



The University of Western Ontario
Department of Sociology
SOCIOLOGY 4472G
Social Determinants of Health
Winter 2026

In-Person

Instructor: Dr. Rachelle Miele
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*This is a DRAFT copy only. Please see the course site for the **final** version.*

Course Description:

There are marked inequalities in health by socioeconomic class, race/ethnicity, and immigration experiences. The goal of this course is to understand the patterns of inequality, identify the determinants and consequences of health inequality, and envision policy interventions that can diminish health inequalities across the above-mentioned subpopulations.

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

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 4486F/G taught in 2020/2021.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

Upon the completion of this course, you will:

- Have a strong understanding of the main issues and debates related to the health inequalities.
- Critically examine and discuss the relationship between social institutions, social forces, and inequalities in health
- Understand and critically discuss the role of social class, race, gender, sexuality, and disability in health and health inequality.
- Demonstrate an ability to present and discuss ideas clearly through effective oral communication.
- Make connections between readings and pose effective questions.
- Improve your communication, writing, and analytic skills through course work.

Course Material:

Assigned academic journal articles (see weekly schedule) are available for download through the library or on OWL. There are no required texts to be purchased.

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.

Course Schedule and Readings:

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

Method of Evaluation:

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

Class Engagement (Check in: Feb 10; Final: Apr 7): 15%

Weekly Reflections: 20%

Discussion Leader: 25%

Research Paper Proposal (March 3rd at 4:30 pm): 10%

Research Paper (April 9th at 11:59 pm): 30%

Class Engagement (Self-Assessed) (15%) – Check in: Feb 10; Final: Apr 7

This course is a seminar course. Each week, you will have the opportunity to discuss the topic at hand, ask questions, and bring in your own knowledge to our class. Engagement will be evaluated based on the frequency and quality of your participation. Mid-semester and at the end of the course, you will be asked to reflect on your engagement in the course. Your professor will review your self-assessment and assign a grade.

Weekly Reflections (20%)

Each week, you will submit a brief written reflection on the assigned readings in 1.5-2 pages double spaced. The focus of this assignment is on reflecting on the topic, using your critical thinking skills, and applying the knowledge you have gained from the course. The reflections are not about summarizing the articles. You are not required to submit a weekly reflection the week you present and you will have to complete 10 for the entire term (2% \times 10). Reflections are due on OWL at 9 am on the day of class – due dates for this assignment are firm because of the built in assignment flexibility and because reflections are connected to weekly class discussions. A rubric and detailed instructions for this assignment is posted on OWL.

Discussion Leader (25%)

During the first week of class, you will sign up to lead class discussion for a given week on one of the weekly readings. Leaders will present on the course readings and lead the class discussion with prepared discussion questions. You are expected to bring in outside materials and make your presentation engaging. Students are expected to prepare a 30-minute presentation with discussion questions and submit their presentation before class on OWL. A rubric and detailed instructions for this assignment is posted on OWL.

Note: Instructors are permitted to designate one assessment per course per term as requiring documentation to receive academic consideration. The discussion leader assessment has been

designated as being central to the evaluation of learning outcomes in this course. An absence will also impact the learning of other students, and because of the nature of the course schedule, this assessment cannot be rescheduled. Accordingly, students must provide documentation for any absence from this evaluation. If you miss this evaluation, you will need to present to the instructor at a time scheduled outside of the class. Students must not provide medical or compassionate documentation to the instructor.

Research Paper Proposal (10%) – March 3 at 4:30 pm

Your final assignment is your opportunity to explore a topic you are interested in relation to health inequalities. In 2-3 pages double spaced, outline your final assignment and include a reference page (minimum of five peer-reviewed academic sources). The purpose of the proposal is for you to receive feedback and guidance before starting your project. A rubric and detailed instructions for this assignment is posted on OWL.

Research Paper (30%) – April 9 at 11:59 pm

Your final paper should be between 3000-3500 words, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font with at least 8 peer-reviewed academic sources (12-15 pages not including reference list or cover page). The assignment should be APA format and submitted on OWL. Your paper will be put through TurnItIn.com. A rubric and detailed instructions for this assignment is posted on OWL.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):

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

Electronic Devices:

Use of electronic devices is permitted in class, but notifications should be turned off and devices should also be used when necessary for the course activity. Per university policy, recording in-class activities is prohibited without permission from the course professor.

Academic 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 website: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

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 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.

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, in a manner consistent with the course outline. Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam, unless otherwise specified in the course outline. The course instructor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup text/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.

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.

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 https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf. 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 or University approved emergency 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.

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

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, that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and

that they are aware of any antirequisite course(s) they may have taken. Students must familiarize themselves with the Student Responsibility for Course Selection policy https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/academic_counselling.pdf and the Registration and Progression policy https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/registration_progression.pdf. Students are responsible for the successful completion of the Graduation Requirements for their degree program https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/graduation.pdf.

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](#) offers information about student the health/dental plan, 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 <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> 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>. Additional on-campus services are also available <https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/services/index.html>.

[Accessible Education](#) provides supports 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 at the following website: http://uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

[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 available <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/research/index.html>.

[Writing support](#) – Online writing resources, writing support and writing modules are available <https://writing.uwo.ca/undergrads/>

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