



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Foundations of Sociology (Soci. 101:11) Fall 2019 Syllabus

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Class schedule: Tuesday 9:45-11 and Thurs 8:15-9:30
Office hours: Tuesday 11am-12pm (noon) Thursday 10am-12pm -(noon)
Or by appointment

Course Description

One part of a two-part introduction to the discipline of sociology, this course provides students with the foundations of sociological theory, methods and historic considerations which are applied in SOCI 102. In this course you will be introduced to the sociological perspective, to theoretical orientations, to the methods used to study human behaviour and to the concepts that guide the thinking and research of sociologists. You will learn about the development of sociology as a field of research and learn various theoretical perspectives central to the study of society.

Underlying the discipline of sociology is the Sociological perspective. This point of view brings the world to life in a new and instructive way. You will learn about the role of society in your life and the lives of others. You will learn how the general social categories into which we happen to fall shape our particular life experiences. The sociological imagination allows sociologists to make connections between personal experiences and larger social issues.

You will be introduced to three major historical theorists in the social sciences: Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim as well as contemporary social theorists. The theories will be examined by highlighting the historical context in which the theories were written as well as key concepts that can be applied to social issues today.

You will see how sociologists have helped change and mold the social world we know today, and sociology continues to be an exciting topic to study because it teaches people how they fit into the bigger picture of society. We can look at ourselves through a sociological perspective to see how we classify ourselves and how others classify us. This is an invaluable tool for living and working in an increasingly diverse and globalized world. While one aim of this course is to give you a sampling of the diversity of perspectives and insights in sociology, another is to introduce you to what all sociologists have in common—that they all approach the study of

human behaviour socially. Our central focus throughout this course will be the question of what it means to think sociologically about the issues of our world.

Sociology looks beyond normal, taken-for-granted views of reality, to provide deeper, more illuminating and challenging understandings of social life. Through its particular analytical perspective, social theories, and research methods, sociology is a discipline that expands our awareness and analysis of the human social relationships, cultures, and institutions that profoundly shape both our lives and human history.

Sociology is an immensely challenging and exciting discipline. It involves the systematic study and explanation of social life, groups and societies. Studying Sociology can give you new ways of seeing the world, encouraging you to question aspects of it you had previously taken for granted. Sociology can provide you with the ‘tools’ to become a better informed and more socially aware member of society by asking you to think critically.

Overall course objectives:

1. Learn the sociological perspective & develop critical thinking skills
2. Develop (or enhance) an interest in social & political issues, and current affairs
3. History of social thought – (key influences on today’s thinking).
4. Distinguish between the major sociological paradigms and understand their theoretical foundations.
5. Understand how sociologists go about studying society
6. Identify how the sociological perspective illuminates understanding
7. Evaluate ideas and debates using the sociological perspective.

Required Texts:

Required Textbooks:

Ravelli, Bruce & Michelle Webber. 2019. “Exploring Sociology: A Canadian Perspective”. Fourth Edition. Toronto: Pearson. (Third edition is also acceptable)

Electronic copies of readings will be available on Moodle or through the St. FX library (or searching the inet)

Evaluation

Quiz 1	25%	Oct. 8
Quiz 2	25%	Nov.5
Participation/reading quizzes	10%	test for class preparation
Final Exam	40%	Date determined by registrar’s office

- *Class Preparation:* You are expected to read all the required readings through the course so as to develop a sense of Sociology. It is expected that you will reflect and contemplate the readings by

asking your own questions and examining your personal experiences. This class primarily follows a lecture format however, I expect student interaction and in-class discussion.

Class room etiquette/policies

- Be respectful of your classmates and avoid class disruption (leaving class early, late, talking, whispering).
- This class should be free from discrimination and harassment in accord with the *StFX Discrimination and Harassment Policy* which can be found at <http://www.mystfx.ca/campus/stu-serv/equity/>.
- Regular attendance at class is advised. (see calendar section 3.7) http://sites.stfx.ca/registrars_office/academic_calendar.
- Students are responsible for material discussed in class even when they are absent. Be sure to take notes as not all material covered in class will be in the readings. Always bring a pen and paper to class. Note taking tips: <https://lss.info.yorku.ca/resources/note-taking-at-university/#Intro>
- Avoid electronic devices in class

Class schedule and readings: The readings are available on your Moodle site –The dates below are approximate guidelines. I reserve the right to change readings (with early notification).

Week 1-2, September 3-12

What is Sociology? What are the origins of Sociology? What is the Sociological Perspective?

- Mills, C. Wright. 1959. [excerpt from: “The Promise.” From *The Sociological Imagination* by C. Wright Mills. 1959: Oxford University Press - Pp. 1-8
- Berger, Peter. 1971 “Sociology and Freedom.” *The American Sociologist*, 6, 1:1-5
- Durkheim, E. 1897. “Suicide”. [Excerpt from Robert Alun Jones. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1986. Pp. 82-114.]
- Chapter 1 Ravelli & Webber and pages 41 & 43 (Chapter 2) Ravelli & Webber

Week 3, September 17-19

- Brym, Robert. 2008. “Hurricane Katrina and the Myth of Natural Disasters.” Pp. 53-78 in *Sociology as a Life or Death Issue*. Toronto: Pearson.
- Chapter 1 continued Ravelli & Webber

Week 4, September 24-26

- Miner, Horace. 1956. “Body Ritual among the Nacirema.” *American Anthropologist* 58(3): 503-507.
- Harris, Marvin, 1992 [original 1953]. “The cultural ecology of India’s sacred cow”. *Current Anthropology*. Vol 33, 1:261-276.
- Chapter 5 Ravelli & Webber

Week 5, October 1-3

- Mead, George Herbert. "The Social Self", *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 10, (1913): 374- 380.
- Goffman, E. 1956, *The Presentation of the Self*. Edinburgh. (Pp. 1-10)
https://monoskop.org/images/1/19/Goffman_Erving_The_Presentation_of_Self_in_Everyday_Life.pdf (also on Moodle.
- Chapter 6 Ravelli & Webber AND Chapter 2 -Symbolic Interactionism Pages 55-59
Ravelli & Webber

Week 6, Oct. 8-10

- **QUIZ Oct. 8**
- Chapter 4 Ravelli & Webber

Week 7 – Fall study break Oct 15-18

Week 8 – Oct. 22-24

- Weber, Max. 2016 (original 1922) “The Case for Value Free Sociology.”
http://nelsonssociology101.weebly.com/uploads/2/6/1/6/26165328/the_case_for_value_free_soc.pdf
- Becker, Howard. 1967. “Whose Side are We On?” *Social Problems* 14(3): 239-247.
- Chapter 4 Ravelli & Webber con’t

Week 9, Oct. 29-31

- Durkheim E. “Bau und leben des Socialen Korpers: Erster Band” in *Imagining Sociology* by C. Corrigan-Brown (2017). Canada: Oxford University Press.
- Durkheim, Émile. 1982 [original 1895]. “What is a Social Fact?” Pp. 51-59 in *The Rules of Sociological Method*. New York: The Free Press.
- Chapter 2 pages 31-47 (3rd ed) Ravelli & Webber

Week 10 & 11, Nov. 5-14

- **QUIZ 2 Nov. 5**
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. 1978 [original 1848]. “*I. Bourgeois and Proletarians*” in “*The Communist Manifesto* [selection].” Pp. 14-21.
- Chapter 2 pages 47-55 (3rd ed) Ravelli & Webber
- Bourgois, Philippe. 2009. “Poverty at Work: Office Employment and the Crack Alternative.” Pp. 227-239 in *Conformity and Conflict*, edited by J. Spradley and D. McCurdy. Upper Saddle River, NJ:
- Pearson. Sennett, Richard and Jonathan Cobb. 1981. “Some Hidden Injuries of Class.” Pp. 223-233 in *Down to Earth Sociology*, edited by J. M. Henslin. New York: The Free Press.
- Chapter 3 Ravelli and Webber

Week 12, Nov. 19-21

- Lehmann, Wolfgang. 2009. “Becoming Middle Class: How Working-Class University

Students Draw and Transgress Moral Class Boundaries.” *Sociology* 43(4): 631-647.

- Hamilton, Laura and Elizabeth Armstrong. 2012. “The (Mis)Education of Monica and Karen.” *Contexts* 11(4): 22-7. Valenti, Jessica. 2014. “How to End the College Class War”, *The Guardian*, May 27.
- Chapter 7 Ravelli & Webber

Week 13, Nov. 26-28

- Weber, Max, *The Characteristics of Bureaucracy*.
- Ritzer, George, *The Mcdonaldization of society*
- Chapter 16 Ravelli & Webber

FINAL EXAM DATES are arranged by the registrar’s office and will be announced at a later date. Exam dates are firm. The exam period is from December 5 - 16. When booking flights plan to book after Dec. 16 as this is not an approved excuse. A dean’s excuse is required should anyone miss an exam and usually only in extreme circumstances.