

St. Francis Xavier University
Department of Sociology

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY (SOCI 101.15)

Fall 2017

Lecture Room: SNP 100
Mondays: 2:15pm – 3:30pm
Wednesdays: 2:15pm – 3:30pm

Instructor: Stephen Marmura

Email: smarmura@stfx.ca

Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00am – 1:00pm; Thursdays 1:00pm – 3:00pm;
Fridays 12:00pm – 1:00pm; or by appointment
Office: Annex 111C

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology is concerned with identifiable patterns of belief, activity and organization which arise in the course of human interaction, and which in turn create the social individual. This course is designed to familiarize students with the foundations of sociology as a discipline. We consider the origins of sociology as a specific area of academic study, its leading schools of thought, primary methods of research and some of the main concerns of sociological investigation today. Students are encouraged to think critically about the nature of social life and culture, while gaining greater insight with respect to the forces and circumstances shaping their own world views, motivations and values.

Required Course Material

Murray Knuttila and Andre Magnon. *Introducing Sociology: A Critical Approach*. 5th edition. Oxford, 2012.

John J. Macionis, Nijole V. Benokraitis and Peter Urmetzer. *Classic, Contemporary, and Cross-Cultural Readings in Sociology*. 4th Canadian Edition. Pearson, 2014.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Class Participation:

While there is no specific grade for class participation in this course, students are expected to attend class regularly and repeated absences will be noted. Keep in mind that lectures and course readings are meant to *complement* one another, and I will often refer to ideas and examples in class which are not drawn directly from the readings. You will find that the term moves quickly and that lectures are critical for gaining a better appreciation and understanding of the various perspectives provided in your text and reader. You are expected to be familiar with *all* course material. In addition, a considerable amount of class time will be devoted to discussion. This is an important way for students to more fully digest course material and gain deeper insight with respect to both readings and lecture material.

You alone are responsible for keeping your own course notes. I do not provide these online and I do not email them to students. If you have missed a class for a legitimate reason (e.g. a documented absence due to medical concerns) and want to go over what was covered during the lecture in question, then please come and visit me during my office hours.

October Quiz: 15% of final grade

Date: Oct. 14 (in class)

November test: 25% of final grade

Date: Nov. 6 (in class)

Critical Response Paper: 20% of final grade

Due: last day of class

Note: A general outline for the response paper is provided at the back of this syllabus.

Final Exam: 40% of final grade

Date: TBA

Please note: For reasons of both security and practicality *I do not email individual grades* on tests, papers or exams to students. Such requests will not be responded to. If you were absent when a test or paper was handed back, want to look over a final exam (these are not handed back) or want to discuss a grade, then please come and see me during my office hours.

COURSE OUTLINE

Note: All chapters referred to below (by number) correspond to those in your textbook. All readings referred to by title are taken from the reader.

Sept. (6) Introduction to Course

Sept. (11, 13) Thinking sociologically

Chapter 1

Hunting Humans
Elliot Leyton

Sept. (18, 20) Biology, Culture and the question of 'Human Nature'

Chapters 2 & 3

Sept. (25, 27) Socialization and human subjectivity

Chapter 4

"The Self"
George Herbert Mead

Oct. (2, 4) Sociological Theory and the problem of Modernity

Chapter 7

Alienated Labour
Karl Marx

The Disenchantment of Modern Life
Max Weber

Oct. (9) Thanksgiving Day (no class)

Oct. (11) **Quiz** 15% (in class)

Oct. (16, 18) Modernity cont.

The Price of Modernization: The Case of Brazil's Kaiapo Indians
Marlise Simons

"The Presentation of Self"
Erving Goffman

Oct. (23, 25) Culture and Cultural Change: the role of 'base and superstructure'

India's Sacred cow
Marvin Harris

"Manifesto of the Communist Party"
Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels

"Facebook: Friend or Foe"
Daniel Trottier

(Oct. 30) (Nov. 1) The Feminist Movement and Feminist Theory

Chapter 9

Note: this is a good time to re-read your response paper article

Nov. (6) **Test** - 20% of grade

Nov. (8) Research Methods: Joining Theory with Practice

Nov. 13 - no class

Nov. 15 cont.

Chapter 10

Myth Busting: Robert Pape on ISIS, suicide terrorism, and U.S. Foreign Policy
(I will email you the link for this)

Nov. (20, 22) (27) Groups and Organizations

Primary Groups

Charles Horton Cooley

The Characteristics of Bureaucracy

Max Weber

Even if I Don't Know What I'm Doing, I Can Make It Look Like I Do: Becoming a Doctor in Canada

Brenda L Beagan

"McJobs: McDonaldization and the Workplace"

George Ritzer

Nov. (29) Review period – Response Paper due in class

Critical Response Paper

Value: 20% of your final grade

Length: 5 – 7 pages (double-spaced; 12 pt. font)

Due Date: Nov. 29

In the course of your undergraduate studies you will frequently be required to provide 'critiques' or critical appraisals of specific articles, essays or books. The main purpose is for you to demonstrate your capacity to think analytically and logically, while drawing upon both your own creative insights, and relevant sociological concepts and frameworks. For the purposes of this assignment you are expected to write a response to a piece in the New York Times entitled *Why Gender Equality Stalled* by Stephanie Coontz. It is available at the following Web address (or just Google the title):

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/17/opinion/sunday/why-gender-equality-stalled.html?_r=0

General Guidelines:

Your responses are to take the form of short essays. Because space is limited, avoid spending too much time summarizing content. Instead, try to succinctly convey a general sense of what the article is about, while providing the necessary context for the specific points and arguments you wish to raise in the course of your critique. Keep in mind that writing a strong paper requires the development of a clear thesis statement in your introduction. This provides the reader with a sense of the position you are taking, while allowing you to tie your points and arguments together in a coherent manner. You should also refer to

any ideas that you feel are relevant taken from your textbook and/or raised in class as this will make for a stronger paper. You may consult journal articles or other academic resources if you wish, although this is not required. Any sources which you cite (including textbook) should be listed in a reference section at the end of your paper.

The questions below may serve as useful points of reference in terms of what to consider when writing your response papers. Please note that this is a general guideline only – i.e. do not answer these questions in an overt, step-by-step manner. They are intended as prompts to help you keep on track, and you will likely find yourself thinking along these or similar lines intuitively.

- What is the author's central argument or objective in writing this article?
- What other arguments or evidence is offered in support of this (central) argument or objective?
- What is the significance of the author's position in terms of its larger sociological implications?
- How does the author's position clash or overlap with some of the sociological perspectives considered in this course?
- What other conclusions might be drawn from the same evidence presented by the author and/or what counterarguments or objections could be raised from a different perspective?
- How convincing or important do you find the author's argument(s) overall?

Citing and Referencing Sources:

The Sociology Department page of the StFX Web site provides citation and reference style guidelines for the American Sociological Association (ASA). Look under the 'Current Students' heading to find this. You may use another citation style if you wish (e.g. Chicago style, American Psychological Association – APA). My main concern is that you are consistent with whichever style you choose.

Please Note: Students are expected to be familiar with the academic integrity policy concerning plagiarism as set out in the StFX Academic Calendar.