must include the completed Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical_certificate.pdf or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner. Students must request academic consideration as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

Procedure on makeup assessments for Social Science students and for courses offered by the Faculty of Social Science (Effective September 1, 2026):

If academic consideration is granted, students should consult the course outline for information regarding how the missed assessment will be addressed and follow any instructions provided by the instructor. At the instructor's discretion, the weight of a missed test/quiz or mid-term may be transferred to another assessment in the course, including the final exam, rather than requiring a makeup assessment. Reweighting is not available for missed final exams.

Students are entitled to **one makeup assessment opportunity** for a missed test/quiz, mid-term, or final exam supported by approved academic consideration. **No additional makeup opportunities will be provided.** Makeup assessments represent the final opportunity to complete a missed course assessment. The course instructor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup test/exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test/exam will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test/exam.

What happens if I miss a makeup assessment as a Social Science student or in a course offered by the Faculty of Social Science?

Students who miss a makeup assessment are not eligible for an additional makeup opportunity. Depending on their circumstances, they may:

1. Remain enrolled in the course and accept a grade of zero on the missed makeup assessment. Students should consult the course outline and calculate whether they can still achieve a passing grade in the course.
2. Withdraw from the course through [Student Center](#) before the [published drop deadline](#). A course dropped before the deadline will result in a withdrawal (WDN) without academic penalty. Part-time students should consult the Registrar's Office [refund schedule](#) to determine whether a tuition refund is available. Students enrolled full-time in 4.0-5.0 courses are generally not eligible for tuition refunds when a course is dropped.
3. If the published drop deadline has passed and the missed makeup assessment is supported by appropriate documentation, students may submit their documentation through the [Student Absence Portal](#) to request a **WDN (withdrawal without academic penalty)**. Approval is not automatic and remains subject to Faculty review. Requests for a second makeup assessment will not be considered.

Students are encouraged to carefully consider their ability to complete a makeup assessment as scheduled, as no further opportunities to complete the missed work will be available.

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 Advising Office.

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.

Guidelines for Grades/Marks: The Department of Sociology has grade distribution guidelines that all instructors are expected to follow. Generally, and with few exceptions, this means that the number of A's in a course cannot exceed the number of B's, and class means are expected to fall within a prescribed percentage range. This means that your final grade depends on your ranking relative to your peers. Courses with grades falling outside this range may be adjusted, up or down. These guidelines do not prohibit a student achieving 95% or higher in all their courses, but it does mean that an entire course cannot be made up of students receiving 95%. This policy combats grade inflation, contributing to higher standards, and ensuring uniformity across all courses of the same level. Motivated and hard-working students receive grades well above the course averages. The use of grade guidelines, including any adjustments of grades, either up or down for this purpose, cannot be used as the basis of an appeal.

Sociology 1000-Level

A's not to exceed B's

Means in the range of 68-72%

Sociology 2000-Level

A's not to exceed B's

Means in the range of 70-75%

Sociology 3000-Level

Means in the range of 73-80%

Sociology 4000-Level

Means in the range of 78-82%

Support Services:

- **Office of the Registrar Services** <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>
- **Faculty Academic Advising** - Please visit your Home Faculty Academic advising webpage for information regarding adding/dropping courses, important dates, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters
https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html .
- **USC services** – information available regarding student health/dental plan, LTC bus pass, food support services, Peer support Centre etc <http://westernusc.ca/services/> .
- **Mental health** – Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Mental Health@Western](#) <https://www.uwo.ca/health/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

- **Health & Wellness Services** – Registered part-time and full-time students can book a physical health appointment at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/index.html>.
- **Accessible Education** provides support and services to students with disabilities at Western, in all programs and faculties. Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing.
- **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 or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experience GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts on the Wellness and Wellbeing website <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/index.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.
- **Western Libraries** – Visit the many library locations on campus. Western Libraries provide access to material in physical and digital formats <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/catalogue/index.html>. Research support is also available <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/research/index.html>.
- **Writing Support Centre** – Online writing resources, writing support and writing modules are available to undergraduate students <https://writing.uwo.ca/undergrads/>.
- **Bookstore:** Search for Textbook/course material availability and cost <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/course-materials-textbooks/course-materials-and-textbooks>.