



Sociology 2268f (570)
Policing Mental Health
Fall/ Winter 2026-2027

Instructor: L. Bikos
Email: levans8@uwo.ca

Course Information

Calendar Description:

This course explores two aspects of mental illness and policing: mental illness within policing, focusing on operational and organizational stressors/impacts and police response to people living with mental illness. Issues such as criminalization processes, social determinants of health, equity and justice, and movements for social and structural transformation are explored.

Antirequisite(s): [Sociology 2293F/G](#) if taken in 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023.

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
Policing Mental Health
Soc 2268F, Section 570
Fall 2026**

Instructor: Dr. L. Bikos

Email: levans8@uwo.ca

Location: In person

Office Hours: Wed 11:30am -12:30pm or by appointment (in person, Zoom, phone call)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is divided into two sections. The first section will explore mental health within policing, the causes and impacts, including the impact on public service. The second section will explore the policing and incarceration of persons living with mental illness(es) from historical to current times. We will explore how and why police/prisons remain the front-line response, the issues therein, impacts through intersecting and/or intersectional lens(es), community care responses/programs, and meaningful transformation from systems of criminalization and dehumanization. This inquiry includes the criminal justice system and political, economic, policy, and social influences of who we value, and who we do not. Topics include systemic 'isms,' criminalization and decriminalization, experiences of persons living with mental illness(es) from intersecting social locations and identities, police operational response, police culture, carceral systems, decolonial/anti-colonial responses, disability justice, defunding and abolition, community-led care, current reforms, and evaluation of programs.

Note on content: there will be discussions of systemic systems of oppression and their violence/impacts. Materials are chosen with care and discussions moderated with the understanding that there are people in the course of lived/living experience.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Describe how various carceral systems and levels of government inform the current response to persons living with mental illness(es) across Turtle Island, colonized as North America.
2. Explore the intersecting systemic social and structural failures that often impact those living with mental illnesses, particularly those who also live in poverty and/or are unhoused.
3. Critically analyze the role (and impact) of the police through intersecting and intersectional lenses.
4. Understand the operational and organizational cultural causes and impacts of police officer mental illness(es).
5. Participate knowledgeably in discussions of opportunities for meaningful transformation including reforms, defunding, decolonial/anti-colonial and abolitionist approaches, community-led care as a first response.
6. Apply interdisciplinary theoretical concepts to course content.

Required Texts and Readings: There is no required text for this course. Weekly materials are posted on Brightspace under the corresponding week's content tab. For academic works, citations will be provided for you to access via the OMNI Western library online.

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

In-class Activities (ongoing)	30%
Attendance	10%
Critical Reflection (Due Nov. 11, 72hr grace period)	20%
Group Project (Due Dec. 9 th , 72hr grace period)	20%
• Individual participation/work on project	20%

Detailed descriptions of assignments will be posted on Brightspace.

As per university rules, 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, as per Senate Regulations, you must pass the essay component to pass the course. That is, the average mark for your written assignments must be at least 50%.

Within this course, use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT) is not permitted for any aspects of any work submitted for evaluation.

Attendance Requirement (10%): 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. Life happens, so one week of attendance can be missed for any reason (you do not have to reach out). This supports the pedagogical structure of the course that has a significant component of in-class group work. Your attendance grade for the missed week will be redistributed to your final attendance grade once in the term, after that will be a grade of zero for each week missed. *Frequently missed classes without prior or timely, after class arrangements (exceptional circumstances only), will significantly impact your attendance grade and require a meeting to discuss your progress.*

In-class Activities/Participation (Ongoing, 30%):

Throughout the term there will be four in-class activities to assist you in the understanding of, and critical engagement with, course materials and your assignments (group project and critical reflection). These are group activities based on course teachings and course materials assigned for that week. You are required to be in class to complete these activities, and they will be submitted to Brightspace at the end of class. You can miss one in-class activity for any reason. This grade will be redistributed amongst your other three submissions. Any other missed in-class activities without formal academic accommodation will be assigned a zero. For exceptional circumstances, please contact me as soon as possible.

Critical Reflection (20%): You will submit a written critical reflection tied to course materials, class discussions, and/or guest speakers to reflect on your journey through the course. Further details will be posted on Brightspace under the content section. There is a 72-hour grace period after the due date, for any reason. For extensions past this date, please reach out.

Group Project (40% -- 20% final group product/20% individual work):

Mariame Kaba asks, “What would the country look like if it had billions of extra dollars to spend on housing, food and education for all?”

Conducting an inquiry into why, how, where, who, and the structural and systemic causes/impacts of compounding marginalizations in a local context, your group will conduct an in-depth analysis of local resource allocation, why it matters, and what you would do differently (and why). Using the resources provided, course materials/content, and those you find on your own, you will learn about London’s 2024-2027 multi-year municipal budget, its implications for increased criminalization, and the impacts of under resourcing community-led root causes/prevention work. Based on these inquiries and course teachings, your group will create your own budget with a focus on meaningful change – what would you prioritize and why? The group final product is worth 20% of the final 40%. Each member of the group will outline their contributions to the project and include their rough research/notes/contributions for assessment, worth the other 20%. As a result, members of the same group may end up with different project grades. Further instructions will be posted to Brightspace. There is a 72- hour grace period after the due date, for any reason. Academic consideration after this date for the group project and individual submission requires submission of formal supporting documentation to academic accommodations.

Course Outline: Please note this is a preliminary schedule and subject to change

Week	Date	Description	Assignments Due
1	Sept. 9	Course Introduction	Please plan to attend
2	Sept. 16	Police officer mental health: organizational and operational causes	
3	Sept. 23	Police officer mental health: organizational and operational causes continued	Class activity 1
4	Sept. 30	No class – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation	
5	Oct. 7	History of responses to mental illness(es) and institutionalization: Systemic racism, colonization, capitalism, patriarchy, ableism, heteronormativity, classism, intersections therein	Webinar, take notes
6	Oct. 14	Reading week – Enjoy!	
7	Oct. 21	Connecting the historical to ongoing settler colonialism, systemic racism, classism and poverty, ableism, capitalism, patriarchy - Criminalization of poverty, homelessness, drug use, mental illness The state, police and criminal justice system	Class activity 2

8	Oct. 28	Public health and harm reduction as a response to criminalization	Class activity 3
9	Nov. 4	Criminalization of mental illness: The criminal justice system, seeking justice and meaningful change	Guest speaker
10	Nov. 11	Experiences of persons living with mental illness(es): police and prisons	Class Activity 4 Critical reflection due (72hr grace period)
11	Nov. 18	Experiences of persons living with mental illness(es) continued: Current programs: an evaluation of reforms E.g., Crisis Intervention Teams with co-police response	Group work, final project
12	Nov. 25	Transformation: e.g., Indigenous-led responses, defunding, decriminalization, abolition, community care	Guest speaker
13	Dec. 2	Transformation: e.g., Indigenous-led responses, defunding, decriminalization, abolition, community care	Group work, final project
14	Dec. 9	Last Class – group work	Group project due (72hr grace period)

**KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2026-27**

1. Academic Accommodations (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 at [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible, and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>.

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this which assessment has been designated as requiring documentation for consideration (that is, exempt from undocumented absences).
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

If an instructor has built flexibility into their assessments (e.g., “complete 8 of 10 quizzes”), this flexibility will already address consideration needs and thus academic consideration may be denied.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** 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 (i.e., you are scheduled to write 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](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their 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.

3. Support Services

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

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

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

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

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based 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 experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's 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 (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. 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://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

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.

6. 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 https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.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 you instructor to check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course.** Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.