



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 9177
The Social Context of Racial Inequality
Winter 2025
Mondays 1:30-4:30pm

Draft

Professor: Kate H. Choi

Office Hours: By Appointment

Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5331

Email: kate.choi@uwo.ca

Enrollment Restrictions

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Sociology Program, 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.

Anti-requisite: Sociology 4177

Course Description

A description of the objectives and content of the course, which shall include a statement of what is expected of the student by way of preparation, tests, exercises, essays, laboratory reports, etc., and specific requirements for attendance and participation.

Learning Outcomes

Broad outcomes

- Synthesize and critically evaluate theoretical arguments and published research from a sociological perspective
- Critically assess social institutions, social processes, social relations, and various dimensions of social experience from a sociological perspective
- Analyze, evaluate, and utilize a variety of theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches in Sociology
- Demonstrate an understanding of results from both quantitative and qualitative research and the competent use of different quantitative and/or qualitative research methodologies and designs

Practical outcomes

- Demonstrate an ability to present and discuss ideas clearly, concisely, and articulately through effective oral and written communication
- Demonstrate an understanding of results from both quantitative and qualitative research and the competent use of different quantitative and/or qualitative research methodologies and designs

- Apply sociological perspectives to real-world problems.
- Demonstrate an ability to engage in scholarly discussion and debate in formal and informal learning environments

Course Material(s)

Mandatory course materials

- Bonilla-Silva, E. (November 24, 2021). *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. 6th Edition. Amazon Kindle edition: 41.80. (EBS)
 - Students are welcome to purchase second-hand. Book is also available via the Western library.
- Zuberi, Tukufu and Eduardo Bonilla Silva. (May 2, 2008). *White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. 1st edition. Amazon Kindle Edition: 85.00. **(TZEB)**
 - Students are welcome to purchase second-hand. Book is also available via the Western library.

The mandatory texts are available as a course reserve at the Weldon Library or electronically via Western Library.

All other course materials can be downloaded from jstor.org or scholar.google.com. You can download them from the UWO library; type the journal name, and once you go to the journal type the article name, and log in using your library credentials.

Relevant sites:

- <https://scholar.google.com>
- <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/>
- <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/business/businesseseconomicsnewspapersmagazines.html>

You need a stable internet connection and a computer with a working microphone and/or webcam. Please note that most of the readings are behind a paywall. Western Library has licenses that allow you to access most of the readings free of charge, but to be beneficiary of these licenses, you must access the readings (that are not open access) at Western, via VPN, or via Western Library.

Evaluation Breakdown

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course. I believe that graduate students should have agency in how they are being evaluated. I also believe that the best way to attain equity in the classroom is by offering all students options about (a) how they will be evaluated and (b) how they

will manage their time given their time constraints and at the onset of the class. To offer students agencies in their education program, students can opt for one of two evaluation options.

Option A:

- Class participation (25%)
- Op-ed (25%)
- Policy paper (50%)

Option B:

- Class participation (25%)
- Op-ed (20%)
- Empirical paper (25%)
- Policy paper (30%)

Note: Each assignment is curved to a predetermined and uniform class average. The choice of Option A or Option B will not affect your overall grade.

Grading guidelines

- The Sociology Department has grading guidelines. For a graduate course, the class average is between 83-87%.
- Subject to some exceptions (e.g., exceptionally low grades from a student), I will curve so that the class average falls in the 85-87% range.
- For the student receive a grade in this course,
 - They need to complete one of the following combination of assignments
 - The Policy Paper and Op-ed
 - Policy paper & Op-ed
 - *Policy Paper and Empirical paper* (contingent on proper documentation)
 - *Op-ed and Empirical Paper* (contingent on proper documentation)
 - Attend 8 out of 13 classes.
 - Otherwise, the student will receive an F or an incomplete.

Methods of Evaluation

Op-ed on racial/ethnic inequality

- Date: February 10, 2025, 1:30 pm EST. Grace period: 3 days.
- Word count: 800 words

- Questions:
 - Highlight the problem- what is the pattern of racial/ethnic inequality, why is it important, and which subgroup is being affected?
 - Review past attempts to solve this problem: what are the gains, and what are the blindspots?
 - Propose a solution. Indicate why you believe that they would be effective. What are the short-term and long-term solutions? What are the immediate and broad solutions?
- Material: Detailed description and rubric will be provided 2/3 weeks prior to the due date. For examples, please reference op-eds in the *Conversation*.
- Grades: You will be graded on a curve based on the criterion specified by the rubric.
- Feedback: I am happy to provide general feedback. I will not do line-by-line edits or offer you a guestimate for your grade.
- Submission: Submit it to OWL assignment section as a PDF and Word version.
- Late op-eds: I will not deduct any points if you turn in the op-ed by February 13, 2025, at 1:30pm.
- Accommodation: Because the op-ed has a grace period, I will not accept any late assignments.
- Missed exam and make-up exam: If you cannot write the op-ed for a documented reason, you must write the empirical and policy papers. Each component will be worth 50% of your final grade.

Policy paper aimed at mitigating racial/ethnic inequality

- Date: March 31, 2025, at 1:30 pm EST. Grace period: 3 days. No points will be lost if you submit it by April 3, 2025, at 1:30pm EST.
- Format: 10 pages double-spaced
- Aims:
 - Describe the problem.
 - Highlight the mechanisms giving rise to the problem
 - Propose a solution.
- Submission: Assignment Section in OWL Brightspace as Word and PDF.
- Feedback: General feedback will be offered to all students who submit the paper at least 7 days before the due date (i.e., March 24, 2025, 1:30 pm EST).
- Late papers: There is a flexible deadline. There are no individual extensions, unless students provide proper documentation and the instructor, the graduate chair, and the chair of Sociology agree that the circumstance warrants accommodation. In these circumstances, the student has the option of writing a 6,000-word empirical paper on racial/ethnic inequality. The paper will be graded by the course professor and will not be curved. The due date will be determined in consultation with the chair and graduate chair.

Optional empirical paper on racial/ethnic inequality

- Date: March 31, 2025, at 1:30 pm. Grace period: 5 days.
- Format: 6,000-word essay.
- Description: A detailed description and rubric will be provided to students 2 or 3 weeks ahead of the due date.
- Grades: Optional paper will be graded on a curve.
- Feedback: General feedback will be offered to all students who submit the paper at least 7 days before the due date (i.e., March 24, 2024, 1:30 pm EST). These will be general comments and offer feedback about ways to improve the paper. The instructor will not do line-by-line edits on your essay, nor will she write paragraphs. Because it is graded on a curve, the course professor cannot guess the student's grade and offer a list of things that they may want to address to get a precise grade.
- Late essays: This paper is optional. Failure to turn in the paper by the end of the grace period will automatically transition the student into Option 1 (midterm + final) without any penalty.
- Communication: There is no need to declare whether you will be writing the optional paper. There is also no need to let me know that you will be taking the grace days.

Participation

- Attendance: Your score will be computed from 10 out of 13 performances. Mandatory number of attendances: 8 classes.
- Participation is an important aspect of all my classes. It is also the part that students find very enjoyable. It also helps develop mastery in verbal skill sets necessary to help students perform better in job interviews, team meetings upon employment, and when they enroll in law/graduate schools.
- Prerequisite to receive participation marks: You must fill out the weekly participation inventory.
- Participation grade: 60% of the marks come from verbal discussions. 40% of the marks come from the participation diary in OWL.
- Expectations: You will receive a rubric between Weeks 1 and 2. Below are some noteworthy expectations:
 - Length of participation: The skill set being developed is (a) accurate and concise description of a social phenomenon and (b) the construction of an effective argument. This is an important skill to develop for job interviews or to get advanced degrees. If a person is verbose, they seldom can accomplish (a) or (b). I am going to ask that you stay within 2 minutes *unless* prompted to elaborate.
 - Number of participations: There is no set amount the student needs to speak to receive a good grade. Active listening is an important element of participation. If a student seeks to

dominate class discussion, the instructor reserves the right not to call on the student when he/she/they raise their hand.

- Relevance of participation points: This is a class where we discuss racial/ethnic inequality. Learning how to stay on topic is an extremely important skill to have for your transition into the labor market or higher learning. The student will earn no marks for irrelevant points. The student's point of view must be backed by empirical findings.
- Disruptive behavior: I care a lot about all my students. Part of caring for my students is ensuring that the classroom is a safe environment for everyone. In line with Western University policies, politically incorrect speech, xenophobia, misogyny, and racism have no place in our classroom. Although students may provide anecdotal evidence to make a point, the purpose of graduate education is to hone your analytical skills, critically evaluate social phenomena, and develop skills that can be used in the labor market, not a place to discuss feelings, personal grievances, conspiracy theories, express their political point of view, unsubstantiated thoughts, or to virtue signal. The student must make efforts to contribute to substantive discussions based on published empirical or theoretical work.
- Race scholars have observed that one way racially prejudiced individuals (both conservative or liberals who identify as allies) obfuscate meaningful discussions of racial inequality is by over-talking about their emotions or trying to substitute personalized accounts instead of talking about objectively documented facts. This is also a class about social structures fomenting racial/ethnic inequality. *The student must substantiate your statements with empirical facts.*
- Students who engage in repeated disruptive behavior will be given a warning in writing. If the behavior persists, the student will not be allowed to partake in classroom participation and will receive a 0 as their participation mark. If the disruptive behavior persists, I will submit a recommendation for disciplinary action to the Chair and the Dean's office. The determination of what is/is not disruptive behavior is at the discretion of the course professor.
- Consequences of disruptive behavior: To ensure that our class is a pleasant learning environment for everyone, there is a zero-tolerance policy towards disruptive behavior in class. The first time - you will receive a warning in writing; the second time- you will forfeit your right to any extra credit marks. The third time – you will be asked to leave the class, and I will request that the student be considered for disciplinary action. It is at my sole discretion to determine what is and what is not disruptive.
- Requests for accommodation for extra credit assignment: Some students may suffer anxiety when speaking in large groups. To accommodate this possibility, there is already a built-in written component to participation. There are also very few jobs that one can perform without any public speaking. As such, I will not offer alternate assignments for this portion of your grade.

Course Schedule and Readings (Subject to some change depending on student interest and current events)

Week 1 (1/6): Class introduction

Part I – Racial inequality and structural barriers to racial equality

Week 2 (1/13): What is race? What is ethnicity? How do we measure race in research?

Academic work

- EBS – Chapter 1
- TZES- Chapters 2-4

Current events conversation: Self-identification or cultural misappropriation?

- CBC Gems – Pretendians. <https://gem.cbc.ca/the-passionate-eye/s02e03?autoplay=1> (Optional before class)

Week 3 (1/20): What social structures sustain racial inequality?

- TZES – Chapters 5, 8, 9
- EBS – Chapter 2
- Ray, V. (2019). A theory of racialized organizations. *American Sociological Review*, 84(1), 26-53.
- Reskin, B. (2012). The race discrimination system. *Annual review of sociology*, 38, 17-35.

Current events: CBC Gems – Deconstructing Karens. <https://gem.cbc.ca/the-passionate-eye?autoplay=1>

- <https://www.vox.com/2021/1/15/22231079/capitol-riot-women-qanon-white-supremacy>

Part II: Patterns, Trends, and Nature of Racism in Specific Contexts

Education and Labor Market

Week 4 (1/27) – Racial/ethnic inequality in education

- Kao, G., & Thompson, J. S. (2003). Racial and ethnic stratification in educational achievement and attainment. *Annual review of sociology*, 29(1), 417-442.
- Denice, P. (2022). Spatial mismatch and the share of Black, Hispanic, and White students enrolled in charter schools. *Sociology of Education*, 95(4), 276-301.
- Owens, J. (2022). Double jeopardy: Teacher biases, racialized organizations, and the production of racial/ethnic disparities in school discipline. *American Sociological Review*, 87(6), 1007-1048.

Current events: Supreme Court: Affirmative action

- <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/06/29/us/affirmative-action-decision-document-supreme-court.html>

Week 5 (2/3) - Racial/ethnic inequality in Academia

- Kobayashi, A. (2009). Now You See Them, How You See Them: Women of Colour in Canadian Academia. In F. HENRY & C. TATOR (Eds.), *Racism in the Canadian University: Demanding Social Justice, Inclusion, and Equity* (pp. 60–75). University of Toronto Press.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3138/9781442688926.5>
- Misra, J., Kuvaeva, A., O'meara, K., Culpepper, D. K., & Jaeger, A. (2021). Gendered and racialized perceptions of faculty workloads. *Gender & Society*, 35(3), 358-394.
- Miller, C., & Roksa, J. (2020). Balancing Research and Service in Academia: Gender, Race, and Laboratory Tasks. *Gender & Society*, 34(1), 131–152. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243219867917>
- Williams, M. T. (2019). Adverse racial climates in academia: Conceptualization, interventions, and call to action. *New ideas in Psychology*, 55, 58-67.

Current events: Racism in Academia

- Harris, A. P. (2020). *Presumed incompetent II: Race, class, power, and resistance of women in academia*. university Press of Colorado. – Chapters 17 and 20.
- Melaku, T. and A. Beeman. (2020). Academia isn't a safe haven for conversations about race and racism. <https://hbr.org/2020/06/academia-isnt-a-safe-haven-for-conversations-about-race-and-racism>

Week 6 (2/10) – Racial/ethnic inequality in the labor market

- Browne, I., & Misra, J. (2003). The intersection of gender and race in the labor market. *Annual review of sociology*, 29(1), 487-513.
- Greenman, E., & Xie, Y. (2008). Double jeopardy? The interaction of gender and race on earnings in the United States. *Social Forces*, 86(3), 1217-1244. (Optional)
- Pager, D., & Shepherd, H. (2008). The sociology of discrimination: Racial discrimination in employment, housing, credit, and consumer markets. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, 34, 181-209.
- Quillian, L., & Midtbøen, A. H. (2021). Comparative perspectives on racial discrimination in hiring: The rise of field experiments. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 47, 391-415.

Current events: Racial inequality in Canadian labor market

- Block, S., & Galabuzi, G. E. (2011). Canada's colour coded labour market. *Canadian centre for policy alternatives*, 1-20.
- https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/230118/dq230118b-eng.pdf?st=0ZZC_7Vl
- Slack, T., & Jensen, L. (2011). Underemployment among minorities and immigrants. *Underemployment: Psychological, economic, and social challenges*, 127-143.

Week 7 (2/17) – Reading week

Health care

Weeks 8 and 9 (2/24, 3/3) – Health inequality

- Braveman, P. (2012). Health inequalities by class and race in the US: What can we learn from the patterns? *Social Science & Medicine*, 74(5), 665-667.
- Choi, K. H., Denice, P., Haan, M., & Zajacova, A. (2021). Studying the social determinants of COVID-19 in a data vacuum. *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie*, 58(2), 146-164.
- Gutin, I., & Hummer, R. A. (2021). Social inequality and the future of US life expectancy. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 47, 501-520.
- Collins Jr, J. W., David, R. J., Symons, R., Handler, A., Wall, S. N., & Dwyer, L. (2000). Low-income African American mothers' perception of exposure to racial discrimination and infant birth weight. *Epidemiology*, 11(3), 337-339.
- Gee, G. C., & Ford, C. L. (2011). Structural racism and health inequities: Old issues, New Directions. *Du Bois review: social science research on race*, 8(1), 115-132.

Current events

[Data linking COVID-19 hotspots](#). *The Conversation*.

Housing

Week 10 (3/10): Housing inequality

- Choi, K. H., & Ramaj, S. (2023). Ethno-racial and nativity differences in the likelihood of living in affordable housing in Canada. *Housing Studies*, 1-24.
- Charles, Camille Zubrinsky. "The dynamics of racial residential segregation." *Annual review of sociology* 29, no. 1 (2003): 167-207.
- Pattillo, M. (2013). Housing: Commodity versus right. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 39, 509-531.

Current events: Nonresident taxes and gentrification

<https://theconversation.com/canadas-ban-on-foreign-homebuyers-is-unlikely-to-affect-housing-affordability-197383>

Family

Weeks 11/12 (3/17, 3/24)

- *TFES – Chapter 15*
- Baker, R. S., & O'Connell, H. A. (2022). Structural racism, family structure, and Black–White inequality: The differential impact of the legacy of slavery on poverty among single

mother and married parent households. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 84(5), 1341-1365.

- Choi, K. H., & Denice, P. (2023). Racial/Ethnic Variation in the Relationship Between Educational Assortative Mating and Wives' Income Trajectories. *Demography*, 60(1), 227-254.
- Cross, C. J., Fomby, P., & Letiecq, B. (2022). Interlinking structural racism and heteropatriarchy: Rethinking family structure's effects on child outcomes in a racialized, unequal society. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 14(3), 482-501.
- Pessin, L., Damaske, S., & Frech, A. (2023). How Education Shapes Women's Work and Family Lives Across Race and Ethnicity. *Demography*, 60(4), 1207-1233.
- Williams, D. T., & Baker, R. S. (2021). Family structure, risks, and racial stratification in poverty. *Social Problems*, 68(4), 964-985.

Current events: From the Moynihan Report to Marriage Promotion

<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/06/gops-dead-end-marriage-program/>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/the-moynihan-report-an-annotated-edition/404632/>

Week 13 (3/31): Conclusion

Important Policies

Policies for Assignment Deadlines

My philosophy about extensions is guided by the following principles.

Be truly equitable. Providing students with an endless number of extensions is unfair to students who do the work and meet deadlines. Empirical work shows that students from advantaged backgrounds, male students, and older students ask for extensions. Empirical work also shows that students are more likely to ask for extensions from younger, female, and racial minority faculty than from older White male faculty, increasing the individual labor for younger and female faculty of color and reducing their chances for success. Thus, contrary to its intended design, extensions can be a real source of inequities.

Instead of relying on exceptions and individual accommodation, I provide students with a bundle of assignments from the onset of the course. All students can choose the bundle of assignments that best fits their skill set and time constraints. The bundles are designed to ensure that the students obtain learning objectives. Thus, students need to do the work and meet the deadlines of the chosen bundle.

Prepare students for life after school. Meeting deadlines is an important skill to develop for the labor market. As such, endless accommodation is the best way to hinder the long-term labor market success of students. I expect students to meet deadlines.

All assignments have flexible deadlines. No more extensions will be granted in the absence of proper documentation.

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

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

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.

Artificial Intelligence

Within this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploring a topic, with students expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and avoiding plagiarism. Essays, written assignments, and/or lab reports should reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work. Students should also generate their own figures (e.g., graphs, diagrams) rather than using AI-generated ones. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and effective learning environment that promotes critical thinking and independent inquiry and produces original written contributions. The same principles also apply to the use of translation software to support the writing of essays and other written assessments.

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
To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Miscellaneous

Recording Devices: Some of the topics we discuss may be sensitive and personal in nature. To ensure that all members of the class can feel safe and actively participate, recording devices **may not** be used in this class.

Lectures and Other Course Materials: All materials created by the instructor are protected by copyright law and may not be copied or distributed in any form without the explicit permission of the instructor. Any unauthorized use of these materials constitutes an academic offence.

Extraordinary Circumstances: The content and/or evaluation of this course is subject to change in the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's or instructor's control.