

St. Francis Xavier University  
Department of Sociology  
Social Inequality: Sociology 290  
2012 2013

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Office Location: Annex 111A  
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Wednesdays & Thursdays, 8:30-10:30  
Or by appointment

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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*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Toronto: Pearson Prentice Hall.
2. Selected readings assigned by the professor during the year (approximately 10 journals articles and a small book).

Grading Scheme

October quiz	10%	Tuesday, October 23
Fall term assignment	20%	Tuesday, November 27
~ two choices		Indicate choice by September 20
December exam	20%	TBA
Library research paper	20%	Tuesday, March 12
Final examination	30%	TBA

Class Attendance and Participation

Class attendance will be taken and unexplained, repeat absences will be reported to the Dean. You are encouraged to participate. Your questions help ensure that new ideas are explained fully and they facilitate class discussion. Strive to integrate key concepts and refer to core substantive issues when you ask questions. *Failure to attend class is likely to impact your performance on exams and assignments.*

If you miss class, you are responsible to find out what you missed (e.g., lectures, announcements, presentations, videos). If you know you will be missing class, you are recommended to report this absence to your professors through the Dean's Office.

### Policy on Cell and Smart Phones and Laptops

Cell and Smart phones: Please turn off cell/smart phones and have them put away during class. Students who breach this rule may be reported to the Dean.

Laptops: No laptops allowed. If you require the use of a laptop for note taking during class, you are required to make an appointment to discuss your request.

### Policy on Powerpoint Presentations

Powerpoint slides are used to organize most lectures. These slides are **not** available to students. Because the slides highlight material covered in the readings, students do not need to access the slides. Strive to read the assigned reading for the day it is scheduled, and be prepared to take notes and participate.

### 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>

### 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 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.

### 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/](http://sites.stfx.ca/accessible_learning/)

## Fall Term Assignment: The lived experience of social inequality

### STUDENTS HAVE **TWO OPTIONS** FOR THE FALL TERM ASSIGNMENT

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

A five page (1000 word) 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 or news programs on how certain people are experiencing unequal access or social exclusion (e.g., *social exclusion* of individuals living with mental illness, *access to health care*, *access to university*). Once you have done so, you will interview someone who is working to achieve greater equality/inclusion for your target group. Then you will find and employ five references from scholarly journals to help you develop a critical understanding of the experience of your target group. 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 reference should be on the significance of social policy for the fate of certain marginalized individuals. Most references should be written by Canadian Sociologists. Length: 5 pages (1000 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 [Marla Gaudet](#) from the Service Learning Department. You will write a reflexive journal, then select 3 relevant peer-reviewed sociology articles to help you develop your analysis of the experiences or issues you identified through your volunteer service. The essay will be 5-pages (1000 word).

**Please Note: You are required to choose Option A or B by September 20th.** Students who choose Service Learning must meet with Marla Gaudet (this will be explained in class and in a handout) to select a placement (e.g., Food Bank, tutoring, working in a sheltered workshop). You will agree to a set of scheduled hours -- 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.

**Please Note:** Only students who sign on for Service Learning by September 20 with Marla Gaudet can do Option B. After September 20<sup>th</sup>, you are locked into your choice. Students who do not sign up for Service Learning do Option A by default.

For both the fall and winter term papers, some class time will be spent discussing possible topics and how to select suitable references. 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: Library Research Paper

Students are required to write an 8-10 page (i.e., 2000 word) library research paper focused on one specific aspect of *social inequality in Canada*. The paper should incorporate both the theory and empirical research written on your topic.

You may choose any topic that pertains to social inequality in Canada, but your analysis must integrate one or more of the key concepts learned in this course: **social class, power, and political and ideological control**. This applies to all topics including topics related to inequality rooted in ascription criteria (race, gender, sexuality, disability). Your questions on this requirement are welcome, either in class or during office hours.

*Select the reference material carefully.* You must use at least eight references drawn *primarily* from peer-reviewed social science journals. At least six of your references must be published by Canadian Sociologists. At the end of your research, you should have identified some of the key Canadian scholars on your topic. You may use one chapter from the textbook and assigned readings as *one* of your eight required references. If you use references from non-academic sources, treat them as such.

### **Please Note:**

If you are doing a paper on the same topic as the Fall Term paper, you must request to do so. Please submit a one-page proposal in which you outline how the winter term paper will be significantly different from the fall term paper. Please attach your graded fall term paper, and include at least six of the references you plan to use in the winter term paper. Feel free to discuss this proposal with me in person as you develop it. You must submit this request on Moodle by **January 18**. I will respond to your request within one week of receiving it.

## Policies concerning course assignments

### 1) Extensions and late papers

A penalty of 5% 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) Submit assignments in Microsoft Word in Moodle

It is your responsibility to ensure that papers are submitted in Microsoft Word or rtf format. Papers submitted in other formats will be returned and late penalties will apply.

### 3) Respecting essay conventions

Please respect proper essay conventions (i.e., proper introduction, grammar and spelling).

Please remember to include **page numbers**.

Please use the option of **1.15" 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 paraphrased reference points as well as direct quotes. Failure to comply with this policy will result in a grade penalty.

- There are writing resources available on-line or at your library. In addition, The Writing Centre has a template you may find helpful. It is at: <http://www.mystfx.ca/resources/writingcentre/ASA%20Template%20revision%20FEB%202011%20COMPLETE.pdf>
- The librarians have also recommended OWL at Purdue University (OWL: Online Writing Lab): <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/01/>

#### 5) Avoiding plagiarism

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. All forms of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Arts.

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 book review or term paper assigned in this course. Every submission with “copied” material will result in a grade of 0. Any violations of the university’s Academic Integrity Policy are report to the Department Chair and to the Dean of Arts.

##### 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 reference facts or opinions drawn from the same source.

#### 6) RefWorks bonus

If you use RefWorks and Write’n’Cite to complete your assignments, you will receive 2 bonus marks, per assignment. 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.

### Schedule of Readings\*

#### Power and Class

September 7	pp. 1-16, 1	Introduction and Economic power in Canada
<i>Sept 11-14</i>	2	Globalization and neo-liberalism
Sept 18-21	3	Working class – [video: 10,000 men]
Sept. 25-28	4	Globalization and changing economic rights

#### Socio-Economic Bases of Social Inequality

Oct 2/5	5 & 6	Income & wealth inequality
Oct 9/12	7	Poverty in Canada [video: Four feet up]
Oct 16/19	8	Social mobility
<b>Tuesday, Oct 23</b>	--	<b>Midterm exam ((Chapters 1-7 plus lecture content)</b>
Oct 26/30/Nov2	9 +RR	Labour markets and the future of work
Nov 6/9	10 & 11	Changing patterns of educational inequalities in Canada
Nov 13/15	12 & 28	Family SES educational inequality
Nov 20/23	----	Barriers to higher education
Nov 27/30		Discussion of Assignment 1 (participation mandatory)

#### Ascription and Social Inequality

Jan 8/11	Intro + 13	Ascription; gender
Jan 15/18	14 & 15	Family, work and gendered inequality
Jan 22/25	16 & 17	Immigration/ Economic integration of visible minorities
Jan 29/Feb1	18	Racial inequality, social cohesion, and policy issues
Feb 5/8	19	First Nations & reserve reading [Monture-Angus]
Feb 12/15	20 & 21	Age-based inequalities
Feb 19/22	22	Regional inequalities
<b>Week of Feb. 25</b>	--	<b>Winter Term Recess – no classes</b>

#### Some Consequences of Social Inequality

March 5/8	23	Health inequalities
March 12/15	----	Mental health
March 19/22	24	Housing inequalities and homelessness
March 26/29Apr 2	25, 26, 27	Intolerance, beliefs, and political behavior
April 5	---	The future .....

\* **Please note** that you will be assigned approximately ten readings in addition to those included in the textbook. These additional readings do not appear on this schedule of readings. You will be assigned the additional reading at least one week before they will be covered. The readings will be provided on-line or on Reserve Reading at the library.

The professor reserves the right to make minor alterations to the dates material will be covered. Any changes will be made in consultation with the class and in response to the need for further time to cover topics or invite guests.