



Sociology 3375F/G (570)
Critical Approach to Policing
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026

Instructor: L. Bikos

Email: levans8@uwo.ca

Course Information

Calendar Description:

This seminar course examines Canadian policing from a critical perspective across its historical roots, contemporary form, and future possibilities. Genders and masculinities, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, socioeconomic status (and their intersections), police culture, organizational structure/operations, resistance and justice, public impacts, and mechanisms for radical transformation are explored.

Antirequisite(s): [Sociology 3325F/G](#) if taken in 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023.

Pre or Corequisites

Prerequisite(s): 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.

Department of Sociology
Kings University College
Critical Approaches to Policing 3375F, Section 570

Instructor: Prof. Lesley Bikos

Email: levans8@uwo.ca

Location: In person

Course Description: This course provides an examination of the institution of policing as a colonial, white supremacist, capitalist, cisheteropatriarchal project through historical, material, and cultural lenses, linking organizational and operational systems of present-day policing to critically exam the police in a broader social context. An investigation into the institution's role in maintaining systemic and structural oppression(s), the impacts on those policed by it (and those who work within it) and an evaluation of various reforms will be the focus of our work together. This course will challenge some of you to view the institution in a new way. For others, it will challenge you to go deeper. The goal of this course is for us, together, to interrogate how systems of power influence what we think public safety is (and why) and explore what community-led safety, care, and justice can (and does) look like. No matter where you are in this journey, you are welcome.

Please note: at times, this course will contain subject matter of police harm and violence. Lectures are created with the assumption that there are those who may have lived experienced of harm. Material is chosen with care and class discussions moderated. However, discussions of police violence, victimization, and systemic 'isms' will occur. Please feel welcome to approach me with any concerns/suggestions.

Prerequisite(s): 1.0 from Sociology courses at the 1000 level or with permission of the instructor. Please know that the university stipulates that unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from the Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the 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 prerequisite(s).

Antirequisite: [Sociology 3325F/G](#) if taken in 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course the student should be able to:

1. Gain an understanding of the institution of policing as a colonial, white supremacist, capitalist, cisheteropatriarchy project through historical, material, and cultural lenses.
2. Critically analyze the institution from the inside through an examination of police culture and operations and their impacts on police officers through an intersectional lens.
3. Connect the internal environment to impacts on public service, with a particular focus on the experiences of equity-denied/marginalized groups.
4. Apply relevant critical theories/concepts to course themes such as abolition, Indigenous Justice, transformative justice, and restorative justice.
5. Evaluate enacted/proposed reforms.
6. Explore examples of community-led safety, care, and justice.

Course Materials: There is nothing to purchase for this course. A list of weekly course materials will be posted to Brightspace.

Contact Information: The best way to reach me is via email at levans8@uwo.ca. I will respond within 48 business hours.

Method of Evaluation

Your final grade for this course will be calculated as follows:

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| 1. Weekly seminars | 30% |
| • Participation (self-assessment chart due Nov. 28) | 15% |
| 2. Reflections x2 | 30% |
| • Reflection 1 (10%) due Sept. 12 (48hr grace period) | |
| • Reflection 2 (20%) due Nov. 14 (48 hr grace period) | |
| 3. Oral Assignment (Nov. 28/Dec. 5) | 25% |

The university requires that a 2000 and above essay course must contain written assignments that meet at least 2500 words and must be so structured that the student is required to demonstrate competence in essay writing to pass the course. Because this is an essay course, the Senate Regulations state that you must pass the essay component to pass the course. That is, the average mark for your written assignments must be at least 50%.

Attendance Requirement: This course requires consistent attendance to do well and support its learning style and outcomes. If you have barriers for this requirement, for example due to family care responsibilities or disability accommodations/access needs, please contact me. I never expect (or desire) you to come to class ill and life happens, so two weeks of class participation/seminar work can be missed without penalty for any reason (you do not have to reach out to me). Your grade for those weeks will be redistributed to the rest of the weekly seminars/participation grades for the semester. Should you miss more than two classes, please reach out to me *within 24 hours of missing class* to make up missed work. Except under exceptional circumstances, requests to make up missed work outside of the 24-hour window will not be accepted and frequently missed classes without prior arrangements/agreements will require a meeting to discuss your progress in the course.

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

Weekly Seminars (30%)

This course is a seminar-style course with a twist. Each week you will submit short answers by 5pm the day before class based on the weekly materials to the same three questions I will provide. These can be written, audio files, video files, Zines or other forms of art that provide enough information for assessment. Each class will consist of time in small groups of your choice to discuss the week's materials, ideas, thinkers, questions you have, observations, connecting lived experience/and or real-life cases if you wish, and so on. Together you will create a few points you wish to bring to the larger group discussion. We will then come together as a class for a larger discussion, where I will provide clarification on points and/or questions, we will make connections to real-life cases and events, and further learning/application to course concepts, theoretical ideas, and resistance movements/actions. Understanding that our best work often comes over the course of a semester, these submissions will not be individually graded but rather reviewed as a whole semester of contributions in deciding your final grade for this portion of the course. A progress report will be provided within the first 5 weeks to allow you time for adjustments as needed.

Participation (15%)

Tied to your weekly seminar grade is an additional participation grade for group and larger class discussions. Because this is a seminar-style course, *attendance with participation/engagement* is required. Our classroom is a community where we will learn together and engage with complex ideas. Being accountable and supportive of each other during weekly class seminars is part of our shared responsibility. This means attendance, completing weekly materials, and meaningful engagement during seminar discussions (both small group and larger class discussions). Frequently missed classes will significantly impact your participation grade as will consistently not being prepared for class or being frequently distracted by technology. On November 28th you will complete a self-assessment participation chart for me to consider in marking your term contributions.

Critical Reflections (30%)

You will submit two critical reflections, one at the start of the term and a second toward the end of term to reflect your journey through the course. The first is a short reflection (10%) outlining your understanding and worldview in relation to the course subject matter (guiding questions will be provided). The first reflection is an informal assignment that does not require citations etc. The second (20%), will reflect on your learning about the people (authors, guest speakers, podcasters, peers, etc.), ideas and/or actions you have learned from/about in this course that may have challenged, transformed, and/or deepened your thinking and/or commitment toward action, explaining why, how, and linking course material to your analysis. The second reflection does require citations and a reference page, but informal writing is fine. Please note: You do not have to align with everything you learn in this course, your reflections are your own and will be marked on your critical engagement and use of evidence to support, not your agreement. The process of thinking through your stance and why has value within itself. Further details will be discussed in class and posted on Brightspace under the content section. A 48-hour grace period is built into both reflection due dates.

Oral Assignment (25%)

In the final two weeks during regular class time (you will only attend one of the days) there will be an individual and in-person oral assignment. You will choose a date and time slot by lottery. Details and instructions will be discussed in class. Should you have accommodations you wish to discuss or barriers to an oral assignment, please make an appointment with me.

Course Outline: A complete list of course materials will be posted to Brightspace. Completion of class materials is required to do well in this course. Weekly topics are subject to change as needed:

September 5th: Introduction (attendance is important):

- Going over the course
- Mapping our Collective Knowledge
- Creating our Community Agreement

September 12th: Policing as a Colonial, White Supremacist, Capitalist, Cisheteropatriarchal Project – the history

- Reform evaluation: First Nations police services
- **Critical Reflection #1 Due**

September 19th: Continued Colonial State Enforcement

- Reform evaluation: Anti-bias training

September 26th: Police Culture and the “Ideal” Police Officer

- Guest speaker, Angie Rivers
- Reform evaluation: External Reporting

October 3rd : Policing Social Issues: Homelessness, Substance Use, Mental Illness(es)

- Reform evaluation: Co-police response

October 10th: Police Use of Force

- Reform evaluation: Body cameras

October 17th: Profiling, Over and Underpolicing: Race and Ethnicity, Religion

- Reform evaluation: Increased diversity

October 24th: Policing Gender and Sexual-based violence

- Reform evaluation: Institutionalized Restorative Justice

October 31st: Police Accountability

- Reform evaluation: Civilian police oversight (e.g. S.I.U., police services boards)

November 7th: Reading Week

November 14th: Defund and Reallocate

- Police Budgets
- **Critical reflection #2 due**

November 21st: Abolition, Indigenous Justice, and Community-Led Safety: A brief overview (SOC 3327G offers an in-depth examination of the ‘how’ locally, nationally, and internationally)

- Short, medium, long-term goals toward transformative change
- **Participation self-assessment due**

November 28th: Oral Assignment (in person during class time)

December 5th: Oral Assignment (in person during class time)

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.