

**St. Francis Xavier University**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**SOCI 101: Foundations in Sociology**  
**Winter 2017**

Instructor: Dr. Neal A. Smithwick  
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Office Hours: Mondays 9:45-1:00; Thursdays 11:15-2:30; or by appointment.  
Class Times: Tuesdays 7:00-9:30 p.m.  
Classroom Location: Physical Sciences Centre, Room 1072 (PS 1072)

**Course Rules and Etiquette**

Welcome to university! In order to have a productive semester, the following rules will be enforced in this course. Essentially, think of your undergraduate studies as practice for entering the real world, in which practising what are considered to be unacceptable communicative behaviour during work hours can often lead to you being fired!

**1) Classroom Disruptions:**

Your professors put tremendous effort into preparing your lectures and assignments, so *ignoring* your professor is extremely rude and disrespectful. Common ways to do this is by using your cell-phone or laptop; therefore, we will practice the application of professional communication, which include:

- **No cell phone** usage in class: Please turn them off and put them away prior to class.
- **No laptops** are permitted for note-taking: These devices have also turned out to be disruptive to the classroom environment.
  - WE WILL HAVE A 10 MINUTE BREAK DURING CLASS, SO YOU CAN SATISFY ANY URGENT IMPULSES AT THAT TIME!

**2) Evaluation:**

It is simply unfair to alter the course evaluation for any individual. Therefore, under any conditions, there will be no alternative tests or assignments if you miss or do poorly on a requirement.

- Furthermore, it is your responsibility to track your own grades: Please do not contact the professor for such information.

**3) Course Communication: E-mail and Moodle:**

- Please use your StFX e-mail address to avoid having your message blocked by SPAM filters.
- Include “SOCI 101” in the subject line.
- Finally, in our academic environment, please practice writing e-mails formally, as you will need to do on a regular basis upon graduation. For example, use a simple greeting, do not use slang or abbreviations, and always sign off with your name!
- **We will use Moodle to post weekly outlines and communicate with the entire class.**

### **Course Description and Expectations**

This course introduces students to the social scientific study of society. In particular, it provides the foundation for the theoretical, methodological and conceptual approaches used by sociologists in their endeavour to explain the complexities of modern society. Students will gain an understanding of how Western societies tend to organize themselves, which includes learning about social structures, social institutions, social norms, values and beliefs, as well as social interaction.

The course is organized in a logical manner. We will begin by exploring the nature of sociological analysis and its relevance for understanding the social world within which we live, often referred to as using the *sociological imagination*. We will then commence with a deep exploration of the core theoretical and methodological ways of understanding capitalist social, political and economic organization. There are four basic sociological perspectives (theories) that “explain” how society is organized; namely, functionalism, political economy, symbolic interaction, and feminism. No matter which perspective you choose to adopt in order to understand our complex society, be respectful to each of these theoretical “lenses”. Related to any theoretical position, we must also study the scientific methodological procedures that are necessarily utilized to analyze the empirical world around us in a scientific manner.

Once we have attained an understanding of the theoretical perspectives and methodological procedures, we will then apply this knowledge in order to study how we experience society. We will, thus, study *culture* and the basic agents of *socialization*. To complete the course, it is necessary to examine “*institutions*”, because these are the structures that we create, as a society, to organize and control human behaviour. Common institutions that all of us are familiar with are *families*, *work* and the *economy*, so we will practice applying our learned sociological perspectives to these institutions in particular.

### **Learning Objectives**

The major objective is for students to place their own circumstances within wider social context. Using a range of topics as the backdrop, this course illustrates the ways in which a sociological perspective is scientifically unique. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify the purpose of sociology, and the types of questions and research strategies used to understand and explain issues, organizations and institutions in society.
- Differentiate between macro and micro social analyses of society.
- Describe the historical development of sociology, its major founders (Marx, Durkheim, Weber, etc.) and their main ideas and contributions.
- Apply and formulate explanations of social issues and institutions, by utilizing the major sociological perspectives.
- Recognize and apply the specific sociological terms, definitions and concepts.

### **Required Readings**

Macionis, John J., Nijole V. Benokraitis, and Peter Urmetzer. 2014. *Seeing Ourselves: Classic, Contemporary, and Cross-Cultural Readings in Sociology, Fourth Canadian Edition*. Toronto: Pearson.

- Please follow our course schedule carefully, and complete the assigned readings prior to every class.

## Evaluation

Mid-Term Test #1	30% (February 7)
Mid-Term Test #2	30% (March 14)
Final Exam	40% (TBA)

## Tests and Exam

The two Term Tests (30% each) and the Final Examination (40%) will consist of any combination of multiple choice, true/false, matching, or written-answer questions. There will be a brief review before each of these evaluations, and all course content may be included.

## Course Outline

**Please note that, although each topic/reading will be covered, the detailed schedule may be altered in order to make unforeseen accommodations, such as university-imposed cancelation of classes (due to snow, for example). If this occurs, then students will still be responsible for course reading material.**

- Topic areas are in **bold print**.

Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments Due
Jan. 10	Introduction. • <b>The “Sociological Imagination”.</b>	Ch. 1: C. Wright Mills, <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> . Ch. 3: Horace Miner, <i>Body Ritual Among the Nacirema</i> .
Jan. 17	Theoretical Perspectives. • <b>Functionalism.</b> • <b>Political Economy.</b>	Ch. 21: Emile Durkheim, <i>The Functions of Crime</i> . Ch. 9: Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, <i>Manifesto of the Communist Party</i> .
Jan. 24	Theoretical Perspectives. • <b>Political Economy.</b> • <b>Symbolic Interaction.</b>	Ch. 47: Max Weber, <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> . Ch. 18: Max Weber, <i>The Characteristics of Bureaucracy</i> .
Jan. 31	Theoretical Perspectives. • <b>Symbolic Interaction.</b> • <b>Feminism.</b>	Ch. 12: George Herbert Mead, <i>The Self</i> . Ch. 15: Erving Goffman, <i>The Presentation of Self</i> . Ch. 31: Margaret Mead, <i>Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies</i> . Ch. 33: Elaine Leeder, <i>Domestic Violence: A Cross-Cultural View</i> .
Feb. 7	<b>Mid-Term Test #1.</b>	
Feb. 14	<b>Social Scientific Research Methodology.</b>	Ch. 4: Max Weber, <i>The Case for Value-Free Sociology</i> . Ch. 6: Soraya Altorki, <i>Arab Women in the Field</i> .
Feb. 28	Entering the Social World: • <b>Culture.</b>	Ch. 8: Marvin Harris, <i>India’s Sacred Cow</i> . Ch. 5: Bruce Ravelli, <i>Defining Features of Canadian Sociology</i> . Ch. 7: Michael Adams et al., <i>North America’s Two Distinct Societies</i> . Ch. 11: John A. Hostetler, <i>The Amish: A Small Society</i> .

Mar. 7	Moving through the Social World: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Socialization.</b></li> <li>• <b>Defining Social Institutions.</b></li> </ul>	Ch. 26: J. M. Carrier, <i>Homosexual Behaviour in Cross-Cultural Perspective.</i> Ch. 13: Anne S. Douglas, “ <i>It’s Like they Have Two Parents</i> ”: <i>Consequences of Inconsistent Socialization of Inuit Children.</i>
Mar. 14	<b>Mid-Term Test #2</b>	
Mar. 21	Social Institutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Families.</b></li> </ul>	Ch. 14: D. Terri Heath, <i>Parents’ Socialization of Children in Global Perspective.</i> Ch. 45: Gillian Ranson, ‘ <i>Bringing Up</i> ’ and ‘ <i>Growing Up</i> ’: <i>Parents, Children, and Family Life.</i> Ch. 10: Kathryn Edin & Maria Kefalas, <i>Unmarried with Children.</i> Ch. 46: Bron B. Ingoldsby, <i>Mate Selection and Marriage Around the World.</i>
Mar. 28	Social Institutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Work and the Economy.</b></li> </ul>	Ch. 19: George Ritzer, <i>McJobs: McDonaldization and the Workplace.</i> Ch. 40: Jim Stanford, <i>The Economy and Society.</i> Ch. 39: Brenda L. Beagan, <i>Experiences of Social Class: Learning from Occupational Therapy Students.</i> Ch. 43: Geraldo Otero & Gabriela Pechlaner, <i>Is Biotechnology the Answer? The Evidence from NAFTA.</i>
Apr. 4	Summary and Review.	

### **Technology and Academic Conduct**

The course includes a **Moodle** course page, but please do not e-mail the professor via Moodle (use the StFX web-mail). All topics are listed on Moodle to help you follow the course syllabus easily.

- Furthermore, there is a student discussion forum available on Moodle for you to communicate with one another outside of class. Please use this forum for whatever you want, such as asking questions that you may have missed in lectures, organizing study groups, seeking clarity or just to introduce yourself. This forum is for student communication, so I will not be monitoring them (in other words, I will not participate).

### **Accessibility and Accommodation**

St. Francis Xavier University supports academic accommodation for students with any sort of disability so that they may meet the learning objectives of their courses and be given the opportunity to be evaluated fairly on their mastery of course material. The **Tramble Room** welcomes students with documented disabilities and offers them a student-centred program of support. For more information about access and accommodation, please see:

[http://sites.stfx.ca/accessible\\_learning/](http://sites.stfx.ca/accessible_learning/).

- **For all students**, please feel free to speak with me about course material and how to succeed in academia. It is my pleasure to help you.