



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

**SOCIOLOGY 3324F – 200
Social Inequality over the Life Course
Fall 2026**

Delivery Method – Blended

Instructor: Dr. Andrea Willson

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

Course Description:

This course focuses on social factors that affect social inequality in later life from a life course perspective. A life course perspective emphasizes the intersections of individual lives, social change, and social structure. It calls attention to the patterns and trajectories based on gender, race-ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation that span across human lives, and are shaped by broader social structure and historical time.

Pre-requisite(s): Prerequisite(s): 1.0 from: Sociology 1020, Sociology 1021E, Sociology 1025A/B, Sociology 1026F/G, Sociology 1027A/B. Registration in third year or above.

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): None

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

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

- *Understand and explain how continuity and change in human lives affect social inequality.
- *Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts, strategies, and empirical examples from life course analysis related to social inequality.
- *Write a paper that clearly utilizes class concepts and makes an evidence-based, sociological argument to discuss social inequality from a life course perspective.

Course Material:

There is no textbook for this course; all required readings are available electronically in our OWL Brightspace. Technical requirements for the course: stable internet connection, computer with working microphone and webcam.

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. Students will also receive course information updates to their Western email address.

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.

Midterm	30%	October 27, 9:30 a.m. LOCATION: IN CLASSROOM
Final paper	35%	Due December 1, 11:59 p.m.
Final exam	35%	TBA. Scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during the final exam period

Midterm

The midterm exam will consist of multiple-choice and short essay questions covering the lectures, films, and reading assignments. You are responsible for all the material in the assigned readings even if this material is not covered in class. The exam will be administered **IN THE CLASSROOM** and is 2 hours in length. No aids or electronic devices will be allowed during the exam. 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.

*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 has been designated as requiring supporting documentation. Students missing the exam for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request using the [Student Absence Portal \(SAP\)](#). Once the request and supporting documentation have been received and reviewed, appropriate academic consideration, if granted, shall be determined by the instructor in consultation with the academic advisor. Students with academic consideration for an examination will either be provided a make-up examination date or will have their grade re-weighted, at Professor Willson's discretion.

Final Exam

The final exam will consist of multiple-choice questions covering the lectures, films, and reading assignments. You are responsible for all the material in the assigned readings even if this material is not covered in class. The final exam covers the material covered after the midterm and is NOT cumulative. The exam will be administered **IN A CLASSROOM** and is 2 hours in length. No aids or electronic devices will be allowed during the exam. 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.

* Final exams **always** require supporting documentation. Requesting academic accommodation follows the same procedure as the midterm, described above. Students with academic consideration for an examination will either be provided a make-up examination date or will have their grade re-weighted at Professor Willson's discretion.

Final Paper

This assignment involves conducting an in-depth interview and applying the sociological tools and knowledge that you gain in this course to understand the intersection of individual biography, social change, and social structure in an individual's life. Minimum word count: 2,500 words. Detailed instructions will be provided in class and posted in our OWL Brightspace course site. Due December 1, 11:59 p.m. The assignment will be submitted in the OWL Brightspace course site, including Turnitin.com for plagiarism checking.

*The submission deadline for this assessment includes flexibility in the form of 3 grace days. Students are expected to submit the assignment by the due date of December 1, 11:59 p.m. Should illness or extenuating circumstances arise, or if students have accommodation for flexible deadlines through Accessible Education, students are permitted to submit their assignment up to 72 hours past the due date without academic penalty. Should students submit their assignment beyond 72 hours past the due date, a late penalty of 5% per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade. Assignments submitted after the grace period will receive no written feedback. The instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments which are submitted following the end of the period of flexibility.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):

Students are expected to write their essays in their own words. Students are **not permitted to include AI generated text in their essays and present it as their own writing.** In-text citations are needed to indicate the source of any information or statements that are not common knowledge. Reference lists need to be complete and accurate, and the referenced items need to be locatable. Written assignments must reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work.

Emerging research suggests that AI is reshaping our ability to think and the way we process information and make decisions, often diminishing our reliance on our own cognitive abilities. In addition, the use of AI introduces an increased risk of misinformation, including errors,

outdated information, or biased responses, as well as reduced diversity in thought that risks overlooking marginalized voices.

- Retain control of your work and develop your critical thinking skills, which are a key part of a university education. Do not use AI as a crutch or as an outsourcing of your brain.
- Critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments and perspectives.
- Appropriately attribute all sources of information to avoid plagiarism.
- Written assignments should reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work.

Electronic Devices:

Electronic devices are not permitted during examinations. This includes smart watches.

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.

2026-2027



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>.