



The University of Western Ontario

**SOCIOLOGY 4407G - 001**  
**Criminological Theory and Research**  
**Winter 2025**

**In-Person**

**Instructor:** Dr. Ballucci, Associate Professor

**Department of Sociology**

**Email:** dballucc@uwo.ca

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**Course Description:**

The purpose of this course is two-fold: 1) To explore the debates concerning the role of criminological research, and 2) to advance your knowledge of selected criminological topics. This course discusses the purpose and goals of criminology and criminological research. Using a variety of theoretical and empirical readings on select topics (represented in several modules), we explore these various positions and engage in critical discussions concerning how and why issues are shaped and dealt with. Through an in-depth examination of each topic, we explore the power of definitions of crime, the effects of these definitions, and the political and social context for crime control initiatives. We assess policies and practices and discuss how they serve as institutions that control and shape lives. This seminar-style course will require you to think critically and debate thoughtfully with your classmates. Each student is required to complete all readings each week.

***Prerequisites:* 1.0 from Sociology 1020, 1021E, 1025A/B, 1026F/G, 1027A/B**

Unless you have either the prerequisites or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in the course, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The 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.

***Antirequisite(s):* The former Sociology 260F/G, and 2260A/B**

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, students should:

- \* Learn to recognize the connection between public policy on crime, political ideology, and criminological theory.
- \* Develop a critical understanding of the major crime control policy issues, debates over these issues and their ideological and theoretical underpinnings.
- \* Learn to work cooperatively in a group to accomplish common goals.

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### **Course Material:**

#### ***Required Text(s):***

All readings will be available to students on OWL, Western Library or via email.

\*I reserve the right to modify the course outline and readings.

### **Communication:**

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL Brightspace site

(<https://westernu.brightspace.com/d21/login>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

#### ***Office hours:***

Professor Ballucci: I will be available for office hours by appointment. Also, please provide me with some information concerning your questions.

#### ***How to Contact Me and the Teaching Assistants***

I can be contacted via email at [dballucc@uwo.ca](mailto:dballucc@uwo.ca). The teaching assistant's email will be provided below. Only emails that use proper etiquette will be answered. For example, a salutation is required. "Hello, Professor Ballucci, or Dr. Ballucci" is acceptable. "Hey", "Miss", or the absence of a salutation is unacceptable. Also, no texting terminology is acceptable. Lastly, please provide me with your name and the course and section you are emailing about. These rules also apply when emailing teaching assistants.

Please do not email me questions about course content or course procedures. I will take time in every class to answer these types of questions. There are, however, two main exceptions to this policy:

1. You are experiencing a personal emergency that I need to know about before the next class.
2. You want to make an appointment to see me.

I will try to respond to these emails within 24 hours.

### **Method of Evaluation:**

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

1. Seminar Leadership 30%:
2. Weekly Participation 20%
3. Ted Talk: conference Style Presentation 20%
4. Final Paper 30% (5-7 days after the last day of class)

#### ***1. Seminar Leadership 30%: To be assigned at the beginning of the course***

You will each lead one seminar (on your own or in pairs or groups, depending on class size) on the required readings. This is an essential part of your grade. This is NOT simply a summary of the article. Students who complete a summary will receive a low grade. This exercise requires you to teach the class about the ideas and arguments in the article, and how they pertain to the larger questions of criminology. This means that you must understand the arguments presented in the piece. This may require you to do

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some additional reading, and, or to look up the meaning of words. The presenters for this week will have the entire 3 hours of the course. Each presenter will receive an independent grade.

\* Two days before your presentation date (by 6 pm), submit three questions on OWL through 'announcements' to the class or the "forum" section. The three questions are to be used by non-presenting students to guide their reading and prepare them to participate in the seminar. Failure to do so will result in a 3% reduction in your final presentation grade. Note: DO NOT have any questions start with, "What do you think, or Tell me your opinion." Each question should be written to encourage students to think about the material, the debates, issues and content, NOT personal experience or opinions. The goal is to generate discussion around the material.

\***2.5%** of your seminar grade will be for choosing an appropriate 3<sup>rd</sup> **Academic Article** to add and/or complement the assigned readings. This element in the seminar is to 1) encourage students to begin their presentation early and 2) allow students to choose the part of the focus of their presentation.

***There is no negotiation on the timeline: the article must be shared with the class a week in advance.***

\***2.5%** is for sending out questions to the class by the assigned date. You will also be assessed on the quality of your questions.

***\*These are both essential elements of the seminar process, as both can impact the success of your seminar.***

***You are welcome to add news articles to your presentation but they DO NOT replace the academic article required.***

### ***How to build a strong presentation?***

A strong presentation will result from being prepared and understanding the article's arguments. Complete a **brief** summary of the main points of the article. That is to **highlight the key elements of the piece**. Identify the main arguments on one page. This means understanding and explaining how the author(s) demonstrate the argument. Think about what methods they used, as well as the expertise they drew on. 1. What areas/discussions does the article contribute to? 2. What does the article claim to offer? 3. What does the article say still needs to be explored? 4. What problems or challenges does the article identify? 5. What unites the texts of that week or module? Are there debates that you can engage in?

The key to preparing and leading a seminar is to engage and guide the class in 'unpacking' and critically analyzing the readings. An effective way to complete the presentation is to identify themes (potentially 2-3, but this will vary based on the topics) that overlap between the readings. These can be in the form of questions or statements. For example, what is the risk? The themes organize and frame your presentation and show you how to manage and integrate all the articles. To do this, read the articles and consider the readings in relation to each other (and if applicable to readings discussed in previous seminar weeks).

For the question period, the goal is not to consider discussing the challenges the piece raises, how the piece relates to or diverts from other readings, and/or the strengths and limitations of the argument. These are some suggestions. This exercise aims to illustrate that you are thinking about the piece and how it relates to other course material and to get others to do the same. Approx. 10-15 mins

\*Your presentation grade will reflect how closely you follow the requirements discussed in this section.

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TIPS: Only use words in your discussion/presentation if you know what they mean. Do not simply summarize or read out parts of the article. You can integrate quotes from the article, but the presentation must be in your own words. Using your own words is the best way to understand and explain what you have learned to other people.

PLEASE see Appendix 1, the course schedule and readings document for further details.

### **2. Weekly Participation 20%**

In-class participation 20%: As a seminar, the success of this course depends on informed and engaged student participation. All students are expected to attend class having done the readings and prepared for discussion. You must bring the reading material with you to class each week, along with your nametag. Please refer to each other by name in class discussions.

This proportion of your grade will reflect your efforts to contribute meaningfully to class discussions. This means providing comments related to the readings that address course content. You will not be given grades for giving your opinions or telling me what you think if it is unrelated to the course material. To attain grades for participation, you must engage in meaningful conversations in the class. I will evaluate how often you speak and the quality of your contributions. Your contributions should be informed by and grounded in the readings. Your attendance is also reflected in this grade. You will receive a mid-term grade on your participation.

### **2. Ted Talk': Conference Style Presentation 20%**

In the last two weeks of the course, you will perform a Ted Talk on your own. The purpose is to showcase students' research papers in a format that appeals to the public. A strong Ted Talk will tell the class why the case you choose matters, why it is essential for people to reevaluate it in the manner you have chosen, and why people should care about your alternative analysis and interpretation.

If you have not seen a Ted Talk before, I encourage you to watch one. For this class, each student will present 8-12 minutes (depending on the class size). Remember, the key to this exercise is not to review all the components of your paper but rather to make your research attractive to a general audience, to policymakers, and to your family at Christmas. This exercise will demonstrate the value of criminological research in the 'real world' and why it is essential to think about correctional practices, language, and societal reactions and ideas of people. If time permits, there will be a short question period.

### **3. Final Paper 30%**

Your final papers must be on one of the topics of the 5 modules. You are encouraged to write your final paper on the module topic you presented for your seminar. Your paper needs to explore one of these topics. The papers must be original and will be written specifically for this course. They will be organized and articulate a coherent argument. They must use the appropriate literature and sources typically expected for a scholarly paper being prepared for publication. All papers should be correctly referenced, using any standard academic reference styles (use whatever you are familiar with as long as you are consistent in the paper). You are required to use 10-15 sources. Of these sources, a minimum of 3 must be from the module (place an \* beside each of the references that are from the course). The remaining sources must be from beyond the course material. The final paper takes the place of a comprehensive final examination. All papers must be typewritten and double-spaced. Do not forget to

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leave time to proofread your work very carefully. This practice reduced the potential for grammar and spelling errors and increased your paper's clarity. Final papers for undergraduate students will be 10-12 pages long. This paper should provide a critical literature review, including theoretical perspectives and empirical research (*See Appendix*). *Save your paper using your last name, NOT the name of the course.*

The papers must be original and will be written specifically for this course. They will be organized and articulate a coherent argument. They must use the appropriate literature and sources that are typically expected for a scholarly paper being prepared for publication. All papers should be correctly referenced, using any standard academic reference styles (use whatever you are familiar with as long as you are consistent in the paper).

You are required to use 8-10 sources. Of these sources, a minimum of 2 must be from the course (place an \* beside each of the references from the course). The remaining sources must be from beyond the course material. The final paper takes the place of a comprehensive final examination. All documents must be typewritten and double-spaced. Remember to leave time to proofread your work very carefully. This practice reduced the potential for grammar and spelling errors and increased your paper's clarity. Final papers for undergraduate students will be 10-12 pages long.

*Save your paper using your last name, NOT the name of the course.*

### **Late Assignments Policy**

For each in-class assignment, students are expected to submit the assignment by the deadline listed. Should illness or extenuating circumstances arise, students can submit their assignment up to 24 hours past the deadline without academic penalty. Should students submit their assessment beyond 24 hours past the deadline, a late penalty of 5% per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade. As flexible deadlines are used in this course, requests for academic consideration will not be granted.

Instructors can designate one assessment per course per term as requiring supporting documentation to receive academic consideration. For this course, the Mid Term Exam requires supporting documentation.

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam must write a makeup exam. The course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to answer questions during the makeup exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, duration, or cover the same material as the original test.

**Bonus Grades:** Occasionally, I may provide opportunities for bonus marks. I may offer these on days with low attendance, either at the start or end of each class.

### **Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning:**

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence 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 for

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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.

### **Student Absences:**

Please follow the procedures below if you cannot meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances.

University policy on academic considerations is described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation. Further information about academic considerations and submitting this self-attestation with your academic consideration request may be found here. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.”

Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#). Students missing coursework for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request at the central academic consideration portal. 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 elsewhere in this document. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the course instructor in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration in accordance with the information presented in this course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness should use the [Student Medical Certificate](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner.

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam must write a makeup exam. The course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to answer questions during the makeup exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, duration, or cover the same material as the original test.

### **Artificial Intelligence:**

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

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### Academic Policies:

Please review the Department of Sociology “[Important Academic Policies](https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf)” document [https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic\\_Policies.pdf](https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf) for additional information regarding:

- Scholastic Offences
- Plagiarism
- Copyright
- Course Selection
- Absence from Course Commitments
- Missed Tests and Exams
- Religious Accommodations
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health
- Gender-Based and Sexual Violence Statement

### Additional Important Information

#### How to get important information:

All relevant course material will be available in the course outline and in class. Course announcements and information may also be sent to your Western email account.

#### Approach and Expectations

The learning outcomes will be achieved through lectures, readings, class discussions and activities, multimedia clips, written and collaborative work, and exams. Students are expected to:

- Attend **all** classes;
- Read any required readings **before** class;
- Participate actively and thoughtfully in class discussions and group assignments (treat others with respect);
- Make notes on class content and identify questions as they arise during the process of reading required texts;
- Keep all rough work (notes, drafts, etc.) until their final marks have been officially recorded and be able to supply this rough work if requested by the course instructor;
- Keep an electronic copy of any paper or written commentary that is submitted in this course. The instructor may verify any written work using anti-plagiarism software (e.g., Turnitin.com);
- Contact Dr. Ballucci with any problems that may arise during the semester.
- **Turn off all handheld electronic devices in class and refrain from using cell phones, messenger, Facebook, and other social networking tools during class time.**

#### 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.