



## **Western University SOCIOLOGY 9154B**

### **Sociology of Work, Occupations, and Professions Winter 2026**

**Tuesdays 9:30am to 12:30pm**

**DRAFT**

**Professor Sean Waite**

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5212

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#### **Enrollment Restrictions**

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in Sociology, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

#### **Course Description**

Examines the sociology of work, occupations, and professions in Canadian society and elsewhere in the world. Attention will be paid to the structure of work, workers' experiences, as well as inequalities within and across workplaces.

#### **Course Organization**

This graduate seminar consists of class discussions and an end of term mock conference presentation. Each week, there are roughly 4 articles or book chapters assigned. Students will sign up to facilitate discussion on the readings. Typically, this consists of a short (five-minute) summary of their article(s) and a class discussion lasting roughly 25 minutes/article. Non-discussion facilitators will submit weekly summary and reflections. The course culminates with a final term paper submission and a 15-minute "conference-style" presentation.

#### **Learning Objectives**

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

- Synthesize and critically evaluate theoretical arguments and published research from the field of sociology of work
- Critically assess social institutions, social processes, social relations, and various dimensions of social experience from a sociological perspective
- Demonstrate an understanding of results from both quantitative and qualitative research and the competent use of different research methodologies and designs
- Apply sociological theory and methods to understand and interpret social phenomena

- Understand and apply standards of academic integrity and appropriate guidelines and procedures for responsible conduct and presentation of research
- Demonstrate an ability to present and discuss ideas clearly and articulately through effective oral and written communication
- Demonstrate an ability to attend class and engage in scholarly discussion and debate in formal and informal learning environments
- Demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the complexity of knowledge, the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines, and the limitations of one's own work and of the discipline more generally
- Understand and articulate various stakeholders' (employees, employers, organized labour, government, investors/capitalists, community leaders etc.) perspectives on work and employment relations
- Be able to present research findings from your course term paper in a mock conference presentation
- Respectfully engage and respond to ideas, topics, and opinions presented in class which you may not fully agree with or support.

### **Required Text**

Articles or book chapters assigned in the detailed reading list, excluding optional readings.

### **Methods of Evaluation**

Participation and discussion facilitation:	Throughout term	<b>15%</b>
Summaries and reflections:	Throughout term	<b>15%</b>
Proposal	February 24, 2026	<b>10%</b>
In-class conference presentation:	Last day(s) of class	<b>10%</b>
Term paper:	Last day of class	<b>50%</b>

#### *Participation and discussion facilitation*

Students are expected to participate in class discussion by engaging with the authors arguments, their relative merit, strengths and weaknesses, sociological implications, and how their theory, findings or methods contribute to students' own research interests. Attendance and participation are mandatory. There are no alternatives to physical attendance and participation. Students should consider how the big five sociological perspectives (functionalism, Marxist/conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, feminism, and postmodernism) may view a particular issue. It is also important to consider the standpoint of various stakeholders, such as employees, employers, organized labour, governments, capitalists, and community leaders.

The weekly discussion facilitators will be asked to provide a five-minute summary of their article(s) and facilitate class discussion for roughly 25 minutes/article. Students should avoid reading directly off their page during their summary and discussion. A good discussion should feel natural for the presenter and audience.

#### *Summaries and Reflections*

Each week, all students, except for the weekly discussion facilitators, will submit a 3-4-page double-spaced summary and reflection on the articles covered that week. Students are encouraged to critically engage with the readings and consider how the topics/reading can contribute to their own research. Students may also pose questions/topics they would like to raise during class discussion.

#### *Term Paper Options*

Students have two options – an empirical paper or a research paper.

*a) Empirical paper*

I strongly encourage doctoral students to write an empirical term paper using secondary data. [ODESI](#) is a great site for downloading public use Canadian datasets. While I encourage students to challenge themselves with advanced methods, basic descriptive statistics (mean, mode, median) are acceptable. The empirical paper should be formatted like an academic journal article. Empirical papers must include an abstract, introduction, literature review, data and methods section, results, and discussion/conclusion. The purpose of this exercise is to write an original research paper that could be developed into a publishable paper.

*b) Research Paper*

Alternatively, students can write a research paper on any topic related to the sociology of work, employment, or professions. Ideally, students will choose a topic that complements their MRP/thesis/dissertation research. Research papers should be roughly 25 double-spaced pages, excluding reference pages.

*Proposal*

Students will be asked to submit a two-to-three-page research proposal, prior to commencing their research papers. Proposals should demonstrate that you have selected a relevant topic and have started conducting preliminary research. If you are writing an empirical paper, be sure to mention the research questions, data, and methods that will be used.

*Abstract*

To be scheduled as a presenter at the *You better work!* annual conference (more information below), students must submit a term paper title and abstract at least one week before the in-class conference. Abstracts should be no more than 200 words. Helpful information on how to write an abstract can be found [here](#). If a student fails to submit an abstract, they will not be scheduled to present at the conference and receive a zero for this component of the course.

*Conference Presentations*

On the last day(s) of class, we will hold a conference entitled *You better work!* Students will prepare a 15-minute conference presentation and share their research findings with the class.

*Conference presentation peer-review*

Your peers will evaluate your conference presentation and provide me with their feedback and grade. This feedback and the average grade from your peers will be considered when determining your conference presentation mark.

*Submitting your paper and TURNITIN*

All papers must be submitted via email. You must also submit your paper to TURNITIN through OWL. This is done by submitting your paper on OWL in the “assignments” tab.

*Assignment format requirements*

Marks may be deducted if you do not follow these instructions:

Times New Roman font	1-inch (2.54cm) margins on all sides	Papers should be double-spaced.
12-point font size	Pages should be numbered in the right side of the <u>footer</u> starting on	Your full name should appear in the right side of the header.

	the first page of text, excluding the title page.	
All papers need to be submitted through TURNITIN on OWL.	All papers must be submitted via email.	ASA (American Sociological Association) style.

## Communication

- In person during office hours: Tuesdays 2:00pm to 3:00pm. Office hours are on a first-come first-serve basis.
- By telephone: 519-661-2111 x.87689
- By email: [swaite3@uwo.ca](mailto:swaite3@uwo.ca)

I endeavour to respond to emails within three business days. I will not respond to questions where the answer can be found on the course outline. Similarly, I will not respond to questions that require considerable exposition. These questions should be asked in class or during office hours. I only respond to emails sent to [swaite3@uwo.ca](mailto:swaite3@uwo.ca).

Make sure to check the course Brightspace site regularly for course updates, cancellations, and other course-related postings. You are responsible for any emails I send to your Western email account. Please be sure that you can receive and access emails from this account.

## Important Policies

### *Policies for Assignment Deadlines*

There are no late penalties. The consequence for not submitting a proposal or term paper is an incomplete grade for this course.

***If you are absent on your assigned discussion facilitation day, you will not be reassigned. Instead, you will be scheduled to write an in-person handwritten essay on the weekly readings worth 15% of your grade.*** This in-person essay will be roughly 12-15 double-spaced pages. Alternatively, if you are absent on your discussion facilitation day, you can switch your facilitation day with a willing peer.

**Students who miss their conference presentation dates will be assigned a make-up conference date.** Given that this will need to take place outside of class time, faculty, and other graduate students will be invited to hear and peer-review your presentation. Students will receive an incomplete grade on their transcript until they complete the course conference presentation.

### *Statement on 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 Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

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 The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### *Completion of Course Requirements*

Course requirements must be completed by the end of the term in which the course is offered (Fall-December 31; Winter-April 30, Summer-August 31). Only in exceptional circumstances may a student take additional time to complete the course requirements. In such a case, the student must first meet with the Graduate Chair to request permission to carry the incomplete. Medical documentation, where required, will be kept on file in the Sociology graduate program office. More details regarding incompletes are outlined in the Graduate Handbook:

[http://www.sociology.uwo.ca/graduate\\_handbook/course\\_information.html](http://www.sociology.uwo.ca/graduate_handbook/course_information.html)

#### *Standards of Professional Behaviour*

It is the responsibility of all members of the Department of Sociology to adhere to and promote standards of professional behaviour that support an effective learning environment. These include:

- **respect for others** both in and out of the classroom through words and actions (be professional, fair, and respectful in interactions with people on-line and in-person; understand and respect differences among classmates and colleagues; avoid disrupting the learning environment; respect others' expectations of confidentiality and privacy)
- **active engagement in learning** and commitment to quality (being prepared for classes; participating and listening actively to other; using technology and social media appropriately, striving to do your best)
- **personal integrity** (following through on commitments; doing own work)

Students should also be aware of the **UWO Student Code of Conduct** found at

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>

#### *Accessible Education Western (AEW)*

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

#### *Health/Wellness Services*

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.

#### *Statement on 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 experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

[https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

*Textbook and Other Learning Materials*

All course materials can be accessed digitally via the Western University Library at no charge. There are no textbooks assigned.

*Disputed Grades*

Students wishing to dispute the grading of an assignment must write a one-page explanation and justification for having their work re-evaluated.

*Extraordinary Circumstances*

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University or instructor's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.