The University of Western Ontario
Department of Sociology
SOCIOLOGY 4420G
Social Context of Racial Inequality
Winter 2026

Delivery Method – In-Person

Instructor: Priscila Barros
Email: pribeir2@uwo.ca

_____

This is a DRAFT copy only. Please see the course site for the final version.

Course Description: What are the sociological origins of racial inequality? We begin by investigating how sociologists understand racial and ethnic distinctions. We then shift our attention to patterns of racial inequality in the context of major social institutions: housing, the labor market, schools, and prisons.

Prerequisite(s): Registration in third year or above in any Department of Sociology module, or fourth year in any module.

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

Anti-requisite(s): Sociology 4485F/G.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

1. Gain a general understanding of how race/ethnicity is studied by sociologists.

2. Show comprehension of key sociological concepts and discourses around race and ethnicity

3. Demonstrate an understanding how "race" is socially constructed and that it effects every facet of our everyday lives, following the latest knowledge in social science

Course Material:

There is no required textbook for this course.

Reading assignments will consist of articles, book chapters, and knowledge mobilization resources. Links or PDFs to all resources will be provided through Brightspace.

Communication:

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL Brightspace site on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students enrolled in the course.

If you have a question or would like to discuss course content, please speak with me before, during, or after class. Outside of class, please email me at pribeir2@uwo.ca to set up a time to meet during office hours. You can expect a response within 24-48 hours on Mondays to Fridays between 9-5PM (EST).

Course Schedule and Readings:

The reading list and weekly schedule are available on the course Brightspace site.

Method of Evaluation:

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

1. Facilitating Discussion – 20% *(Schedule to be assigned on the first day of class)*

2. Essay Proposal – 20% Due: Sunday, January 25, 2026, before 11:59 PM

3. Annotated Bibliography – 20% Due: Sunday, March 1, 2026, before 11:59 PM

4. Final Essay – 40% Due: Final day of class, Thursday, April 9, 2026, before 11:59 PM

1. Facilitating discussion (20%)

Each student will lead at least one class discussion during the term. Additional details will be provided on the first day of class.

Discussion leaders are responsible for:

a) Summary and Critical Analysis

- Provide a clear and concise summary of the assigned reading(s).

- Identify the authors' central argument(s) and the evidence used to support them.

- Offer a brief critical reflection on what you learned or found significant.

b) Connecting Readings to the Course

- Explain how the reading(s) align with, extend, challenge, or complicate material previously covered in the course.

c) Guiding Class Discussion

- Prepare 3 thoughtful, open-ended questions that encourage engagement and analytical conversation among your peers.

2. Essay Proposal (20%)

Students will submit a proposal (2–3 pages, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman or Arial, 1-inch margins) that includes:

- Research question and preliminary thesis/argument

- Explanation of the topic's sociological significance

- A statement on how the topic relates to course themes

- An outline of the supporting arguments and evidence that will structure the essay

Submission: Upload to OWL Brightspace by **January 25, 2026, before 11:59 PM**.

3. Annotated Bibliography (25%)

The annotated bibliography (2–3 pages, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman or Arial, 1-inch margins) must:

- Identify five scholarly sources you plan to cite in your essay

- Provide a brief summary of each source

- Explain each source's relevance to your research topic and argument

Submission: Upload to OWL Brightspace by **March 1, 2026, before 11:59 PM**.

4. Final Essay (40%)

Students will submit a fully revised and expanded version of their proposal, integrating their annotated bibliography. The final paper may take one of the following forms:

- Research proposal, or policy proposal

- Length: 10–12 pages (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman or Arial, 1-inch margins)

Submission: Upload to OWL Brightspace by **April 9, 2026, before 11:59 PM**.

Extensions Policy

- _Students are expected to submit assignments by the posted deadlines._

- _In cases of illness or extenuating circumstances, students may submit assignments up to five (5) days late without penalty._

- *Assignments submitted more than 5 days after the deadline will receive a 10% deduction per day.*

- *Because this course already incorporates flexible deadlines, requests for academic consideration will not be granted.*

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):

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, independent inquiry and all them to produce original written contributions. The same principles also apply to the use of translation software to support the writing the essays and other written assessments.

Electronic Devices:

Recording Lectures

Recording lectures is not permitted. Some of the topics we discuss may be sensitive. If students choose to share personal stories or experiences, they should not worry that they are being recorded. If you require a recording device for medical or other reasons, please see me.

Electronic Devices

All types of technology are welcome in my class, but they must not interfere with my lecture or distract other students. Please note, research suggests students do better when taking notes by hand. If your electronic device distracts me or another student, you will be asked to put it away and not permitted to use them for the remainder of the class. Cell phones should be turned to silent at the beginning of class.

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 website: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

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.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for 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 (https://www.turnitin.com/).

Students are expected to retain all research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, your instructor may ask you to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against you.

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.

Copyright: Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

Absence from Course Commitments: Students must familiarize themselves with the Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request using the Student Absence Portal (SAP) https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html . 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 in the course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness must include the completed Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner. Students must request academic consideration as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

Once the request and supporting documentation have been received and reviewed, appropriate academic consideration, if granted, shall be determined by the instructor in consultation with the academic advisor, in a manner consistent with the course outline. Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam, unless otherwise specified in the course outline. The course instructor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup text/exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test/exam will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test/exam.

Note: missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own. Students should check the Western website to see what directives for Covid are to be followed. Western has been and will continue to follow directives established by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. That directive will state whether students should or should not come to campus/class and any other requirements (e.g., masks are mandatory). Please check on your own and do not email the instructor, the Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator or the Faculty Academic Counselling Office.

Students who fail to write a make-up test or special examination will receive a grade of zero on that assessment. No other make-up opportunities will be provided unless further academic consideration is granted by the student's Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

Religious Accommodation: Students should review the policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf.
Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning: In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence or University approved emergency 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 Brightspace for 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.

Code of Student Conduct: It is the responsibility of every student to read the Code and familiarize him or herself with its contents. The Code is available at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/code_of_conduct.pdf. Sanctions for non-compliance range from a warning or reprimand to expulsion from the University.

Student Responsibility: Students in a degree program must select courses in accordance with the published requirements. Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and

that they are aware of any antirequisite course(s) they may have taken. Students must familiarize themselves with the Student Responsibility for Course Selection policy https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/academic_counselling.pdf and the Registration and Progression policy https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/registration_progression.pdf. Students are responsible for the successful completion of the Graduation Requirements for their degree program https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/graduation.pdf.

Support Services:

Office of the Registrar Services http://www.registrar.uwo.ca

Faculty Academic Advising - Please visit your Home Faculty Academic advising webpage for information regarding adding/dropping courses, important dates, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html.

USC services offers information about student the health/dental plan, Bus Pass, food support services, Peer support Centre etc http://westernusc.ca/services/ .

Mental health – 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.

Health & Wellness Services – Registered part-time and full-time students can book a physical health appointment at https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/index.html. Additional on-campus services are also available https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/services/index.html.

Accessible Education provides supports and services to students with disabilities at Western, in all programs and faculties. Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing.

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 experience GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: http://uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

Western Libraries – Visit the many library locations on campus. Western Libraries provide access to material in physical and digital formats https://www.lib.uwo.ca/catalogue/index.html. Research support is available https://www.lib.uwo.ca/research/index.html.

Writing support – Online writing resources, writing support and writing modules are available https://writing.uwo.ca/undergrads/

Bookstore: Search for Textbook availability and cost https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search