



**Sociology 3361f (570)
Crimes of the Powerful
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026**

Instructor: M. Courey
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Course Information

Calendar Description:

White collar and state crime is often ignored in discussions of crime. Despite this, white collar crime contribute to far more financial loss, injuries, and deaths than all street crimes combined. The goal of this course is to provide students with an overview of this important domain.

Prerequisite(s): [Sociology 2266A/B](#), and third or fourth year standing in a Sociology or Criminology module.

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.

Department of Sociology

SOCIOLOGY 3361F: Crimes of the Powerful Fall 2025 Section 570

DETAILED COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Instructor: Dr. Michael Courey

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Office Hours: Monday's 11:30 – 12:30pm or by appointment

Class time: Monday's 8:30 to 11:30am

Class location: TBD

Course Description

Despite the fact that white collar crime contributes to far more financial losses, injuries, and deaths than all street crimes combined, the study of how powerful people and institutions engage in and perpetuate these harms receives relatively little attention from criminologists. The goal of this course is to provide students with an overview of this important domain. In this course we examine how crimes of the powerful are facilitated by social, political and economic systems related to the growth of global capitalism and empire building. We also examine how actors in those systems are able to sidestep the law or systematically neutralize their guilt. Although we will look at some case studies, the main goal of the course is to identify structural aspects of society that perpetuate social harm and facilitate large scale criminal activity. We will examine historical and contemporary examples of these crimes looking at themes such as colonialism, the nation state, globalization, neoliberalism, and corporatization. Responses to crimes of the powerful will also be discussed throughout the course including an overview of social movements that challenge power structures in the name of justice and/or the common good.

REQUIRED READINGS (On OWL)

All readings available on OWL

Course Requirements

PRE-REQUISITES: [Sociology 2266A/B](#) (formerly 266) or permission of the instructor.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will 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.

DROP DATE: Last day to drop half-courses September 12, 2025 (without penalty) December 1, 2025, with WDN on transcript

Learning Objectives

1. Problematize the definition of crime
2. Understand systems of power and individual roles within them
3. Identify the harms to humanity that have come through empire building and the spread of global capitalism
4. Learn about citizen responses to crimes of the powerful

Assignments and Course Grading

The final grade will reflect your performance on three evaluation components of the course.

(1) **Two Discussion Forum Posts (15% each x 2 = 30%)**

Due – Week 4 and Week 9

(2) **Participation (15%)**

Students will be awarded 15% of their grade for participating in in-class and online discussions. Attendance will be taken, and student contributions will be tracked by the professor.

(3) **Presentation (20%)**

Each student will do a 10-15 minute presentation to the class. The topics align with the reading and lecture themes.

See *Presentation Overview* on OWL [resources]

(4) **Final Exam – (35%)**

This exam will allow you to apply the knowledge you've accumulated during the semester through short answer and essay questions. The questions are designed to allow students to 'show off' what they have come to know over the semester rather than memorization of facts. More details in class.

Timetable and Schedule of Assignments

Below is a general timetable of when students will need to engage

Activity	Due Date	Grade Value
Discussion Forum	Posted twice throughout course Due – Week 4 and Week 9	2 x 15%
Presentation	Date to be selected by student (3 to 4 Students each class will present) – 15-minute presentation	20%
In Class Participation	Students are expected to participate in a minimum of 10 synchronous learning sessions (scheduled during class hours) throughout the semester. Students will be graded for attendance and more heavily for contributing thoughts and insights to the class discussion and lectures.	15%
Final Exam	Date to be determined – take-home exam	35%

LECTURE TOPIC & READINGS

<p>Week 1 Sept 8</p>	<p>Topic: Introduction and overview of the course – Some Basic Definitions and Key Terms</p> <p>Reading: Hillyard and Tombs (2004). <i>Beyond Criminology</i>. In <i>Beyond Criminology: Taking Harm Seriously</i>. eds. Paddy Hillyard, Christina Pantazis, Steve Tombs, and Dave Gordon. Pluto Press: Ann Arbor, MI. pp. 10-29</p>
<p>Week 2 Sept 15</p>	<p>Topic: Ideology – Capitalism, Socialism, left and right</p> <p>Reading: Robbins Richard H. (2014). Introduction and Chapter 1 – Constructing the Consumer. In <i>Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism</i>. Sixth Edition. Pearson: Upper Saddle River, NJ. Pp. 1-23, 31-34.</p>
<p>Week 3 Sept 22</p>	<p>Topic: State Routinized Crime</p> <p>Reading: Barak, Gregg. (2017). Chapter 1: Capitalism, Corporations, and Criminality. In <i>Unchecked Corporate Power</i>. Routledge</p>
<p>Week 4 ** Sept 29</p>	<p>Topic: Corporate Crime</p> <p>Reading: Tombs and Whyte (2015) Selected readings from: <i>The corporate Criminal: Why Corporations Must be Abolished</i>. Rutledge.</p>
<p>Week 5 Oct 6</p>	<p>Topic: Building Empire: Maintaining Capitalist Control</p> <p>Reading: Documentary – Requiem for the American Dream. (2015) Directors. Kelly Nyks, Peter Hutchison, Jared Scott. Featuring – Noam Chomsky</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBx1NltliCs</p> <p>Topic: Corporate Crime</p> <p>Reading: Tombs and Whyte (2015) Selected readings from: <i>The corporate Criminal: Why Corporations Must be Abolished</i>. Rutledge.</p>
<p>Oct 13</p>	<p>No Class – Thanksgiving Monay</p>
<p>Week 6 Oct 20</p>	<p>Topic: Theories of Crimes of the Powerful (CoP) I – Modernity, Bureaucracy, and Denial</p> <p>Readings: David Whyte (2009) <i>The Organization of Domination</i> (Section 5, in Crimes of the Powerful a Reader, Berkshire: Open University Press) pp. 130 – 148</p>

<p>Week 7 Oct 27</p>	<p>Topic: Theories of CoP II – Competition, Differential Association, Anomie</p> <p>Readings: David Whyte (2009) <i>The Organization of Domination</i> (Section 5, in Crimes of the Powerful a Reader, Berkshire: Open University Press) pp. 149 – 164</p>
<p>Nov 3</p>	<p>Reading Week</p>
<p>Week 8 Nov 10</p>	<p>Topic: State and State-Corporate Crime - American led <i>coups</i> and Anti- Communism</p> <p>Reading: Kinzer, Stephen (2006) <i>Overthrow: America’s Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq</i>. Times Books: New York, NY. Pp. 111-128; pp. 195-216.</p>
<p>Week 9 Nov 17</p>	<p>Topic: Examining Globalization and Neoliberalism*</p> <p>Reading: Derber (2013) <i>Sociopathic Globalization and Kochomami Democracy</i>. Pp. 132 – 152</p>
<p>Day 10 Nov 24</p>	<p>Topic: Crimes of Globalization and Global Financial Institutions: WTO, IMF, World Bank</p> <p>Reading: Documentary - <i>The New Rulers of the World</i> (2001). Dir. John Pilger http://johnpilger.com/videos/the-new-rulers-of-the-world</p>
<p>Day 11 Dec 1</p>	<p>Responding to Crimes of the Powerful: Transcending Capitalism and Globalization vs There is No Alternative (TINA)</p> <p>Reading: Graber (2002) For a New Anarchism. <i>New Left Review</i>, 13, 1, pp. 61-74</p>
<p>Day 12 Dec 8</p>	<p>There is No Alternative (TINA)??? – New Social Movements</p> <p>Reading: Howard and Kelly (2019) <i>The Making of a Democratic Economy</i>, Chapter 1.</p>

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.

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

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/

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 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

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

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.