



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

SOCIOLOGY 3260A - 001
Sociology of Law
Fall 2026

Delivery Method - In-Person

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Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the broad-ranging field of law and society. Our focus is to challenge the way people ordinarily understand law by thinking about it outside the box of legal logic. This course introduces different ways of thinking about law as a social phenomenon, as well as some of the main themes and debates that characterize the field of law and society. Themes include law and social control, law and culture, law and knowledge, law and governance, law and inequality, legal pluralism, law in action, and law and social change. Students will consider how law gains meaning and authority from society, and the extent to which it shapes society through its regulatory force.

Pre-requisite(s)

1.0 from Sociology 1020, 1021E, 1025A/B, 1026F/G, 1027A/B.

Unless you have either the prerequisites 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)

The former Sociology 260F/G and Sociology 2260A/B.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Distinguish personal opinion from critical socio-legal analysis.
- Compare and contrast different ways of thinking about the relationship between law and society.
- Describe and challenge the ideal image of law by examining the everyday practices and experiences of law.
- Identify social forces that influence law and ways in which law influences social life.
- Identify, define, and apply foundational concepts in law and society to contemporary issues.
- Analyze current events through a socio-legal lens and connect news about law to course concepts and evidence.
- Develop the conceptual foundation needed for advanced study in Sociology of Law 4455.

Course Material

Required textbook: Calavita, Kitty. 2016. Invitation to Law & Society: An Introduction to the Study of Real Law. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Additional required readings will be provided through OWL Brightspace or Western Libraries Course Readings. Students should consult the Dellelce Family Bookstore course-materials listing for current textbook formats and pricing.

Communication

Students are responsible for reviewing 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.

Course announcements may also be sent to students' Western email accounts. Email should include a clear subject line, an appropriate salutation, the student's name, and the course number. Questions about course content that would benefit the class should normally be raised during class. Students are welcome to email to arrange an appointment or regarding matters that require individual attention.

Course Schedule and Readings

The reading list and weekly schedule are available on the course OWL Brightspace site. A separate Course Schedule and Readings document identifies weekly topics, required readings, the eight scheduled in-class assignments, the midterm date, Reading Week, and the October 6 Law in the News activity.

Method of Evaluation

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

Assessment	Weight	Date
In-Class Assignments - best 6 of 8	40%	Scheduled dates in Course Schedule
Midterm Exam	25%	November 3, 2026
Final Exam	35%	TBA - Registrar exam period

1. In-Class Assignments - 40%

Eight graded in-class assignments are scheduled during the term. Only the highest six assignment grades will count toward the final course grade. Together, the six counted assignments are worth 40% of the course grade. Assignment dates are identified in the Course Schedule and Readings document.

The assignments are designed to move beyond memorizing course material. Students will work with concepts, readings, current events, short cases, policies, media, or other socio-legal problems and apply the course material to them. Activities may involve short analytical writing, problem solving, comparison, interpretation, or other individual and collaborative work. Unless otherwise indicated, students will work in groups of approximately 4-5 and submit one response per group by the end of class.

Students must attend the class and participate in the activity to receive credit. Because two of the eight assignments are automatically excluded from the calculation of the final grade, these exclusions provide built-in flexibility for occasional absences. Academic consideration will not normally be granted for a missed in-class assignment. If more than two assignments are missed, a grade of zero will be recorded for each additional missed assignment unless academic consideration is required under University policy.

Assignments will be assessed primarily on accurate use of course material, quality of analysis, application of concepts and evidence, and clarity. Point-form answers may be permitted when the assignment instructions specifically call for them; otherwise, responses should be written clearly in complete sentences.

Law in the News

A recurring goal of the course is to learn to recognize law and society outside the classroom. Current news stories will periodically be used to connect course concepts to contemporary events. For October 6, when there is no in-person class, each student will locate one current, credible news article involving law and bring the article or a working link to class on October 20. There is no submission and no grade attached to finding the article itself. The articles will be used as the basis for the October 20 in-class assignment.

Students should look beyond stories that are simply about courts or legislation. Appropriate stories may involve policing, housing, immigration, education, healthcare, work, protest, Indigenous governance, discrimination, municipal regulation, surveillance, poverty, family regulation, or other settings in which law operates. Students should be prepared to consider where law appears in the story, what social relationships or inequalities are connected to it, and what the story reveals about how law operates in practice.

2. Midterm Exam - 25%

The midterm exam will be held in person during class on November 3, 2026. The exam will assess material covered before the midterm, including lectures, required readings, class discussions, videos, and in-class activities. The format may include multiple-choice, true/false, matching, concept identification, and short-answer/application questions. No electronic devices or unauthorized aids will be permitted.

Instructors are permitted to designate one assessment per course per term as requiring supporting documentation to receive academic consideration. For this course, the Midterm Exam on November 3, 2026 has been designated as requiring supporting documentation. Students with an approved absence will be required to write a makeup exam. The makeup exam may differ in format and duration from the original exam.

3. Final Exam - 35%

TBA. Scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during the December 11-22, 2026 final examination period. The final exam will be administered in person and may assess material from across the course, including lectures, required readings, discussions, videos, and in-class activities. The format may include multiple-choice, true/false, matching, concept identification, and short-answer/application questions. No electronic devices or unauthorized aids will be permitted.

Supporting documentation is required for academic consideration for a Registrar-scheduled final examination; students with approved absences will write a makeup exam.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI tools may be used for information gathering and preliminary research when explicitly permitted by the instructor. Students remain responsible for critically evaluating any information produced by AI and for verifying information against credible sources. AI may not be used to generate, rewrite, or complete responses submitted for graded in-class assignments, tests, or examinations unless the instructor explicitly authorizes its use for a particular activity. Submitted work must reflect the student's or group's own analysis and writing. Any permitted use of AI must follow the instructions for the specific assessment and University academic-integrity requirements.

Electronic Devices

Laptops and tablets may be used in class for course-related purposes. Cell phones should be silenced and put away unless their use is requested for a class activity. Electronic devices and unauthorized aids are not permitted during the midterm or final examination.

Course Policies and Expectations

The course combines lectures, readings, discussion, current events, multimedia, and collaborative application. Students are expected to:

- Attend class regularly and arrive prepared to participate.
- Complete required readings before the class in which they are discussed.
- Participate actively and respectfully in discussion and group work.
- Take notes on course material and identify questions as they arise.
- Retain copies of submitted work and relevant rough work until final grades are recorded.
- Follow the specific instructions and academic-integrity expectations for each assessment.

Academic Policies

University and Faculty academic policies, including policies on academic consideration, academic integrity, accessibility, and student support, are provided in the separate Academic Policies document posted on OWL Brightspace.



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>.