



**Western University**  
**SOCIOLOGY 2140-650**  
**SOCIAL PROBLEMS**  
**Summer 2016**

**Instructor: Cathy Thorpe**

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**Course Description:**

This course is designed to familiarize students with the issues and theories in the sociological study of social problems, with particular attention to contemporary Canadian society.

***Prerequisite(s) and Antirequisite(s):***

None

**Learning Outcomes:**

- Understand the major sociological theories and research used to understand social problems
- Understand that various inequalities based on age, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation exist
- Appreciate the various social issues confronting Canadians and the global community
- Understand the strategies being utilized to reduce inequalities in social problems

**Required Text:**

Available at the Bookstore: Holmes, Mooney, Knox, Schacht, *Understanding Social Problems* (Fifth Canadian Edition), 2016, Toronto: Nelson.

## **Method of Evaluation:**

### ***Evaluation Breakdown:***

Course grades will be determined on the basis of two formal discussion questions, a mid-term, a participation grade, and a final exam. The following distribution applies:

First formal discussion (submission due)	Week Four	10%
Midterm exam	Week Seven	30%
Second formal discussion (submission due)	Week Ten	10%
Participation	Continuous	15%
Final Exam	August 2 - 5, TBA	<u>35%</u>
		100%

## **Important Policies**

### **Policies for Assignment Deadlines:**

The schedule on the Owl site for the course will show the specific due dates for graded material.

### **Posted Discussion Questions:**

Part of your grade will be based on two separately posted formal discussion questions (each worth 10% of your final grade). These questions will be posted in the Forums section of the course under Formal Discussions. The messages are "threaded" together around an original posting that raises a specific question or subject for discussion. The question will be posted on a specific day (as indicated on the OWL schedule). Once the question is posted, students will have one week to contribute to the discussion. The posting date (the date the instructor posts the discussion question), the closing date and time will be indicated on the OWL schedule). There will be no excuses accepted for late submissions. As everyone has an entire week in which to log on and overcome any technological difficulties that may unexpectedly arise, excuses are not plausible. Students' grades for this portion of the course will not be based solely on posting a response to the discussion (e.g. simply responding to the question). Both grammar and content will be considered. I will be looking for substantive comments in relation to the question (e.g. the student's ability to relate comments to course material as well as reflective ideas on other students' postings). More information as to the precise format of the discussion component will be available on OWL when the question is posted. Standards of "netiquette" will be adhered to. Please see <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/index.html> for details.

## Participation Grade:

As the course Forums section allows everyone to read all of the posted messages, we will also use this forum for class participation. Your grade for class participation will be based on your submissions (with the **exception** of the introductory message and the formal discussion questions) to the Unit Weekly Discussions. You can earn up to 15% of your grade by submitting messages spaced throughout the course related to the course content. For example, these messages can be in response to issues raised in the course notes, or you may wish to share your thoughts or ideas on the readings. You may also want to apply aspects of the course material to the news of the day. In order to facilitate active participation by all, you may not post more than 2 participation comments per week. It is recommended that you participate once a week in order to receive full credit for this component.

Although **not** for credit, you may also use the General Discussion section of Forums to raise any substantive or technical questions you may have. Just create a new topic for these discussions.

Finally, as I hope to be able to encourage a sense of community among students through the use of this form of communication, I will require that all students post an introductory message to the discussion section in the first week of classes (see the Forums area of OWL).

## Technical Support: *Student Problems with OWL...*

- If you are experiencing problems, please contact the ITS Help Desk at (519) 661-3800. For hours and additional contact information please visit [www.uwo.ca/its/helpdesk](http://www.uwo.ca/its/helpdesk) Troubleshooting and help information is available for you in the OWL Documentation Site. To join the site:
  - Log into OWL ([owl.uwo.ca](http://owl.uwo.ca))
  - From My Workspace, select Membership from the left-hand side
  - Click the "Joinable Sites" link
  - Find "OWL Documentation" in the list of Joinable Sites
  - Click the "Join" link
  - Click the "Home" link at the left to refresh the page
  - The site "OWL Documentation" will now be one of your active sites.

## A Note on 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 (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).

## Exams:

Exams will be based on material covered in the on-line course notes and the assigned readings. You are responsible for all material covered. Both the midterm and final exam will be two hours in length. Each of the exams will consist of multiple choice questions and short answer/essay style written questions. The tests and examinations are not cumulative. **Note: Both the midterm test and the final exam will be written in person at one of the designated exam centres.**

In the case of midterm tests, the approval of the Dean is not required when rescheduling term tests. However, to be considered for a make-up, you must notify the instructor **before** the scheduled exam (by e-mail, or phone or in person) **and** you must provide appropriate documentation as soon as possible.

There will be no provision for make-up exams or other work for the purpose of improving grades. Be sure that you note the date of the midterm test and the final exam schedule. No electronic devices are permitted in exams.

### ***Scantron exams:***

You should also be aware that "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."

### **Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness**

[www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation: [http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical\\_accommodation.html](http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html)

### **Accessibility Options:**

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

[www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated\\_exams.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html)

### **Scholastic 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 web site:

[www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **Mental Health**

Students who are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western ([http://uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/](http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/)) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

## **Course Schedule and Readings:**

### **Syllabus and Reading Assignment General Information:**

It is advised that you read the assigned readings prior to accessing the on-line lessons/course notes. The on-line course notes can be thought of as the equivalent of lectures in a traditional setting. As such, they are an important part of the course and it is expected that you will give the course notes the same attention that you would

lectures/classes in the traditional setting. Please check the OWL schedule very carefully, including any changes that are required throughout the term.

<i>Unit -Week ending</i>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Textbook Readings</b>
<b>Unit 1 – May 13</b>	Introduction to the Course and The Study of Social Problems; Research Methodology	Holmes et al., Ch. 1
<b>Unit 2 – May 20</b>	Illness and Health Care	Holmes et al., Ch 2
<b>Unit 3 – May 27</b>	Alcohol and Other Drugs <i>Discussion # 1 question will be posted May 27</i>	Holmes et al., Ch. 3
<b>Unit 4 – June 3</b>	Crime and Violence <i>Discussion # 1 question will be due June 3</i>	Holmes et al., Ch. 4
<b>Unit 5 – June 10</b>	Family Problems	Holmes et al., Ch. 5
<b>Unit 6 – June 17</b>	Youth and Aging	Holmes et al., Ch. 6
<b>Midterm exam</b>	<i>Late June, TBA (worth 30%)</i>	
<b>Unit 7 – June 24</b>	Gender Inequality	Holmes et al., Ch. 7
<b>Unit 8 – July 1</b>	Race and Ethnicity	Holmes et al., Ch. 8
<b>Unit 9 – July 8</b>	Sexualities <i>Discussion # 2 question will be posted July 8</i>	Holmes et al., Ch. 9

**Unit 10 –** Poverty Holmes et al., Ch. 10  
**July 15**  
*Discussion # 2 submission will be due July 15*

**Unit 11 –** Work and Unemployment Holmes et al., Ch. 11  
**July 22**

**Unit 12 –** Environmental Problems Holmes et al., Ch. 13  
**July 29**

*Final Exam –date TBA: August 2 - 5 (worth 35%)*