

St. Francis Xavier University
[Department of Sociology](#)
Social Inequality: Sociology 290
2014 2015

Professor: Norine Verberg
Phone/Voice Mail: 867-5077
E-mail: nverberg@stfx.ca

Office Location: Annex 111A
Office hours: Tuesdays, 4:00-5:00
Thursdays and Fridays, 8:30-10:30

Calendar Course Description

This course explores the distribution of social, political, and economic resources in Canadian society, and the unequal access to these resources based on social class, race, ethnicity, gender, age, and region. Using a central theme based on the concepts of class and power, the course examines specific issues such as the socio-economic bases of social inequality, ascription, and the consequences of poverty in Canada.

Required Reading

1. Grabb, Edward and Neil Guppy. 2009. *Social Inequality in Canada: Patterns, Problems, and Policies*, 5th ed. Toronto: Pearson Prentice Hall.
2. Selected readings available at the library and on Moodle.

Grading Scheme

October quiz	10%	Friday, October 17
December exam	20%	TBA
Fall term paper	20%	Tuesday, November 28
~ two choices		<i>Indicate choice by September 18</i>
Group poster project	20%	winter term, after the break
Final examination	30%	TBA

Class Attendance and Participation

Attendance will be taken and your participation is welcomed. Your questions help ensure that new ideas are explained fully. If you miss class, you are responsible to find out what you missed (e.g., lectures, announcements, videos). If you know you will be missing class, you are recommended to report this absence to your professors through the Dean's Office.

Communication and Office Hours

You are strongly encouraged to see me during office hours to discuss any aspect of the course. Email may be the best and most convenient way to communicate about simple matters; however, I prefer to address specific questions about course content in person. If you decide to communicate using email, please use proper email etiquette. If my office hours conflict with your schedule, please ask for an appointment.

Fall term paper: The lived experience of social inequality

STUDENTS HAVE **TWO OPTIONS** FOR THE FALL TERM PAPER

Option A: The experience of social inequality in neo-liberal times

A short paper will be written on a topic appearing in recent news reports which suggests that certain people living in Canada are experiencing social inequality. You will write a critical analysis of this topic. You will begin by finding a couple *news articles* (e.g., CBC, Globe and Mail, Maclean's, Chronicle Herald) on how certain people are experiencing unequal access or social, political or economic exclusion. If in doubt, feel free to have your topic approved by me. Once you have your topic, you will search for, select, and employ five relevant peer-reviewed articles to help you develop a critical understanding of the experience selected. In this course, we learn about changes in social policy that have been coined "neo-liberal". One goal of this paper is to gain a better understanding of this policy shift, while also considering how policy can limit or enhance one's access to scarce resources or opportunities. At least one of your references should be on the significance of social policy for the fate of certain marginalized individuals. At least half your references should be written by Canadian Sociologists. Length: 5 - 6 pages (1000-1200 words)

Option B: Learning about the experience of social inequality through [Service Learning](#)

The Service Learning option involves providing service for a community or school program and using course-based material to develop a critical understanding of the experience. In this case, students will write a sociological account about what was learned about living with social inequality through their service work. If you choose this option, a placement will be set up and monitored by Sheen Cameron from the Service Learning Department. You will write a reflexive journal, then select three relevant peer-reviewed sociology articles to help you develop your analysis of the experiences or issues you identified through your volunteer service. Most of your references should be written by Canadian Sociologists. The essay will be 4 – 5 pages (800 - 1000 words).

Please Note: You are required to choose Option A or B by September 18th. Students who choose Service Learning must meet with [Sheena Cameron](#) to select a placement (e.g., Food Bank, tutoring, working in a sheltered workshop). You will agree to a set of scheduled hours, which will be known in advance of accepting the placement. Individuals and programs will be counting on your service. Please do not sign on to do Service Learning if you cannot fulfill the mandate. Failure to complete the required work in the community will negatively affect your grade. After September 18th, you are locked into your choice. Students who do not sign up for Service Learning do Option A by default.

Some class time will be given to discussing possible topics for the term paper and how to select suitable references for either Option A or B. Nonetheless, please feel free to visit me in office hours with your ideas for papers or your questions about how to find references that address themes you wish to address in your paper. I may be able to suggest "key words" (e.g., stigma, depersonalization) to include in the search engines.

Winter term assignment: Group assignment / public poster presentation

A handout and introduction to the winter term assignment will be passed out in the first class of the winter term. It outlines that students will work in groups of 3 or 4 to research a community-based organization dedicated to addressing an issue related to social, economic, and/or political inequality. Each group will interview an executive member of the organization, complete research related to the organizations mandate, and prepare and present a poster at People's Place Library on Main Street in Antigonish. Each group is required to find 4-6 relevant references. The handout and introduction will provide further detail.

Policies concerning course assignments

1) Extensions and late papers

A penalty of 20% per day (i.e., marked out of 100) applies to late papers. If your circumstances warrant an extension without penalty, please see me to make a formal request.

2) Late penalties

Papers are due at the beginning of class. Late penalties start when class begins.

3) Respecting essay convention

Please respect proper essay conventions (i.e., proper introduction, grammar and spelling). Please remember to include page numbers. Please use 1.5 spaces for line spacing.

4) Citation Style

For this course, please use American Sociological Association Style (ASA). PLEASE NOTE: You are required in this course to document the page number of quotes and paraphrased points. Failure to comply with this policy will result in a grade penalty.

- There are writing resources available at the library and The Writing Centre. The librarians also recommend OWL at Purdue University (OWL: Online Writing Lab): <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/01/>

5) Avoiding plagiarism and academic integrity

Please familiarize yourself with the Academic Integrity Policy spelled out in the university calendar. <http://www.stfx.ca/services/registrar/academic-integrity-document.pdf> Any violations of the university's Academic Integrity Policy are report to the Department Chair and to the Dean of Arts.

Section 3.8.2 of the Academic Calendar defines *plagiarism* as “the misrepresentation of another’s work – whether ideas or words, intellectual or creative works, images or data – published or unpublished, as one’s own”. It includes representing someone else’s sentence(s), paragraph(s), or entire essay as *your* work, regardless of whether the true author was a classmate or a published author.

The following are two important ways students can avoid plagiarism.

a. Non-collaboration

Because you will be writing essays on similar topics, it is imperative that you *do not share your written work*. Specifically, you are not allowed to lend, borrow or use another student's written work related to the term paper assigned in this course. Any submission with "copied" material will result in a grade of 0 and reported to the Dean.

b. Proper referencing of source material

Documenting source material in scholarly papers is imperative, not only to avoid plagiarism, but to show the reader how other writers have influenced your ideas or analysis. I have seen students unintentionally plagiarize because they do not know how extensively they should document the source material. For instance, students almost always reference passages that they quoted word for word, but they often neglect to cite facts or opinions drawn from the same source.

6) RefWorks bonus

If you use RefWorks *and* Write'n'Cite to complete your major paper, you will receive 2 bonus marks. To demonstrate that you used RefWorks, attach a Reference list in both ASA and Chicago style to your paper. **You must edit the output generated in RefWorks to receive the bonus marks.** This will be explained in class.

Resources Available to Students

Libraries and Librarians

The libraries and library resources are excellent. Suzanne van den Hoogen is the Sociology Liaison Librarian, but all Reference Librarians are very pleased to provide valuable, friendly assistance. Make a librarian your best friend! <http://library.stfx.ca/>

The Writing Centre

Students may request assistance from The Writing Centre. They work on appointment basis, so it is advisable to contact them soon after beginning the assignments. <http://www.mystfx.ca/resources/writingcentre/>

The Tramble Rooms – Centre for Accessible Learning

Students who have documented disabilities can access student-centred support at the Tramble Rooms, Centre for Accessible Learning. http://sites.stfx.ca/accessible_learning/

Schedule of Readings*

Power and Class

September 5	pp. 1-16	Introduction
Sept 9/12	1	Economic power in Canada
Sept 16/19	2 & 4	Globalization and neo-liberalism
Sept 23/26	5 & 6	Income & wealth inequality

Socio-Economic Bases of Social Inequality

Sept 30/Oct 3/7	7	Poverty in Canada [video: Four feet up]
Oct 10/14	8	Social mobility
Friday, October 17		Midterm exam (Chapters 1-8, film, lectures)
Oct 21/24	9	Labour markets and the future of work
Oct 28/31	10 & 11	Changing patterns of educational inequalities in Canada
Nov 4/7	12 & 28	Education
<i>Tuesday, Nov 11</i>	---	<i>No class: Remembrance Day</i>
Nov 14/18/21	RR	Education
Nov 25/28	RR	Education
Dec 2	---	review

Ascription and Social Inequality

Jan 5/8	Intro + 13	Ascription; gender
Jan 12/15	14 & 15	Family, work and gendered inequality
Jan 19/22	16 & 17	Immigration/Economic integration of visible minorities
Jan 26/29	18	Racial inequality, social cohesion, and policy issues
Feb 3/6	19 & RR	First Nations
Feb 10/13	20 & 21	Age-based inequalities
Feb 17/20	22	Regional inequalities
Week of Feb. 23	---	Winter Term Recess – no classes

Some Consequences of Social Inequality

March 3/5	23/RR	Health inequalities
March 5	<i>Posters due at the beginning of class: presentations at later date</i>	
March 10/13	RR	Mental health
March 17/20	24	Housing inequalities and homelessness
March 24/27/31	25, 26, 27	Intolerance, beliefs, and political behavior
<i>Friday, April 3</i>	---	<i>No class: Good Friday</i>
April 7	---	review

* Assigned readings (RR) will be available on the course Moodle page.

The professor reserves the right to make minor alterations to the dates material will be covered. Any changes will be in response to the need for further time to cover topics.