SOCL 210: Sociological Perspectives

Location  MacDonald–Harrington, room G-10

Time  Fall 2019, Mon and Wed 2:35–3:55pm

Instructor  Peter McMahan  (peter.mcmahan@mcgill.ca; (514)398-6839)

Office hours  TBD

Teaching Assistants  Lysandre Champagne  (lysandre.champagne@mail.mcgill.ca)
Alicia Pool  (alicia.poole@mail.mcgill.ca)

Office hours  TBD

Syllabus  http://mcmahanp.github.io/soci210

Description
This course provides an introduction to sociological analysis. Sociology is a remarkably diverse field of study, and materials covered will by necessity of time not provide a comprehensive view of the discipline as a whole. Rather, the coursework has three specific aims: (1) to introduce students to many of the substantive subjects commonly studied by sociologists, (2) to familiarize students with different perspectives of sociological theory, and (3) to help students read and think critically about social issues.

_expectations_
Students are expected to attend lectures, be familiar with the required readings, turn in five response papers, and take a midterm and final exam.

Lectures
The lectures are an integral part of the course, and will discuss much more than the content from the readings. Students should plan to attend all of the lectures. Response papers and the final exam will cover material that is only available in class. If you must miss a lecture, you should get notes on the contents from another classmate. I will post links to the slides from my lectures on the syllabus and on MyCourses a short time after each class, and audio recordings of the lectures will be available on MyCourses (pending the availability of recording equipment).

Laptops, mobile devices, and other electronics with screens are welcome in class only to help take notes on the lecture. Use of a screen for other purposes is distracting to other students and is not allowed.

Readings
Each week there will be approximately two required readings, plus occasional supplementary readings. Students are expected not only to read the required works, but to spend some time thinking about how they relate to one another and to the course subject matter. Readings will include chapters and sections from the course textbook (Introduction to Sociology: 2nd Canadian Edition (Little 2016), available online), as well as articles, chapters, and other sources of published sociological work. Supplemental readings are included to provide further perspectives on particular subjects, but students will not expected to have read these works for assessment purposes.

I have tried to include a link to each of the readings in the schedule below, some of which will require you to be on the McGill campus network or to use the library’s proxy or VPN for off-campus use. Please let me know if you are having trouble accessing any of the readings.

Response papers
There will be five response papers due over the course of the semester. The response papers serve multiple functions in this course. They are designed to encourage you to: 1) keep apace of the readings; 2) attend class; 3) generate notes that can be used to prepare for in-class discussions, the final exam, and perhaps future sociology courses; 4) compare and contrast the course’s theoretical content with real-world experiences; and 5) formulate, in writing, a cogent viewpoint on key issues addressed by the course.

They will be short (300-500 words) compositions that will engage with the course material from the student’s own perspective. Two weeks before each response is due, I will post two prompts on MyCourses. Students will choose one of the prompts to respond to.

Responses will be graded on a four-point scale, with one point (no half-points) awarded for each of the following characteristics:

1. They should take a position on the issue being discussed. I am not looking for a summary or report, but
for the students’ opinion on the topic.
2. They should make specific reference to at least one of the readings to support the position being argued (and cite that reference).
3. They should make specific reference to a topic discussed during class to support the position being argued.
4. They should employ an example from outside of class (e.g. a news article or a personal experience) to support the position being argued.

For an appropriate citation style for references in the response papers, see the American Sociological Association’s *Quick Tips for ASA Style*.

In determining the final grade, only the four highest-scoring responses for each student will be taken into account. Because of this there will be no accommodation for late or missed response papers, and no extensions will be given. Completed papers should be uploaded to MyCourses, and are due before class on the dates listed in the schedule below.

**Exams**

Students will be expected to take a midterm and a final exam. The exams will cover all readings and lecture material, including any videos shown in class. The exam may contain any form of question (e.g. multiple choice, true/false, short answer, essay). Details will be given in class as the exam period approaches.

According to Senate regulations, instructors are not permitted to make special arrangements for final exams. Please consult the Calendar, section 4.7.2.1., General University Information and Regulations at http://www.mcgill.ca. Please note that the deferred/supplemental exam for this course may vary in form and content from the final exam given during the regular exam period.

**Evaluation**

The evaluation components for this course, and the dates they are set for, are non-negotiable. Regular absences will affect your ability to do well on assignments and the final exam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Component</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response papers</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>See schedule for dates (best 4 of 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>October 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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</tbody>
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**Accessibility**

Students with disabilities in need of accommodation please contact the Office for Students with Disabilities (http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/, phone 514-398-6009). Students may also contact me directly—I will make every effort to accommodate individual circumstances.

**Academic integrity**

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

L’université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l’étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

**Language of evaluation**

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. (approved by Senate on 21 January 2009)

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue).

**Grade appeals**

Instructors and teaching assistants take the marking of assignments very seriously, and we work diligently to be fair, consistent, and accurate. Nonetheless, mistakes and oversights occasionally happen. If you believe
that to be the case, you must adhere to the following rules:

- If it is a mathematical error simply alert a TA of the error.
- In the case of more substantive appeals, you must:
  1. Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your mark.
  2. Carefully re-read your paper/assignment/test, all guidelines and marking schemes, and the grader’s comments.
  3. If you wish to appeal, you must submit to the instructor a written explanation of why you think your mark should be altered. Please note that upon re-grade your mark may go down, stay the same, or go up.

Schedule

Wed, Sept 4
Lecture:
Administrative, syllabus review, and introduction
Supplementary:
- McIntosh (2017), Wall-E as Sociological Storytelling (video)

Mon, Sept 9
Lecture:
Doing social science: methodology and critical engagement
Required:
- Erikson (2017), The View from the Fourteenth Floor
- Best (2012), chapter 1
Supplementary:
- Ball (2016)

Wed, Sept 11
Lecture:
Theoretical anchors
Required:
- Little (2016), section 4.2
Supplementary:
- Erikson (2017), Coming to Terms with Social Life
- Ellis (2018), Marxism! (video)

Mon, Sept 16
Lecture:
Modern Society
Required:
- Little (2016), section 4.1
- Barker and Lowman (n.d.
- Erikson (2017), Worlds Beyond

Wed, Sept 18
Lecture:
Race, ethnicity, and nationality
Required:
- Little (2016), sections 11.1–11.3
- Bolnick et al. (2007), The Science and Business of Genetic Ancestry Testing
Supplementary:
- TallBear (2013), Genomic articulations of indigeneity
- Panofsky and Donovan (n.d.), Genetic Ancestry Testing among White Nationalists

Mon, Sept 23
Lecture:
Multiculturalism and immigration
Required:
- Little (2016), sections 11.4–11.5
- Mahtani (2002), *Interrogating the hyphen-nation*

**Supplementary:**
- Leroux (2010)

**Due:**
Response paper 1

**Wed, Sept 25**
**Lecture:**
Social construction of disability

**Required:**
- Wendell (1996), *Chapter 2: The social construction of disability*

**Mon, Sept 30**
**Lecture:**
Gender and Socialization

**Required:**
- Little (2016), chapter 5
- Westbrook and Schilt (2014), *Doing gender, determining gender*

**Supplementary:**
- Cross (2018), *Socially constructed does not mean fake*

**Wed, Oct 2**
**Lecture:**
Gender and intersectionality

**Required:**
- Little (2016), chapter 12
- Gilchrist (2010), *'Newsworthy' Victims?*

**Mon, Oct 7**
**Lecture:**
Cultivating difference: class and culture

**Required:**
- Little (2016), chapter 22
- Lamont (1992), prologue and chap. 1

**Due:**
Response paper 2

**Mon, Oct 9**
**Lecture:**
Inequality and stratification in Canada

**Required:**
- Little (2016), section 9.2
- Erikson (2017), *Creating Divisions*

**Mon, Oct 14**
**Lecture:**
*No class—happy Thanksgiving*

**Wed, Oct 16**
**Lecture:**
Global inequality and mobility

**Required:**
- Beck (2010), *Remapping Social Inequalities in an Age of Climate Change*

**Supplementary:**
- Piketty (2017), *Introduction*

**Due:**
Response paper 3
Mon, Oct 21
Lecture:
*No class—go vote!*

Wed, Oct 23
Lecture:
*Midterm exam*

Mon, Oct 28
Lecture:
Population: theories of demographic dynamics
Required:
- *Little (2016), chapter 20*

Wed, Oct 30
Lecture:
Demography and family
Required:
- *Little (2016), chapter 14*
- *Thornton (2001), The developmental paradigm, reading history sideways, and family change*

Mon, Nov 4
Lecture:
States, authority, and political participation
Required:
- *Little (2016), chapter 17*
Due:
Response paper 4

Wed, Nov 6
Lecture:
Democracy and State autonomy
Required:
- *Haney (1996), Homeboys, Babies, Men in Suits*

Mon, Nov 11
Lecture:
Social change and collective behavior
Required:
- *Little (2016), chapter 21*

Wed, Nov 13
Lecture:
Social movements
Required:
- *Mische (2003), Cross-talk in Movements*

Mon, Nov 18
Lecture:
Studying relations
Required:
- *Crossley (2013), Interactions, Juxtapositions, and Tastes*
Due:
Response paper 5

Wed, Nov 20
Lecture:
Networks and collective mobilization
Required:
- Gould (1991)

Mon, Nov 25
Lecture:
The structure of organizations and groups
Required:
- Little (2016), chapter 6

Wed, Nov 27
Lecture:
Institutional analysis
Required:
- DiMaggio and Powell (1983), The Iron Cage Revisited
Supplementary:
- Star and Griesemer (1989), Institutional Ecology, ‘Translations’ and Boundary Objects

Mon, Dec 2
Lecture:
Technology and media in social life
Required:
- Little (2016), chapter 8

Tue, Dec 3
Lecture:
Identity and interaction online
Required:
- Tolentino (2019), The I in the Internet
Supplementary:
- Marwick and boyd (2011)

References
Ellis, Lindsay, dir. 2018. Marxism! | the Whole Plate Episode 9. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFMiuAtbMO0&list=PLJGOq3JclTH8J73o2Z4VMaSYZDNS3xeZ7&index=9.


Tolentino, Jia. 2019. Trick Mirror: Reflections on Self-Delusion. RANDOM HOUSE.
