



Sociology 3361f (570)
Crimes of the Powerful
Fall/ Winter 2026-2027

Instructor: M. Courey
Email: mcourey2@uwo.ca

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.

Sociology 3361F (570)
Department of Sociology

SOCIOLOGY 3361F: Crimes of the Powerful Fall 2026
Section 570

DETAILED COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Instructor: Dr. Michael Courey

E-mail: mcourey2@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Wednesdays 5:30 to 6:30 or by appointment

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 – At no extra cost

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: See the 2026–2027 Academic Calendar for official add/drop and withdrawal deadlines.

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 five evaluation components of the course.

(1) **Two In-Class Tests (15% each x 2 = 30%)**

Tests will be held during Week 4 and Week 9. Each test will be completed in person during class time and will take up to one hour. Tests will include some multiple choice and some written answers.

(2) **In Class Participation (15%)**

Students will be awarded 15% of their grade for participating in in-class 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%)**

The final exam will be written in person during the university examination period. It will assess students' ability to apply and synthesize the knowledge accumulated throughout the semester. More details will be provided in class.

Timetable and Schedule of Assignments

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

Activity	Due Date	Grade Value
In-Class Tests	Two tests during class time Test 1 – Week 4 (Oct 7) Test 2 – Week 9 (Nov. 11)	2 x 15%
Presentation	Date to be selected by student (3 to 4 students each class will present) – 10-15 minute presentation	20%
In Class Participation	Students are expected to participate throughout the semester. Students will be graded for attendance and more heavily for contributing thoughts and insights to class discussions and lectures.	15%
Final Exam	Date to be determined by the University – in-person exam	35%

LECTURE TOPIC & READINGS

Week 1 Sept 9	Topic: Introduction and overview of the course – Some Basic Definitions and Key Terms Reading: Hillyard and Tombs (2004). Beyond Criminology. 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
Week 2 Sept 16	Topic: Ideology – Capitalism, Socialism, left and right 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.
Week 3 Sept 23	Topic: State Routinized Crime Reading: Barak, Gregg. (2017). Chapter 1: Capitalism, Corporations, and Criminality. In <i>Unchecked Corporate Power</i>. Routledge
Sept 30 No Class	NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION
Week 4 ** Oct 7	IN-CLASS TEST 1 (up to 1 hour) Topic: Corporate Crime Reading: Tombs and Whyte (2015) Selected readings from: <i>The Corporate Criminal: Why Corporations Must be Abolished</i>. Routledge.
Oct 14	No Class – Fall Reading Week (October 10–18)
Week 5 Oct 21	Topic: Building Empire: Maintaining Capitalist Control Reading: Documentary – Requiem for the American Dream. (2015) Directors. Kelly Nyks, Peter Hutchison, Jared Scott. Featuring – Noam Chomsky Topic: Corporate Crime Reading: Tombs and Whyte (2015) Selected readings from: <i>The Corporate Criminal: Why Corporations Must be Abolished</i>. Routledge.
Week 6 Oct 28	Topic: Theories of Crimes of the Powerful (CoP) I – Modernity, Bureaucracy, and Denial 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

Week 7 Nov 4	Topic: Theories of CoP II – Competition, Differential Association, Anomie 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
Week 8 Nov 11	Topic: State and State-Corporate Crime - American led coups and Anti-Communism 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.
Week 9 ** Nov 18	IN-CLASS TEST 2 (up to 1 hour) Topic: Examining Globalization and Neoliberalism* Reading: Derber (2013) <i>Sociopathic Globalization and Kochomami Democracy</i>. Pp. 132 – 152
Week 10 Nov 25	Topic: Crimes of Globalization and Global Financial Institutions: WTO, IMF, World Bank Reading: Documentary - <i>The New Rulers of the World</i> (2001). Dir. John Pilger
Week 11 Dec 2	Responding to Crimes of the Powerful: Transcending Capitalism and Globalization vs There is No Alternative (TINA) Reading: Graber (2002) For a New Anarchism. <i>New Left Review</i>, 13, 1, pp. 61-74
Week 12 Dec 9	There is No Alternative (TINA)??? – New Social Movements Reading: Howard and Kelly (2019) <i>The Making of a Democratic Economy</i>, Chapter 1.

**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.