



DEPARTMENT Humanities and Social Sciences

COURSE OUTLINE - Winter 2026

SO2600(A3): Inequality and Social Stratification - 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR:	Dr. Michael Holland	PHONE:	780-539-2973
OFFICE:	C404	E-MAIL:	mholland@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS	Fridays 10-11 am; or by appointment		

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: An introduction to the study of structured social inequalities and poverty, major theoretical approaches, and findings from key empirical studies, with emphasis on Canada.

PREREQUISITE(S):

Complete 1 of the following
Completed the following:
SO1000 - Introductory Sociology (3)

Equivalent course

COREQUISITE(S):

None

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

All readings are open-access (free). Links are included in the weekly schedule and in the readings module on myClass. The film will be shown in class; no purchase is required.

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of the course, students will:

- gain an understanding of various class positions in Canadian society
- gain an understanding of how one's position (social status) at birth affects social standing later in life
- gain an understanding of how social class impacts health and well-being, family and work life, and personal values – the consequences of social stratification
- learn the practical realities of implementing anti-poverty programs and policies.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.alberta.ca>

**** For courses with alpha (letter) grading, a grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

EVALUATIONS:

Assessment	Weight
News Quizzes (10)	10%
Sociological Film Analysis (Parasite)	10%
In-Class Activities, Exit Surveys & Participation	25%
Policy Project (4 Stages)	25%
Take-Home Final Exam	30%
Total	100%

News Quizzes

You will complete 10 short quizzes based on a current Canadian news story related to inequality (introduced in class by the instructor). These quizzes assess your ability to connect real-world events to core sociological concepts. Quizzes are open-book and completed on D2L outside of class time.

Sociological Film Analysis (*Parasite*)

You will write a short analysis of the film *Parasite*, using course ideas to explain how the film represents inequality, power, and class dynamics. This assignment focuses on applying sociological concepts rather than summarizing the movie.

In-Class Activities, Exit Surveys & Participation

Throughout the semester, you will complete brief activities, applied exercises, and end-of-class exit surveys. These are designed to reinforce key ideas, encourage participation, and help you practise thinking sociologically. Most activities are completed during class time; exit surveys ask you to reflect on what you learned.

Policy Project (4 Stages)

Across four scaffolded stages, you will design a sociological policy proposal addressing a real inequality issue in Canada. You will identify a problem, review sociological evidence, develop a feasible intervention, and communicate your plan in a clear, applied format. Each stage receives feedback to support your final submission.

Take-Home Final Exam

The final exam is a take-home, open-book assessment that asks you to apply concepts and evidence from the course to a major sociological question. You may use your notes, readings, and course materials. Clear writing and strong connections to course ideas are expected.

Rubrics and detailed instructions for each assignment will be provided in class and posted on myClass.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most institutions will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

Grading Chart

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines		Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100		C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94		C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84		C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79		D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76		D	1.0	50-54

B-	2.7	70-72		F	0.0	00-49
----	-----	-------	--	---	-----	-------

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Week	Topic	Required Readings	Assessments / Activities
Week 1 Jan 7	Course Overview & Foundations of Inequality	BCcampus Sociology – Ch. 9.1	Ungraded Syllabus Quiz; Intro Exit Survey; News Story Introduced
Week 2 Jan 12, 14	Power, Privilege & Intersectionality	BCcampus Sociology – Ch. 9.2; Ch. 11.1–11.2	News Quiz 1; Exit Survey
Week 3 Jan 19, 21	Class, Poverty & Economic Inequality	BCcampus Sociology – Ch. 9.3; Statistics Canada Poverty Data	News Quiz 2; Exit Survey; Policy Stage 1 Due
Week 4 Jan 26, 28	Gender & Inequality	BCcampus Sociology – Ch. 11; Statistics Canada Gender Wage Gap	News Quiz 3; Exit Survey
Week 5 Feb 2, 4	Race, Indigeneity & Ethnic Inequality	BCcampus Sociology – Ch. 15; Government of Canada Systemic Racism Overview	News Quiz 4; Exit Survey; Policy Stage 2 Due
Week 6 Feb 9, 11	Film Screening – Parasite (In Class)	–	Film Viewing; Exit Survey; Film Analysis Assigned
Week 7	No classes (NWP Winter Break: Feb. 17–21, 2026)		
Week 8 Feb 23, 25	Life-Course Inequality: Age, Family & Care	BCcampus Sociology – Ch. 12–13	News Quiz 5; Exit Survey
Week 9 Mar 2, 4	Work, Labour & Precarity	BCcampus Sociology – Ch. 16; StatCan Precarious Employment	News Quiz 6 ; Exit Survey; Policy Stage 3 Workshop
Week 10 Mar 9, 11	Education & Social Reproduction	BCcampus Sociology – Ch. 14; StatCan Postsecondary Access	News Quiz 7; Exit Survey
Week 11 Mar 16, 18	Health & Social Determinants of Health	BCcampus Sociology – Ch. 17; Government of Canada – SDOH	News Quiz 8; Exit Survey
Week 12 Mar 23, 25	Film Discussion & Sociological Analysis (recap film, Parasite)	–	Film Analysis Due; Exit Survey

Week 13 Mar 30, Apr 1	Policy, Power & Social Change in Canada	Govt of Canada Child Benefit; PBO Inequality Report	News Quiz 9; Exit Survey
Week 14 Apr 6, 8	Canadian Inequality Case Synthesis	Student Case Materials & News Stories	News Quiz 10; Exit Survey
Week 15 Apr 13	Final Review & Synthesis	–	Course Review; Final Exam Prep; Policy Final Paper Due
Final Exam Period	Take-Home Final Exam	–	

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Ultimately, you are responsible for your learning and performance in this course. Your grades are posted to myClass, so please be sure you are tracking them there. If you believe there is an error, please let your instructor know.

Submission, Late Policies, & Issues of Intellectual Concern:

- Equally important to learn and apply professional communication skills, such as writing proper e-mail messages, it is important to learn to meet deadlines. Complete your assignments on time!
- Late assignments will be deducted 5% per day (including weekends). If you anticipate a difficulty meeting a deadline, please contact me as early as possible so we can discuss options.
- Incomplete assignments will receive a grade of 0 unless you have a valid reason supported with appropriate documentation (i.e., a medical note from an M.D.) and you discuss it with me well in advance of any due date.
- In cases where submitted work exhibits concerning patterns or raises questions for the instructor about its creation and the student's intellectual effort involved, students may be required to submit to an oral examination regarding the work at the discretion of the instructor. Failure to participate in the oral examination will result in an assigned grade of 0 for the assessment. If, following the oral examination, the instructor still has concerns about the work, the academic misconduct provisions of the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy (linked below) may be applied.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and

Responsibilities policy available <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/polytechnic-leadership/policies-directory>.

****Note:** all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Attendance:

Because many activities take place during class time, regular attendance is important. Missed in-class work cannot be made up. If you need to leave class early, please let me know before class begins whenever possible. Repeated early departures without notice may affect your participation grade. Emergencies are, of course, understood.

Devices:

Phones and laptops should be put away during lectures and discussions, unless we are using them for a class activity (polls, worksheets, readings, etc.) or there is an emergency. I often use menti.com for in-class engagement. Off-task device use may impact your participation grade and can be distracting for those around you.

Professional Conduct:

Please be aware that I respect that everyone's time is valuable, and I ask that you afford me and your classmates the same courtesy.

- Instead of preoccupying your mind with questions such as, "How do I get an 'A'?", ask yourself, "How can I work to expand my knowledge, perspective, and outlook on the real world?"
- Please only use your NWP email account to contact me to avoid having your message blocked by spam filters.
- Always include "SO2600" in the subject line, or I may not receive your message.
- Finally, in our academic environment, please practice writing emails formally. For example, use a simple greeting, avoid slang or abbreviations, and always sign off with your name.

Use of AI-Generated Content:

You are expected to complete all course work using your own understanding and effort. Submitting work that is primarily generated by AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Gemini, or similar tools) without permission is considered a form of academic misconduct. Your assignments must reflect your own thinking, interpretation, and engagement with the course material. AI tools may be used in limited ways, such as for brainstorming, outlining, or basic grammar checking, but not for generating full answers or analysis. If you use AI in any way, you must clearly acknowledge how it

was used in your submission. If you are unsure whether a tool is appropriate, please check with me first.