

**St. Francis Xavier University
Department of Sociology**

**SOCI 102: Key Issues in Contemporary 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 11:15-12:30 and Fridays 12:15-1:30.
Classroom Location: Nicholson Hall, Room 252

Course Rules and Etiquette

Welcome to your second semester of 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 phones** 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.

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 102” 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 provides the foundation for the theoretical, methodological and conceptual approaches used by sociologists in their endeavour to explain the complexities of modern capitalist societies. Using a broad range of topics as the backdrop, this course illustrates the ways in which a sociological perspective is scientifically unique. Sociologists understand that there is a dynamic relationship between individuals and the larger social networks involved in the socio-economic and political organization of complex capitalist society. This course will re-familiarize students with the theoretical and methodological approaches used to investigate the social world (that were learned in SOCI 101). The course will also explore the foundations of social life and the varying sites of social inequality; examining such topics as gender, education, race and ethnicity, mass media, and processes of globalization. This course is a prerequisite for all upper level sociology courses.

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:

- 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.
- Be able to understand how institutional policies, practices and procedures *shape* and regulate the lived experiences of individuals in society.

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

In-class Critical Reflections	20%	(Weekly)
Mid-term Test	25%	(February 14)
Research Outline Assignment	25%	(March 21)
Final Exam	30%	(TBA)

In-class Critical Reflections

There will be ten graded small group discussions held during class time throughout the semester. Students will arrive at class having both read the required readings and attending lectures, and then break off into groups of three. Students are expected to write a collaborative critical reflection based on the prompts provided. **Each group must submit their reflection by the end of class in hand-written form (one reflection for each group).**

Please include the name and student ID of each group member at the top of your reflection. **If you miss a discussion reflection, then there is no other option to make up these points.** Students do not have to work with the same people on any given discussion, so choose your group members wisely.

- Since these are in-class group discussions, each group is expected to brainstorm together ***before writing up one hand-written copy, to be submitted before the end of class.***

Research Outline Assignment

There will be a research project assigned during the first weeks of the course. This is essentially a “non-essay” assignment, in which students will learn strategies for locating peer reviewed, academic resources, and then organizing research into a logical essay outline. A late penalty of 5% per day will be enforced should you miss the class on the date which it is due. **Hard copies only.** Essentially, you will be submitting a detailed research outline (rather than a complete essay).

Mid-Term Test and Final Exam

The Mid-Term Test (25%) and Final Examination (30%) will consist of a combination of multiple choice, true/false, matching, or short 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.

Dates	Topic	Readings/Assignments Due
Jan. 6	Introduction. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review Sociological Perspectives.	
Jan. 10 & 13	Socialization, Status, Roles and Identity.	Ch. 17: Charles Horton Cooley, <i>Primary Groups</i> . Ch. 52: Keiko Hirao, <i>Japanese Mothers as the Best Teachers</i> . Ch. 16: Christopher J. Schneider, <i>The Music Ringtone as an Identity Management Device</i> .

Jan. 17 & 20	Inequality and Social Stratification.	Ch. 27: John Porter, <i>The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada</i> . Ch. 29: David P. Ross, K. Scott, P. Smith, <i>Introduction to The Canadian Fact Book on Poverty</i> . Ch. 41: C. Wright Mills, <i>The Power Elite</i> . Ch. 28: Melanie Rock, L. McIntyre, K. Rondeau, <i>Discomforting Comfort Foods: Stirring the Pot on Kraft Dinner and Social Inequality in Canada</i> .
Jan. 24 & 27	Defining Societal Institutions.	Ch. 20: Brenda L. Beagan, "Even if I Don't Know What I'm Doing, I Can Make it Look Like I Do": <i>Becoming a Doctor in Canada</i> . ➤ Get started on your Research Outline Assignment: Classroom visit by <u>Suzanne van den Hoogan</u> , <i>Public Services Librarian</i> ; January 24.
Jan. 31 & Feb. 3	The Institution of Education.	Ch. 50: Samuel Bowles & Herbert Gintis, <i>Education and Inequality</i> . Ch. 51: Scott Davies, <i>Stubborn Disparities: Explaining Class Inequalities in Schooling</i> .
Feb. 7 & 10	The Institution of Religion.	Ch. 48: Reginald W. Bibby, <i>Canada's Mythical Religious Mosaic: Some Census Findings</i> . Ch. 49: Jane I. Smith, <i>Women and Islam</i> .
Feb. 14	Mid-Term Test	
Feb. 17	Introduction to Gender Relations. • Film.	
Feb. 28 & Mar. 3	Gender Relations.	Ch. 32: Shauna Pomerantz, D. Currie, D. Kelly, <i>Sk8er Girls: Skateboarders, Girlhood and Feminism in Motion</i> . Ch. 55: Patricia G. Erickson, J. Butters, P. McGillicuddy, A. Hallgren, <i>Crack and Prostitution: Gender, Myths, and Experiences</i> .
Mar. 7 & 10	Racial Relations.	Ch. 34: W.E.B. DuBois, <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> . Ch. 35: Patrina Duhaney, <i>Why Is Our Educational System Still Guilty of Whiteness?</i>
Mar. 14 & 17	Mass Media.	Ch.67: Daniel Trottier, <i>Facebook: Friend or Foe?</i>
Mar. 21 & 24	Social Movements and Social Change.	Ch. 64: Jo Freeman, <i>On the Origins of Social Movements</i> . Ch. 66: Max Weber, <i>The Disenchantment of Modern Life</i> . *Research Outline Assignment due at the beginning of class, <u>March 21</u>: HARD COPIES ONLY.
Mar. 28	Population, Urbanization, and Globalization.	Ch. 57: Georg Simmel, <i>The Metropolis and Mental Life</i> . Ch. 59: Donald H. Clairmont, D.W. Magill, <i>Africville: The Life and Death of a Canadian Black Community</i> .
Mar. 31	Globalization. • Film.	

Apr. 4	Population, Urbanization, and Globalization.	Ch. 60: J. Kenneth Smail, <i>Let's Reduce Global Population!</i> Ch. 30: Peter Urmetzer, <i>Free Trade and the Third World.</i> Ch. 62: Ronald Wright, <i>Fool's Paradise.</i> Ch. 68: Marlise Simons, <i>The Price of Modernization: The Case of Brazil's Kaiapo Indians.</i>
Apr. 7	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/.

- **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.