



**Lakehead**  
UNIVERSITY

**Law and Society**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**  
**January 2023 - April 2023**

Course Lecturer: TBD

Email: within the D2L environment (All correspondence concerning this course should be sent from inside the D2L system.)

**Course Description:**

An examination of different theoretical approaches to the relationship between law and society.

**Aims and Objectives**

This course explores the changing relationship between Canadian society and the law. We will discuss ideas about the relationship between law and society starting with the classical sociologists - Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and Karl Marx. Then we consider how contemporary theorists who base their ideas in intersectional feminist, anti-racist and anti-poverty theories, consider the relationship between law and society. One key question that we will explore is the question of to what laws initiate and reinforce processes of social change that are already in place or underway, and to what extent the law lags behind or follows social changes that are already existent. The course concludes with an experiential learning project in which students observe a local courtroom. This project has two parts: (1) a description of what was observed and (2) a theoretical analysis of people's actual interactions with the legal system.

**Course Goals and Main Learning Objectives:**

- To be able to think critically about the interaction between social change and the law in Canada.
- To better understand how social movements have shaped the development of Canadian law.
- To provide foundational knowledge about the law and society relevant to the types of careers that social scientists tend to pursue (e.g. education; policing; corrections; social work, local, provincial and federal civil service; legal careers; policy analysis, social research, human resources, business; advocacy and support).
- To understand how social theory can be used to analyze social processes in the real-world setting of a local court.
- To improve communication skills through the completion of written assignments.

- To develop professional online forum discussion skills through participation in online discussions, showing respect for others' views whilst still tackling complex and sometimes controversial issues.

## Assessment

Assignment	Due date	Percentage of grade
Discussion Forum Participation	Throughout (see below)	30%
Preparation Notes	Throughout (see below)	40% (8 notes x 5%)
Final Assignment	TBA	30%

## Assignment Descriptions:

### *Participation:*

Participation involves discussing your thoughts, but also responding respectfully to the comments of others. Many of the topics discussed in this course are controversial, so respectful listening and sharing are essential skills. Given that we are working in an online environment, we must be aware that the written words can come sometimes come across as flat and harsh. We can't soften the effects of our words with smiles and friendly voices. This means that we have to be extra careful not to be sharp in our tone or write in such a way as to flame one another. This is especially true when we are tired or sitting up late at night after a busy day. Be polite and kind as we discuss these interesting and challenging topics!

Each week there will be an online forum with a topic for you to discuss. You are expected to make one thoughtful, polite and helpful post and comment on at least one other person's post.

### *Preparation Notes:*

This course emphasizes discussion and participation. Preparing for class discussions is an essential university skill. To state the obvious, it is very hard to discuss material that you have not read! In this course, your preparation will be structured through the use of a Reading Template. This reading form will be completed for each week, and uploaded into the D2L Dropbox. At first you may find you are slow to fill in the template. After a few weeks, you will discover your ability to pick out the major ideas really improves.

There are eight preparation notes to be developed using the template.



***Final assignment:***

SOCI-4250 The final assignment will be a 10-15 page essay about a virtual courtroom observation and analysis. Tribunals and courts have gone online since the beginning of the pandemic, so your court visits will be online also. Instructions will be given for this assignment, so please don't start in advance of them.

***Due Date Policy and Deductions:***

Preparation notes deadlines are listed on the Schedule. If they are late, they will be graded out of 4 points instead of 5 points. Please note that the topic for each preparation note is due the *following* week from the week it first appears on the syllabus to allow you time to digest the material.

The Final assignment date is listed on the Schedule. If it is late, a flat 10% deduction will be made unless an extension has been given.

***Key Texts and Screenings:***

The main text book for this course will *The Legal-Rational Society and its Critics*. This will be provided to you on the website, with a chapter for each topic. It contains many real- life examples, discussion and case material. It focuses mainly on Canada, but there are some international examples. Its main goal is to help us understand social change and its relationship to the law.

Jennifer Jarman and Zoe Sebastien. 2019. *The Legal-Rational Society and its Critics*.

***Films:***

There are a number of documentary films and online media clips that will support our learning in relation to the theme of the relationship of law and society. These are available through links on the website. If any of the links won't work when you try them, let me know immediately.

***Course Expectations:***

1. Communications. Email correspondence should be through D2L. Please include a
2. subject line that includes the course code "SOCI 4250".
3. The success of the discussions depends upon the active participation of all members.
4. It is important that you learn to organize your time well so that



you are able to meet your deadlines. This is particularly important at "peak periods" such as the end-of-term when many assignments from different courses must be handed in at the same time. If circumstance arise in your personal life that threaten your success and/or continuation in the course, contacting student advising to create a management strategy appropriate to the situation. The advisors have helped many a student successfully survive a difficult term. If you begin to fall behind, please contact me to make arrangements to catch up.

5. Assignments must be typed, double-spaced. To facilitate grading, all work must be uploaded into the D2L Dropboxes. Assignments will not be accepted via email or on paper.
6. Assignments are evaluated on the basis of sophistication of content and writing style (including organization of material, spelling, grammar, quality of expression and referencing). Originality of thought is important, as is evidence of critical thinking. Always spell-check and grammar-check your work. *Grammarly*, an online editing tool, is very helpful. Having another student proofread your assignments is a very good idea.
7. Regulations on plagiarism and cheating are enforced. Failing to cite the source, when the ideas or writings of others are used, constitutes plagiarism. Please be aware of the University guidelines on plagiarism. If you have any doubts about the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable practices, please discuss them with me to avoid problems. Please familiarize yourself with the university's policy:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/provost-vice-president-academic/academic-integrity-plans-policies/academic-dishonesty-regulations>

8. Students who need accommodations, please make sure that I know about them as soon as possible.

***Schedule:***

Week	Topics	Prep Notes / Assignments Due	Discussion Forum Post Due
01	Introduction		



	How to Read This Book		
	Icebreaker Discussion		
02	Race and Religion	Prep Note 1 uploaded on (Topic: Introduction chapter)	Forum 1
03	Immigration	Prep Note 2 (Topic: Race & Religion)	Forum 2
04	Refugees	Prep Note 3 (Topic: Immigration)	Forum 3
05	Gender	Prep Note 4 (Topic: Refugees)	Forum 4
06	Sexuality	Prep Note 5 (Topic: Gender)	Forum 5
07	Reading Week		
08	Courts and Legislatures	Prep Note 6 (Topic: Sexuality)	Forum 6
09	Class and Poverty	Prep Note 7 (Topic: Courts and Legislatures)	Forum 7
10	Crime	Prep Note 8 (Topic: Class and Poverty)	Forum 8
11	How does Sociology help us to understand?	(no prep note)	Forum 9
12	Where to from Here?	(no prep note)	Forum 10
13	Symposium	Final Assignment	