

St. Francis Xavier University
Department of Sociology

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY (SOCI 100.15)

Fall/Winter 2012/13
Lecture Room: NH 146
Mondays: 2:15pm – 3:30pm
Wednesdays: 2:15pm – 3:30pm

Instructor: Stephen Marmura
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00am – 1:00pm; Thursdays 12:00pm – 3:00pm
(or by appointment) Office: Annex 111C

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to familiarize students with the foundations of sociology as a discipline, while introducing them to some of its major sub-fields. At its most general, sociology is concerned with the patterns or 'structures' which arise in the course of human interaction and with how these in turn create the social individual. However, the specific problems and social contexts examined by sociologists vary widely. Sociologists may specialize in areas as diverse as deviance, globalization, media, governance, or sexuality, to name only a few possibilities. In this course we consider the origins of sociology as a specific area of academic study, its leading schools of thought today, its main substantive areas of social scientific investigation and its primary methods of research. 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 MATERIAL (available as a package at the campus store):

Textbook:

Lorne Tepperman, Patrizia Albanese and James Curtis (eds.). *Sociology: A Canadian Perspective*. 3rd edition. Oxford, 2012.

Student Handbook:

Margot Northey, Lorne Tepperman and Patricia Albanese. *Making Sense: A Student's Guide to Research and Writing*. 5th edition. Oxford, 2012.

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 noticed. Keep in mind that lectures and course readings are meant to *complement* one another, and I will often refer to material in class which moves beyond the examples provided in your textbook. You are expected to be familiar with *all* course material. Lectures are critical for gaining a better appreciation and understanding of the various perspectives provided in your text, as these vary considerably from chapter to chapter. 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 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. In addition, I will sometimes make announcements in class concerning adjustments to readings, test content, and/or assignment requirements. 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.

Exams (one at the end of each term):

Dates and locations: TBA

2 X 30% = **60%** of final grade

October Quiz: 10% of final grade

Date: Oct. 15 (in class)

Critical Response Papers:

2 X 15% = **30%** of final grade

Due dates:

1st Response paper: Nov. 28

2nd Response paper: Feb. 20

A general outline for the response papers is provided at the back of this syllabus.

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

Fall 2012

Note: The chapters referred to below correspond to those in your primary textbook for this course *Sociology: A Canadian Perspective*.

(Sept. 5) Introduction to Course

CONCEPTUALIZING SOCIETY

(Sept. 10, 12) What is society and why study it?
Introduction

(Sept 17, 19) Major Theoretical Approaches
Chapter 1

(Sept. 24, 26) Research Methods
Chapter 2

MAJOR SOCIAL PROCESSES

(Oct. 1, 3, 10) Culture and Cultural Change
Chapter 3

Oct. 15: **Quiz** 10% (in class)

Oct. (17, 22, 24) Socialization
Chapter 4

(Oct. 29, 31) Statuses, Roles, and Identities
Chapter 5

(Nov. 5, 7) Groups and Organizations
Chapter 6

(Nov. 12, 14) Deviance
Chapter 7

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

(Nov. 19, 21) Families and Personal Life
Chapter 13

(Nov. 26, 28) Work and the Economy
Chapter 15

Winter 2013

(Jan. 7, 9) Religion
Chapter 17

(Jan. 14, 16) Social Movements
Chapter 19

SOCIAL INEQUALITY

(Jan. 21, 23) Class and Status Inequality
Chapter 8

(Jan. 28, 30) Gender Relations
Chapter 9

(Feb. 4, 6) Sexuality
Chapter 10

(Feb. 11, 13); (Feb. 18, 20*) Ethnic and Race Relations
Chapter 11

*Second Response Paper due (in class)

Feb. 25, 27 **Midterm Recess**

CANADIAN SOCIETY AND THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

(Mar. 4, 6) Global Society
Chapter 20

(Mar. 11, 13); (Mar. 18, 20) Mass Media and Communication
Chapter 23

(Mar. 25, 27); (Apr. 1, 3) The Environment
Chapter 24

Critical Response Papers

Value: *Each* response paper is worth 15% of your final grade

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

Due Dates: Nov. 28 (1st paper); Feb. 20 (2nd paper)

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 critically appraise two pieces of work (one for each response paper), each of which deals with a socially significant and controversial topic.

Your first paper, which is due in class on Nov. 28th, will be a response to an essay entitled *Darwinian fallacies*, by Kenan Malik.

This reading is available at the following Web address:

<http://www.kenanmalik.com/essays/fallacy.html>

Your second paper, which is due in class on Feb. 20th, will be a response to the article, *Abu Ghraib and Insaniyat*, by Arshin Adib-Moghaddam.

This article is available at the following Web address:

<http://www.monthlyreview.org/1207adib-moghaddam.htm>

For *each* response paper, you should refer to relevant ideas or theoretical perspectives discussed in your textbook as this will make for a stronger paper. You may also cite lecture material and/or consult journal articles or other academic resources if you wish, although this is not required. Any sources which you cite should be listed in a reference section at the end of your paper.

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 matter.

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?

Referencing Sources:

Your student handbook, *Making Sense* (2009), includes instructions on how to reference papers following Social Science Style (SSS), Modern Language Association (MLA), and American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines. In addition, the Sociology Department page of the StFX Web site provides guidelines for the American Sociological Association (ASA). My main concern is that you are consistent with whichever style you choose! We will discuss style and referencing issues further in class.

Please Note: Students are expected to be familiar with the *Student Research Ethics Guidelines* (particularly regarding plagiarism) which are also listed under *Student Information* in the Academic Calendar.