

St. Francis Xavier University  
Department of Sociology

## **INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY (SOC1 100.15)**

Fall/Winter 2011/12  
Lecture Room: NH  
Tuesdays: 2:15pm – 3:30pm  
Thursdays: 2:15pm – 3:30pm

Instructor: Stephen Marmura  
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Office Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays & Fridays 10:00am – 12:00pm  
(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, James Curtis and Patrizia Albanese (eds.). *Sociology: A Canadian Perspective*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Oxford, 2008.

#### **Student Handbook:**

Margot Northey, Lorne Tepperman and Patricia Albanese. *Making Sense: A Student's Guide to Research and Writing*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Oxford, 2009.

## 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. 13 (in class)

### **Critical Response Papers:**

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

Due dates:

1<sup>st</sup> Response paper: Dec. 1

2<sup>nd</sup> Response paper: Feb. 16

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 2011**

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

(Sept. 8) Introduction to Course

### CONCEPTUALIZING SOCIETY

(Sept. 13, 15) What is society and why study it?  
Introduction

(Sept 20, 22) Major Theoretical Approaches  
Chapter 1

(Sept. 27, 29) Research Methods  
Chapter 2

### MAJOR SOCIAL PROCESSES

(Oct. 4, 6, 11) Culture and Cultural Change  
Chapter 3

Oct 13<sup>th</sup> **Quiz** 10% (in class)

(Oct. 18, 20) Socialization  
Chapter 4

(Oct. 25, 27) Statuses, Roles, and Identities  
Chapter 5

(Nov. 1, 3) Groups and Organizations  
Chapter 6

(Nov. 8, 10) Deviance  
Chapter 7

## SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

(Nov. 15, 17) Families and Intimate Relationships  
Chapter 8

(Nov. 22, 24, 29) Work and the Economy  
Chapter 10

(Dec. 1\*) Last class of term (review); \*First response paper due (in class)

### **Winter 2012**

(Jan. 5, 10, 12) Religion  
Chapter 12

(Jan. 17, 19) Social Movements  
Chapter 14

## SOCIAL INEQUALITY

(Jan. 24, 26) Class and Status Inequality  
Chapter 15

(Jan. 31, Feb. 2) Gender Relations  
Chapter 16

(Feb. 7, 9) Sexuality  
Chapter 17

(Feb. 14, 16\*) Ethnic and Race Relations  
Chapter 18

\*Second Response Paper due (in class)

Feb. 21, 23 **Midterm Recess**

## CANADIAN SOCIETY AND THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

(Feb. 28, Mar. 1); (Mar. 6, 8) Global Society  
Chapter 19

(Mar. 13, 15); (Mar. 20, 22) Mass Media and Communication  
Chapter 22

(Mar. 27, 29) (Apr. 3, 5) The Environment  
Chapter 23

(Apr. 10) Last class (review)

### **Critical Response Papers**

Value: *Each* response paper is worth 15% of your final grade  
Length: 5 – 7 pages (double-spaced; 12 pt. font; 1.25" margins)  
Due Dates: Dec. 1 (1<sup>st</sup> paper); Feb. 16 (2<sup>nd</sup> 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 Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, will be a response to the reading entitled 'The Mass Society' which is an excerpt from the book *The Power Elite* by C. Wright Mills (1956).

This reading is available at the following Web address:

[http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Book\\_Excerpts/MassSociety\\_PE.html](http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Book_Excerpts/MassSociety_PE.html)

Your second paper, which is due in class on Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>, 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 must consult material from your textbook dealing with at least two theoretical perspectives which you find relevant to the case at hand. You may also cite lecture material and/or consult journal articles or other academic resources if you wish, although this is not required. All of the 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 sociological 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.