



Western
UNIVERSITY · CANADA

Western University
SOCIOLOGY 1027B-001

Life Is Not Always Fair
How social institutions and processes affect individual lives

Winter 2021-22

Tuesday 1:30pm-4:30pm, NCB 101

Instructor: Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann

Office Hours: by appointment only
Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5316

Email: wlehmann@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistants:

TBA

Course Description

In this introductory sociology course, we will explore the various social processes and institutions that shape the social world in which we live. We will challenge many commonly held assumptions, such as the idea that the success of individuals is always the outcome of talent and hard work, and that those who do not succeed in conventional terms must be lazy, deficient, and thus responsible for their own problems. In contrast, students will be introduced to important sociological debates about the nature of inequality, and how different social institutions and processes are implicated in the creation and maintenance of this inequality.

Some of the key questions we will be asking include:

- Who gets what kind of education?
- Who does what kind of work?
- Who gets what kind of health care?
- Who is affected when the environment declines?
- What are your chances of being socially mobile?

The course will conclude with a discussion of alternative approaches to learning, working, and living that some have argued contain the potential to overcome many of the problems with which modern societies are grappling.

PLEASE NOTE: this course will be conducted in person, face-to-face, but it has no tutorials.

Antirequisites

Sociology 1020, Sociology 1020W/X, Sociology 1021E.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Challenge common-sense assumptions about social life by applying sociological reasoning.
- Describe and examine a range of key sociological concepts and theoretical approaches and assess their merits for the explanation of social institutions, processes and behaviours.
- Demonstrate knowledge of major dimensions of social inequality and social structure in contemporary societies.
- Explain how different sociological research approaches are used to answer sociological questions.
- Demonstrate the skills necessary to engage in further sociological studies.

Required Text

Corrigall-Brown, Catherine. 2016. *Imagining Sociology: An Introduction with Readings*. Second Edition. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

NOTE: IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU PURCHASE THE SECOND EDITION, AS THIS NEW EDITION INCLUDES A FEW NEW CHAPTERS THAT ARE ASSIGNED AS ESSENTIAL READINGS.

Method of Evaluation

Midterm Exam	February 8, 2022	40%
	<i>Midterm Make-up Exam Date: TBA</i>	
Final Exam	During April Exam Period	60%

Evaluation Breakdown

Midterm and Final Exams: Both exams will be made up of multiple choice questions and are not cumulative. The exams will test all materials covered in the lectures and the readings, including the articles discussed in the tutorials.

How to Contact Me

- By email: wlehmann@uwo.ca

How to Contact Your Teaching Assistants

- TBA

How to get important information

Make sure to check the course OWL site regularly for course updates, cancellations, and other course-related postings. Your tutorial will have its own OWL site, Make sure to check it regularly, as your Teaching Assistants will communicate important information through the tutorial OWL sites.

Important Policies

Standards of Professional Behaviour

It is the responsibility of all of us in this class 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)

Discrimination and Unconscious Bias

- **Zero-tolerance** for discrimination. I encourage students to “call out” comments or content that may be marginalizing, oppressive, or discriminatory. If students are uncomfortable raising concerns in class, please speak to me immediately about any discriminatory conduct.
- **Unconscious/implicit bias.** We all have unconscious biases. Yes, everyone! Our brains unconsciously process huge amounts of information without us even being aware of it. This can include snap judgements about people we meet and situations we encounter. People have unconscious preferences for people who are similar to them and situations that are familiar. This unconscious bias can exclude, marginalize, and discriminate against minorities. As sociologists, it is our duty to use our sociological imaginations to combat unconscious bias.
 - **Here is some additional information and tips to combat unconscious bias:**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GP-cqFLS8Q4>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKHSJHkPeLY>

Students should also be aware of the **UWO Student Code of Conduct** found at <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>

Digital Student Experience

Students should also consider checking out the Western University Digital Student Experience website for additional information about online learning <https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/>.

If you need assistance with OWL and/or online access, you can seek support on the [OWL Help page](#). Alternatively, you can contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#). They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

What do you need?

What do you need to work at your best? Please let me know how I can help you. Western provides a number of resources for students who need accommodation or who are having mental health challenges (see below) but I encourage students to speak to me if there is anything I can do to improve their learning experience.

Policies for Missed Exams or Assignments:

Approved Documentation: Please note that because the Midterm Exam is worth more than 30%, Self-Reported Absences (SRA) cannot be used. Therefore, make-up exams will only be granted with approved documentation. If you have a conflict with one of the exam dates, it is your responsibility to discuss it with the Academic Counseling office as soon as possible, but no later than one week before the regularly scheduled exam and provide documentation of the conflict. If approved, you will be allowed to schedule a make-up exam. If you miss an exam (this includes make-up exams) due to illness or for any other unforeseen reason, you must provide notification and documentation to your Academic Counselor within 48 hours. If your problem is medical in nature, you should be seen by your doctor on the date of the exam. If your Academic Counselor agrees that your reasons are legitimate and are supported by your medical doctor's documentation, you will be allowed to write a make-up exam (or hand in your assignment at a later date). As a courtesy, please also let me know by email that you missed the exam. Please do not send any documentation about the reason for your absence to me. Just notify me, so that I know you are Ok and that you are working on having a make-up exam approved.

Make-up Exams

There will be one makeup date set by the Department for students needing to write a make-up exam (with approved accommodation from your academic counseling office). This makeup exam may or may not be in the same format as the original exam.

If you miss a make-up exam due to sickness or another documented reason, the same process described above applies to arrange for an alternate make-up exam date.

Scantron Exams

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 Laptops and other Electronics/Phones in Class

Laptops are permitted in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, they will be told to close the lid and they will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cell phones are turned off at the beginning of class.

Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at 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

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 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

DRAFT VERSION: FINAL OUTLINE TO BE PROVIDED IN DECEMBER

Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

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

Mental Health

Students who are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western

(http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

Compassionate Grounds

Serious Illness of a Family Member: Inform your instructor as soon as possible and submit a medical certificate from the family member's physician to your home faculty's Academic Counseling office.

In Case of a Death: Inform your instructor as soon as possible and submit a copy of the newspaper notice, death certificate or documentation provided by the funeral director to your home faculty's Academic Counseling office.

Grade Guidelines

The Department of Sociology has grade distribution guidelines that all instructors are required to follow. For Sociology courses at the 1000 level, class means are expected to fall in the range of 68-72%.

Course Schedule and Readings

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Week 1: Introduction (January 4, 2022)

- The purpose of this class: common sense vs. sociological reasoning

Week 2: Sociological Reasoning about Inequality (January 11, 2022)

- Some examples of inequality: individual vs social explanations
- In sociological terms: functionalist versus conflict perspectives
- How do sociologists research these issues?

Reading 1: Chapter 1; Reading 2: TBD

PART II: SOCIAL GROUPS

Week 3: Social class, status and inequality (January 18, 2022)

- What is class and status
- The problem with social mobility
- Poverty
- COVID-19 and essential workers: the role of class

Reading 1: Chapter 4; Reading 2: TBD

Week 4: Race, ethnicity and inequality (January 25, 2022)

- Social construction of race; multiculturalism vs anti-racism
- Race in education and at work
- Immigration
- COVID-19 and its racial impact

Reading 1: Chapter 5; Reading 2: TBD

Week 5: Gender, sexuality and inequality (February 1, 2022)

- Social construction of gender and heteronormativity
- Gender and sexuality in education and at work
- COVID-19 and gender roles

Reading 1: Chapter 6; Reading 2: TBD

Week 6: MIDTERM EXAM (February 8, 2022)

PART III: EFFECTS OF INEQUALITY IN LIFE EXPERIENCES

Week 7: Inequality in Education (February 15, 2022)

- Who does well in school and why?
- Role of school structures and curriculum
- COVID-19, learning loss: who is affected most?

Reading 1: Chapter 9; Reading 2: TBD

READING WEEK (February 22, 2022)

Week 8: Inequality at work (March 1, 2022); *TUTORIAL ASSIGNMENTS DUE TODAY*

- How do different people experience work?
- Hiring discrimination
- Who gets ahead at work?

Reading 1: Chapter 10; Reading 2: TBD

Week 9: Inequality in Health Outcomes: (March 8, 2022)

- Social determinants of health
- Challenging the healthy lifestyle discourse

Reading 1: Chapter 11; Reading 2: TBD

PART IV: LOCAL AND GLOBAL EFFECTS AND RESPONSES

Week 10: Local to global inequalities (March 15, 2022)

- Global income distribution and poverty
- Environmental effects at home
- Global environmental effects

Reading 1: Chapter 12; Reading 2: TBD

Week 11: Change through government and social movements (March 22, 2022)

- Policy to address inequality
- Role of the welfare state
- Individualism vs. collectivism

Reading 1: Chapter 13; Reading 2: TBD

Week 12: Applying what we learned, summing up and reviewing (March 29, 2022)

- How is inequality a social phenomenon?
- What are the roles of the state?
- What are the roles of individuals?

Readings: None