



**Sociology 2270a (570)**  
**Foundations of Social Theory**  
**Fall/ Winter 2025-2026**

**Instructor:** C. Lavrence  
**Email:** clavrenc@uwo.ca

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### **Course Information**

#### **Calendar Description:**

A comprehensive survey of the founding theories and theorists (among others, Marx, Weber and Durkheim) of sociology, and of the social and historical contexts out of which their theories grew. Students will be introduced to the principal philosophical and epistemological questions concerning the nature of sociological knowledge.

**Antirequisite(s):** [Sociology 2240E](#), [Sociology 2263A/B](#).

**Prerequisite(s):** At least 60% in 1.0 from Sociology courses at the 1000 level.

**Extra Information:** 3 lecture hours.

**Course Weight:** 0.50  
**Breadth:** Category A  
**Subject Code:** SOCIOLOG

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol 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.

King's College at the University of Western Ontario  
Sociology 2270F (570)  
Foundations of Social Theory  
Fall 2025

**Course Information:**

Survey of Sociological Thought  
Dr. Christine Lavrence  
Office Hours: Thursday 1-2pm or Zoom by appointment.

**Course Description:**

This course will introduce students to a range of key classical and contemporary sociological theories. In a roughly chronological manner, we will begin by examining the emergence of classical sociological theory as a response to the large-scale social and economic transformations of European “modern society”. We will situate these works critically, in their historical context and in relation to colonial capitalism. We will also explore the key questions and issues that preoccupy contemporary sociological theory. Throughout the course we will discuss key issues such as the nature of capitalism, the relationship between the individual and society, the self as a social phenomenon, as well as questions of power and social inequality. We will examine these texts in relation to the everyday social relations and practices that animate them.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

- Identify, compare, interpret and apply a range of classical and contemporary theoretical orientations within the discipline of Sociology
- Make connections between different theorists/schools of thought
- Employ these theoretical frameworks to think through social issues and practices.
- Develop a decolonial lens for social theory and social issues
- Develop ability to engage theoretical ideas through a variety of written and analytical forms

**Mode of Instruction:** In-person

**Course Requirements:**

Prerequisites: At least 60% in 1.0 from Sociology courses at the 1000 level.  
Antirequisites: [Sociology 2240E](#), [Sociology 2263A/B](#).

**Course textbook/readings:**

Available online through library course reserves and linked through Brightspace course at no extra cost.

### **Method of Evaluation:**

- 1) In-class Critical Reflection (30%) October 21- Question will be given in advance and students will write answer in class.
- 2) Test (30) November 18. In-class test consisting of long answers and/or short answers.
- 3) Final Exam in exam period (30%)
- 4) Attendance and Participation (10%)

### **Academic Considerations:**

One request for academic consideration without formal documentation can be made.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Link to Western Scholastic Discipline policy:

[https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

Within this course, use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT, translation tools, and grammar-checking tools) is not permitted for written work submitted for evaluation. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline.

### **Schedule of Classes and Readings:**

Sept 9: Introduction

#### **Sept 16: Setting the Stage for Sociology: Colonialism and Capitalism**

Alatas, S.F. and Sinha, V. "Introduction: Ethnocentrism, Androcentrism and Sociological Theory", p 1-15

Ritzer, G. and Stepinsky, J. *Sociological Theory*, p 35-43, 58-59

#### **Sept 23: Historical Materialism and Alienation - Karl Marx part 1**

Ritzer, G. and Stepinsky, J. *Sociological Theory* pages 44 – 51, 55-58.

Marx, K. "Alienated Labour" in *Social Theory: Essential Readings*, ed. by

Bailey, G. and Gayle,

R., p 47-55

Robinson, C. “Preface to the 2000 Edition” *Black Marxism*, p 1-5

**Podcast:** 1619: “The Economy that Slavery Built” (Episode 2)

**Sept 30: No class in recognition of National Truth and Reconciliation Day**

**Oct 7: Historical Materialism and Commodities - Karl Marx part 2**

Ritzer, G. and Stepinsky, J. *Sociological Theory* p 52-55.

Marx, K “The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof” in *Social Theory: Continuity and Confrontation*, third edition, edited by Garner R and Hancock BH p 56-7

**Oct 14: Social Facts – Durkheim part 1**

Ritzer G. and Stepinsky. *Sociological Theory*, pages 11-13, 61-73

Oct 21: In-class Critical Reflection

**Oct 28: Social Cohesion – Durkheim part 2**

Ritzer G. and Stepinsky J. *Sociological Theory* (second selection), p 3-8

Alatas, S.F. and Sinha, “Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406)”, p 17-21 and 27-35

**Nov 4: Substantive Sociology- Weber part 1**

Ritzer G. and Stepinsky. *Sociological Theory*, p 9-14

Weber, M. "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism", edited by Bailey and Gayle, p 228-237.

Nov 11: Reading Break

Nov 18: Test

Nov 25: **Substantive Sociology - Weber part 2**

Ritzer G. and Stepinsky J. *Sociological Theory*, p 24-27

Mann, D. "Legitimacy and Domination" in *Understanding Society*, p 141-150

Nov 27: **Social Interaction -Simmel**

Ritzer G. and Stepinsky J. *Sociological Theory* p 28-42

Simmel, G. "Metropolis and Mental Life" in *Social Theory Root and Branches*, ed.by Garner, p 141

Dec 4: **Wrap Up**

# KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

## GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

### 2025-2026

#### **1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences**

##### **Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)**

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

##### **Academic Consideration for Student Absence**

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at [https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses\\_enrollment/exams\\_and\\_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf](https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf).

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

[https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration\\_Sep24.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf)

##### **Absences from Final Examinations**

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

## **Religious Accommodation**

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

## **2. Support Services**

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

[https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/](https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/)

Academic Support Services at King’s University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

### **GBSV Support:**

King’s is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing [Care@kings.uwo.ca](mailto:Care@kings.uwo.ca) or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western’s Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also [https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html)

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

### 3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

**Use of Electronic Devices:** Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

**Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom:** King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

### 4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

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; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

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.

### **5. Copyright of Course Material**

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

### **6. Use of Recordings**

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

### **7. Policy on Attendance**

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.