

St. Francis Xavier University
Department of Sociology

Sociology 101.20: Foundations in Sociology

Winter 2018

Dr. John Phyne
Annex 110A

Class Times: Tuesday: 11:15 AM to 12:30 PM; Friday: 12:15 PM to 1:30 PM
Office Hours: Tuesday, 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM; Thursday: 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM;
Friday: 10:30 AM to 11:30 Noon or by appointment.

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Course Rules: In order to have a productive semester, the following rules will be used. If you do not want to abide by these rules, drop this course as soon as possible:

1. Turn off all cell phones at the commencement of class. If you use a cell phone in class, I will ask you to turn it off. If you refuse, I will end the class and report the matter to the Dean of Arts. Cell phone usage in class is a disrespectful and disruptive act that I no longer tolerate. My lectures are not on your cell phone.
2. Laptops are not permitted. These devices are also disruptive to the classroom environment.
3. There are no extra assignments or tests: If you perform below your expectations, it is your responsibility to contact me for assistance. I will not provide extra assignments or tests. Furthermore, if you perform below your expectations, do not wait until the last two weeks of class to contact me.
4. Your grade is your unit of concern: It is your responsibility to keep track of your grade. *I will not e-mail test results or calculate your grades for you.* Come to class and collect your tests.
5. The Academic Integrity Policy may be found at: http://www.sites.stfx.ca/registrars_office/academic_integrity. Students do not need to be caught USING a device like a smart phone during a test or exam to be in violation of the policy. Simply having the unauthorized device on their person during the test or exam is a violation of the policy.
6. E-mail Policy: Please restrict your e-mails to necessary communications. These include extended absences from class (more than one week) and family emergencies. I refuse to use e-mail to cover lectures from missed classes. My office hours or the phone are be used to cover materials pertaining to the course

Course Outline

This course introduces students to the social scientific study of society. The major objective is to get students to place their own circumstances within a wider social context. Students will gain an understanding of social structures, social institutions, social norms, values and beliefs, and social interaction. These concepts form the basic building blocks of sociological analysis. At the end of the course, students should be able to think sociologically, and grasp some of the basic tools necessary for engaging in sociological analysis. The course is divided into five sections: First, students are introduced to the nature of sociological analysis and its relevance for understanding the world within which we live. Second, we focus upon the four major perspectives in sociology as ‘lenses’ for viewing the social world. These include: functionalism, political economy, symbolic interactionism and feminism. The third section considers the methods used by sociologists to investigate patterns of social interaction and social institutions. Fourth, we explore ‘culture’ as a set of beliefs, norms, values and practices influencing everyday life. Fifth, we focus upon the institutions that form the basis of contemporary society (families, education, work and the economy).

Textbook

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

Evaluation

- 1) Test 1: Tuesday, February 5: 30 multiple-choice questions (2 marks each) and 1 essay (40 marks). This test is worth 33 per cent of your final grade.
- 2) Test 2: Tuesday, March 13: 30 multiple-choice questions (2 marks each) and 1 essay (40 marks). This test is worth 33 per cent of your final grade.
- 3) Test 3: Final Examination. Two essay questions worth 50 marks each. This examination is worth 34 per cent of your final grade.

Required Readings

All readings are from your textbook with the exception of items found on the Moodle page for this course (see the asterisk * to indicate these readings). Read the articles in the order of appearance.

Section One: The Sociological Imagination (two classes)

In this section of the course, the objective is to get you to think sociologically by placing yourself in a larger context. We make choices on a day-to-day basis, but such choices are part of the social fabric we live in. As eminent sociologist Emile Durkheim once remarked, just because we may accept the prevailing views in a society does not remove the fact that such views usually predate our own existence and act as social constraints. We are born into a society that is already made.

C. Wright Mills, “The Sociological Imagination”, pp. 1-6.

Horace Miner, “Body Ritual among the Nacirema”, pp. 18-22.

Section Two: Sociological Perspectives (six classes)

There are several perspectives in sociology. Here, we cover the ‘classic approaches’. Each approach provides a unique perspective for investigating the social world. The objective is to understand each of these perspectives as opposed to indicating that this is ‘the right way’ to think about the social.

Emile Durkheim, “The Functions of Crime”, pp. 122-24.

Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party”, pp. 48-55.

Max Weber, “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism”, pp. 287-92.

Max Weber, “The Characteristics of Bureaucracy”, pp. 106-109.

George Herbert Mead, “The Self”, pp. 65-72.

Erving Goffman, “The Presentation of Self”, pp. 89-94.

Margaret Mead, “Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies”, pp. 184-94.

Elaine Leeder, “Domestic Violence: A Cross-Cultural View”, pp. 195-200.

Section Three: Investigating the Social World: How Sociologists Conduct Research (three classes)

Sociology has its roots in the early 19th century. This was a time when the use of science to observe and explain the world around us became widely accepted. Sociologists cannot conduct lab experiments like natural scientists. They live in the society that is being studied. Nevertheless, they observe what is going on around them and seek patterns in social behaviour and social institutions. In the process, they use methods of research such as face-to-face interviews, ethnography, social surveys and historical materials in order to interpret the social world and draw conclusions on ‘what is going on’.

Max Weber, “The Case for Value-Free Sociology”, pp. 23-24.

Michael Adams (with Amy Langstaff and David Jamieson), “North America’s Two Distinct Societies”, pp. 38-43.

Bruce Ravelli, “Defining Features of Canadian Sociology”, pp. 25-30.

Soraya Altorki, “Arab Women in the Field”, pp. 31-37.

Section Four: Entering the Social World: Culture and Socialization (three classes)

Sociologists argue that we learn how to be members of society. However, we do not necessarily know the norms, values and beliefs of other societies or even subcultures within our own society. We normally accept what are taken as suitable social practices and use these as a yardstick to measure the validity of social practices in other cultures and societies. The objective here is to get you to place your norms, values, beliefs, and practices in a wider social context. Once you do this, you will be able to critically place how you live in the world alongside those who live differently.

Culture

Marvin Harris, “India’s Sacred Cow”, pp. 44-47.

Ralph Linton “100 Percent American.”*

John Hostetler, “The Amish: A Small Society”, pp. 62-64.

J. M. Carrier, “Homosexual Behavior in Cross-Cultural Perspective”, pp. 146-56.

Socialization

Anne Douglas, “It’s Like They Have Two Parents: Consequences of Inconsistent Socialisation of Inuit Children”, pp. 73-83.

D. Terri Heath, “Parents’ Socialization of Children in Global Perspective”, pp. 84-88.

Section Five: Moving Through the Social World: Social Institutions (eight classes)

At this point in your life, you have most likely experienced all or some of the following: being in a family, high school education, and part-time or full-time employment. Families, education and employment in the economy are ‘sites’ or ‘social institutions’ that we enter and leave. Moreover, these social institutions change over time. The ways older generations experience these institutions and your generation experience such institutions differs. The objective is to show the interconnections among families, education and work. While work is often reduced to being an economic practice, workers require education and are members of families. Moreover, the changing nature of the global economy is informing family formation, education and work in ways that differ from the 20th century.

Families

Arlie Russell Hochschild, “Marriage in the Stalled Revolution”, pp. 260-66.

Gillian Ranson, “Canadian Families Today: ‘Bringing Up’ and ‘Growing Up’: Parents, Children, and Family Life”, pp. 267-79.

Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas, "Unmarried with Children", pp. 56-61
Bron B. Ingoldsby, "Mate Selection and Marriage around the World", pp. 280-86.
Danielle Lindeman, "Commuter Spouses and the Changing American Family." *Contexts*.
16(4), Fall 2017: 26-31.*

Education

Samuel Bowles and Herber Gintis, "Education and Inequality", pp. 305-11.
Scott Davies, "Stubborn Disparities: Explaining Class Inequalities in Schooling", pp.
312-23.
Patricia Duhaney, "Why Is Our Educational System Still Guilty of Whiteness?", pp. 206-
11.
Keiko, Hirao, "Japanese Mothers as the Best Teachers", pp. 324-32.

Work and the Economy

Jim Stanford, "The Economy and Society", pp. 234-39.
George Ritzer, "McJobs: McDonaldization and the Workplace", pp. 110-14.
Brenda Beagan, "Experiences of Social Class: Learning from Occupational Therapy
Students", pp. 227-33.