SOCI 2112 WAO	Power and Social Change	Winter 2026

Dates: January 4, 2026 – April 6, 2026
Location: OA 2015
Time: 11:30am-1:00pm

Instructor:	**Dr. Steven Richardson**
Email:	**srichar9@lakeheadu.ca**
Office Hours	**by appointment (email)**

Description

This course introduces students to a variety of critical and historical perspectives on power and everyday life, and how these theoretical and methodological approaches can help us actively understand relations of production and consumption in our daily lives. Through weekly readings, discussions and workshop activities, students will learn to identify a range of material and symbolic culture in order to explore and evaluate everyday social interactions and relations of power. Students will gain an appreciation of how power and social change shapes who we are and what we can be.

Through written assignments and presentations, this course enables students to advance their own interests around topics that concern them related to the impacts of contemporary social, political, economic, or technological developments, such as: artificial intelligence, authoritarianism, political resistance, mis/disinformation, (in)equality and poverty, colonization, etc.

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will learn how social change shapes who we are and what we can be. This course is dedicated to enabling students to reflect and question various aspects of everyday life and social change, and better see the relations of power etched into these structures.

This is a seminar-style course, meaning active participation and regular discussion of the readings and topics is essential.

Readings

All readings will be provided as PDFs on our D2L course site.

Evaluation (Participation + 4 Assignments)

Participation: **20%**
In order to ensure the success of this course, you should read all of the required texts prior to each class/presentation and demonstrate this through participation in discussions. Grades for participation consist of:

a. **Attendance (5%):** Attendance will be taken each class
b. **Participation (15%):** Active participation during class group activities and student presentations (e.g., completion of handouts).

Assignment #1: **Observing the Everyday 20%**
Students will conduct six (6) hours of public observations and write 2 short essays (2 pages each) on a choice of topics provided by the instructor. Instructions available on D2L.

Assignment #2: **Everyday Strategies and Tactics 20%**
Students will conduct basic library research and write 3 short essays (2 pages each) on a choice of topics provided by the instructor. Instructions available on D2L.

Assignment #3: **Group activity/in-class activities 20% (5% each)**
Students will complete four (4) in-class activities on topics selected by the instructor.

3a. Class group activity 1: Observing Culture – students will form into groups in class and complete the associated worksheet.
3b. Documentary Reflection – students will submit a 1-page paper (double spaced) consisting of their reflections, thoughts, and connections to class (or other academic) content after watching a documentary that will be screened in class the week before winter break.
3c. Class group activity 2: Social Location – students will form into groups in class and complete the associated worksheet.
3d. Domesticity and/or Waste – based on March 9/11 discussion and readings, students will submit a 1-page paper (double spaced) considering the unknown and unexamined aspects of their everyday lives, specifically the waste you create and how you manage it; your changing habits (if any); and the discursive dimensions of the clean/unclean.

Assignment #4: **Power & Everyday Technologies (in class presentation) 20%**
Students will prepare a brief (5 minute) presentation and provide a one-page handout on a topic provided by the instructor. Instructions available on D2L.

Please reach out to me early if you need help on how to prepare a presentation using PowerPoint (available for free to you as a student, see: https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/helpdesk/software/software_available/office-365-for-students-staff

You can also use any other software you like (e.g., Zoom recording, Canva, etc.), as long as you submit your presentation materials on your presentation date (i.e., uploaded to D2L).

Readings, Weekly Topics and Schedule:

Date	Topic	Readings and Discussion	Assignment
Jan 5 *Jan 7*	Social Change/Everyday Life	- Course syllabus -Ben Highmore, "Questioning everyday life" (pp. 1-34 in *The Everyday Life Reader, 2002*)	
Jan 12 *Jan 14*	Situating Power in Everyday Life	-Betty Friedan, "The problem that has no name" (pp. 58-62 in *The Everyday Life Reader, 2002*) -Erving Goffman, "Front and back regions of everyday life" (pp. 50-57 in *The Everyday Life Reader, 2002*) -Raymond Williams, "Culture is ordinary" (pp. 91-100 in *The Everyday Life Reader, 2002*)	
Jan 19 *Jan 21*	Mass Observation	-Ben Highmore, "Mass-Observation: A science of everyday l*d Cultural Theory, 2002*) -Mass Observation, "Two letters and 'They speak for themselves'" (pp. 145-152 in *The Everyday Life Reader, 2002*)	Jan 21 – Assignment #3a. Class Group Activity 1: Observing Culture
Jan 26 *Jan 28*	Experiencing change	-Guy Debord, "Perspectives for conscious alterations in everyday life" (pp. 237-245 in *The Everyday Life Reader, 2002*) and "Separation perfected" (pp. 11-24 in *Society of the Spectacle, 2006*) -Ben Highmore, "Henri Lefebvre's dialectics of everyday life" (pp. 113-144 *The Everyday Life Reader, 2002*)	Presentation assignment date selection opens
Feb 2 *Feb 4*	Progress	**-** Nathan Kowalksy, "The Baconian project" and "The doctrine of progress" (pp. 141-178 in *Western Technoscience, 2025*)	
Feb 9 & 11, (2 classes)	Documentary Screening	*Hypernormalisation (2016)*	Assignment #3b. paper due **Feb 11** (at end of class)
Feb 14-20, 2027)	****WINTER BREAK (no class)****		

Feb 23 *Feb 25*	'For the People'	-Michel de Certeau, "General introduction to the practice of everyday life" (pp. 63-75 in *The Everyday Life Reader, 2002*) -Ben Highmore, "Michel de Certeau's poetics of everyday life" (pp. 145-173 in *Everyday life and Cultural Theory, 2002*) -Dorothy Smith, "A feminist methodology" (pp. 271-281)	Assignment #1 – Observing the Everyday due **Feb 25** Assignment #3c. Class group activity 2: Social Location
Mar 2 *Mar 4*	Domesticity	-Jean Baudrillard, "Structures of interior design" (pp. 308-318 in *The Everyday Life Reader, 2002*) -Luce Giard, "Doing cooking" (pp. 319-324 in *The Everyday Life Reader, 2002*) -Daniel Miller, "Making love in supermarkets" (pp. 339-345 in *The Everyday Life Reader, 2002*)	
Mar 9 *Mar 11*	Waste	-Jeff Farrell, "Street knowledge" and "Scrapped together" (pp. 73-95 & 129-159 in *Empire of Scrounge, 2005*) -Warwick Anderson, "Introduction: modern excrementalities and postcolonic biopolitics" and "The sewage panopticon" (pp. 1-30 in *Spectacles of Waste, 2025)*	Assignment #2. 'Everyday Strategies and Tactics' paper due **Mar 9** Assignment #3d. paper due **Mar 15**
Mar 16 *Mar 18*	**Student Presentations**		
Mar 23 *Mar 25*	**Student Presentations**		
Mar 30 *Apr 1*	**Student Presentations**		
Apr 6	**Student Presentations/no class (TBD)**		

COURSE & UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Assignment Policies

- There is a penalty for assignments handed in late (2% per day).
- Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to the University regulations. See for more details, Lakehead University New Student Code of Conduct: Academic Integrity: https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-conduct/academic-integrity/node/51239

Lakehead University Grading Scale	
A+	90-100%
A	80-89%
B	70-79%
C	60-69%
D	50-59%
E Fail	40-49%
F Fail	1-39%
F Academic Dishonesty	0%

Contact and Email Policy

When communicating with the instructor or the graduate assistants, use of your official Lakehead email is required. When emailing please include the subject line "INTD 3011" and a short description. Remember to keep your emails polite, direct, and to-the-point. Before emailing me, please ensure your question is not answered in the syllabus or on the course website. If it is, I may not respond. Please keep in mind that email is for short inquiries only. For questions, concerns, and issues that require a longer reply (more than 1-2 sentences), please make use of my online office hours. I will not discuss grades or assessments via email, please visit online office hours to discuss these matters. If I have not replied to your message within 48 hours (not including weekends) please send a reminder. Do not expect replies over the weekend.

Accommodations

Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and register as early as possible.

Accommodations are in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the course.

Lakehead Policy on Generative AI Tools

Generative artificial intelligence (Generative AI or GenAI) is a category of AI systems capable

GenAI tools can provide valuable assistance and support in academic work. However, it is essential to use them responsibly and ethically. The following information and guidelines apply to the use of AI-based tools in this course:

a. **Student Responsibility**– It is the responsibility of the student to understand the limitations of AI-based tools. While these tools can provide suggestions and insights, final decisions and critical thinking should come from the student's own understanding and effort. Before submitting, review your work with this in mind. If you don't understand what type of GenAI usage is appropriate, ask the course instructor for clarification.

b. **Formative Usage**– In this class, you may use GenAI for formative, but not summative, work. That means it can be used as a "possibility engine" (brainstorm tool), a "study buddy," a "collaboration coach," a "guide on the side," a "personal tutor," a "co-designer," etc. to help you learn course content, but it cannot be used as the primary vehicle for any work that is submitted for marks or evaluation. (See UNESCO's "ChatGPT and Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education Quick Start Guide," page 9, for explanations and examples of these and other roles GenAI can productively serve in a formative capacity.)

c. **Error & Bias**– AI content is created by computer algorithms that have been trained using large amounts of data. The AI learns from patterns and examples in the data to generate new content that resembles what it has been trained on. If the training data used to train the AI model is biased or limited in scope, the AI may reproduce content that is inaccurate, incomplete, offensive, and/or biased. Students should weigh this as they consider material produced by AI.

d. **Trustworthiness**– Generative AI can be vulnerable to manipulation and misuse. It can be used to generate fake news, misinformation, or deepfake content, which can have harmful consequences. Students should check AI generated content against reputable sources.

e. **Plagiarism**– Since writing and ability to think critically are learning outcomes of this course, all work submitted for evaluation must be the student's original work. Using the work of others (including content curated/generated by AI) without proper citation is considered plagiarism. See "Citing Artificial Intelligence" for assistance with correct documentation.

f. **Citation of Sources**– If you use material generated by an AI program for an assignment in this course, it must be cited like any other source (with due consideration for the quality of the source, which may be judged as poor). Failure to do so will be considered a violation of academic integrity. See Student Code of Conduct – Academic Integrity.

LAKEHEAD RESOURCES

The Student Success Centre has many programs and support services in place to help you achieve your academic and personal goals while studying at Lakehead University. They provide academic support through tutoring services, career exploration, co-operative opportunities and leadership development. More information is available here https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-success-centre.

The Lakehead Library provides access to resources, study rooms, and research support both online via chat and in person with more details available here https://library.lakeheadu.ca/. Public Computer Labs are available on campus where you may write and/or print out your work. For more details go to https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/helpdesk/computer-labs.

Student Life and Services offers health and wellness resources both on and off campus, as well as opportunities for involvement in health and wellness activities. More information is available here https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-services/or.

Office of Human Rights and Equity. You have the right to an education that is free from any form of discrimination. A wide variety of resources are available here https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/human-rights-and-equity/resources.