

St. Francis Xavier University
Department of Sociology

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY I (SOC1 101.14)

Fall 2022
Lecture Room: MULH 3034
Mondays: 12:45 – 2:00pm; Wednesday 11:15 – 12:30pm

Instructor: Stephen Marmura
Office: NT 603
Email: smarmura@stfx.ca

Office Hours: Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30pm-2:30pm; Thursdays 12:00pm-2:00pm; Fridays 10:30-11:30am

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology is concerned with patterns of belief, activity and organization that arise from human interaction, and that 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, approaches to the conduct 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

Johnson, Allan. *The Forest and the Trees: Sociology as Life, Practice, and Promise*. 3rd edition, Temple, 2014.

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

Note: Some additional readings are posted on Moodle (where indicated below)

Evaluation

Tests (2 X 20%) = 40%
Response Paper = 20%
Final Exam = 40%

Statement on Drop Date: Students may drop a course, online in Banner, on or before November 2, 2022.

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 readings. You are expected to be familiar with *all* course material. In addition, time will be devoted to discussion. This is an important way for students to engage with 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 miss a class for a legitimate reason (e.g. an absence due to medical concerns) and want to go over material covered during the lecture in question, then please come and visit me during my office hours.

Test 1: 20% of final grade
Date: Oct. 12 (in class)

Test 2: 20% of final grade
Date: Nov. 21 (in class)

Critical Response Paper: 20% of final grade
Due: Dec. 5 (last day of class) – see outline at 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 and want to pick it up, or if you want to look over the 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

All chapters referred to below by chapter number correspond to those in Johnson (2014). Other readings are from the reader (Macionis, Benokraitis & Urmetzer: 2014).

Sept. (7, 12, 14) Introduction to Course: Thinking Sociologically

Ch. 1: The Forest, the Trees, and the One Thing

Sept. (19, 21) Biology, Culture and Social Structure

Ch. 2: Culture: Symbols, Ideas, and the Stuff of Life

Vast New Study Shows a Key to Reducing Poverty: More Friendships Between Rich and Poor

Miller, Katz, Paris, and Bhatia (on Moodle)

Sept. (26, 28) Sociological Theory and the problem of Modernity

The Disenchantment of Modern Life

Max Weber (425-426)

Alienated Labour

Karl Marx (223-226)

Oct. (3, 5) Modernity cont'd.

Durkheim on 'Suicide as social fact'

<http://uregina.ca/~gingrich/250j2003.htm> (on Moodle)

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

Marlise Simons (434-440)

Oct. (10) *Thanksgiving* – no class

Oct. (12) Test 1

Oct. (17, 19) Socialization and Human Subjectivity

Chapter 3: The Structures of Social Life

The Self

George Herbert Mead (65-72)

The Presentation of Self

Erving Goffman (89-95)

Oct. (24, 26); Nov (31) Social/Cultural Change: the 'materialist' perspective

"Manifesto of the Communist Party"

Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels (48-55)

India's Sacred cow

Marvin Harris (44-47)

Nov. (7, 9) Fall Study Break

Nov. (14, 16) The Feminist Movement and Feminist Theory

Three Waves of Feminism: From Suffragettes to Grrls

Charlette Krolokke & Anne Scott Sorensen

Nov. (21) Test 2

Nov. (23, 28, 29) Groups and Organizations

Primary Groups

Charles Horton Cooley (102-105)

The Characteristics of Bureaucracy

Max Weber (106-109)

McJobs: McDonaldization and the Workplace

George Ritzer (110-114)

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 (115-121)

Dec. (5) Wrap-up and review – Response Paper due in class (hard copies only)

Critical Response Paper

Value: 20% of your final grade

Length: 4 – 6 pages (double-spaced; 12 pt. font)

Due Date: Dec. 5th (hard copy due in class)

During 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 (in this case) relevant sociological concepts and frameworks. For the purposes of this assignment, you are expected to write a response to a piece taken from the *New York Times* entitled, “Vast New Study Shows a Key to Reducing Poverty: More Friendships Between Rich and Poor”. This article corresponds to your second reading for the course, is posted on Moodle, and will be discussed further in class.

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 readings 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 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?

More specifically, how do the notions of *structure* and *agency* pertain to this study?

Does this study point to a meaningful solution to the issue of poverty or does it merely indicate a larger problem?

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.

Late penalty: Barring exceptional circumstances, a 2% penalty applies per late day including weekends.

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