



DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER 2016

SO1000 (B3) INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY – 3 (3-0-0) 45 HOURS

INSTRUCTOR: Alan Segal **PHONE:** 780-539-2011
OFFICE: C410 **E-MAIL:** asegal@gprc.ab.ca
OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 12.15 - 12.45. Thursdays 11.30 – 12. Or by appointment.

PREREQUISITE(S)/CO-REQUISITE: None

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

Thinking Critically About Society - Russell Westhaver

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the theory, methods, and substance of sociology. How societies and individuals are shaped and modified by culture, socialization, deviance, stratification, group processes, industrialization and social movements will be covered.

CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS: 3 Credits / 3 Hours per Week

DELIVERY MODE(S): Class and Group Discussions, Lectures, Film Analyses

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Acquire a sociological 'eye' on social life.
2. Learn the difference between personal social experiences, and effects of social institutions. And how these operate together as powerful influences and forces in the life of a society.
3. Become familiar with approaches to sociological analysis, and how these stand in contrast to those of other social science disciplines.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Familiarity with, and rudimentary use of, micro and macro sociological analysis.
2. Awareness, and basic application, of concepts and theories pertinent to socialization, stratification, inequality, political organization, social movements, and social institutions.

- Awareness of a broad spectrum of terminology found in sociological conversation and research.

TRANSFERABILITY: UA & AF, UC, UL, AU, Concordia UC, Canadian UC, GMU, KUC

***** Grades of 'D' or 'D+' may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students must be aware it is their responsibility to contact receiving institutions to ensure transferability.**

GRADING CRITERIA:

GRADING CONVERSION CHART			
Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Designation
A+	4.0	95 – 100	EXCELLENT
A	4.0	90 – 94	
A-	3.7	87 – 89	FIRST CLASS STANDING
B+	3.3	83 – 86	
B	3.0	80 – 82	GOOD
B-	2.7	77 – 79	
C+	2.3	73 – 76	SATISFACTORY
C	2.0	65 – 72	
C-	1.7	60 – 64	
D+	1.3	55 – 59	MINIMAL PASS
D	1.0	50 – 54	
F	0.0	0 – 49	FAIL
WF	0.0	0	FAIL, withdrawal after the deadline

NOTE: On the College's marking grid there is no D-. Therefore no such final mark will be recorded. However, for the course assignments, I will use D- as an additional non-failing mark.

EVALUATIONS:

Academic assignments for this course emphasize synthesis of ideas from a sociological standpoint, and the best questions you can think of to advance that synthesis. Analysis does not mean just reporting what others have expressed on a topic. Important as this is, other ideas or conclusions are valuable because they add insight or specific details that help you to ask questions about that topic. My written assignments are a philosophical inquiry that is advanced through your and others' investigations. Deciding what questions are worth raising is an important part of analysis. Conclusions can be valuable but aren't obligatory for any of my assignments.
How your grade is calculated?

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS:

- Assignment 1: Critical Analysis Questions Essay 1 Weight: 33.3%
- Assignment 2: Critical Analysis Questions Essay 2 Weight: 33.3%
- Take-Home Final Exam: CAQ Essay 3 Weight: 33.4%

The following example illustrates the determination of how the grade is calculated:

Task	Grade	Score	Final score & Grade
Assignment 1	B	3.0	3.0
Assignment 2	B	3.0	3.0
Final Exam	B	3.0	3.0
			$(3.0+3.0+3.0)/3=3.0$ = B

General Assignments Description:

Ordinarily, we learn information and then use it to identify our own and other individuals' behaviour. Identifying seems to be the same in our minds as interpreting. So we use the information not just to pick out details of personal and social cultures; we also impose a conclusion on them. The assignments for this course require that you do the opposite. *All information or interpretation is a suggestion, not a conclusion. Even if the information or interpretation appears unlikely ever to change.*

Each assignment is an essay, but based on a series of questions you will develop and then explain. Your explanation will tell me why the questions you write are worth asking from a sociological outlook. How would they help you understand anything sociologically?

Most Important: You cannot answer the questions. Your assignment entirely is to discuss the value of each question, and if possible, how they might work together to show what may lie under the surface of everyday life.

Assignment 1: Due February 1st Minimum 900 Words

Based on the Introduction and the first 4 chapters of Westhaver's book, you will develop at least 4 questions. You MUST use 4 or more of the following in developing the questions:

Context, Self-Awareness, Social Fact, Subjective, Symbols, Objective, Urbanization, Agency, Ideology, Social Structures, Specific Theories, Mutual Social Action, Relational Behaviour.

Questions can come from more than one idea. Each question could emerge from 2 or more of the above. The assignment's goal is to communicate the queries you think of, and discuss why you believe they might help you investigate a social context. However, if you can gradually go beyond this, and express why all of your questions constitute an imaginative sociological inquiry, you will advance the assignment an important step. This describes all the assignments, not just the first.

For this assignment you will address any of the films I will show you in class. You will write this as if I know nothing of the movies. **Try to communicate sufficient details about plot and conceptual purposes. What idea(s) can you identify as important to the director? Indicate the concepts you will refer to explicitly, tell me what they mean, and try to explain the logic implied by them. Then state the question you would ask while using this concept, as it could be used in discussing sociological implications of the film you are writing on.**

Assignment 2: Beginning March 7th Group Presentations

Based on chapters 5 - 8 of Westhaver's book, you will develop at least 6 questions. You MUST use 6 or more of the following in developing the questions:

Social Status Positions, Status Set, Socialization, Social Role, Institutionalization, Social Institution, Inequality, Meritocracy, Social Stratification, Social Mobility.

Final Take-Home Exam Essay Assignment: Due Date TBA Minimum 1400 Words

Based on chapters 9 - 11 of Westhaver's book, you will develop at least 8 questions. You MUST use 8 or more of the following in developing the questions. If you have included at least 8, you can go beyond this to incorporate any other ideas, concepts, theories that sociologists employ:

Class, Class Situation, Commodity, Social Relations of Production, Forces of Production, Patriarchy, Gender, Gendered Division of Labour, Prejudice, Institutional Discrimination, Systemic Discrimination, Minority Group, Racism, Ethnocentrism, Ethno-Racialization

With these, you will analyze sociologically one of the following:

1. A book of fiction, a short story, or a body of work by an author of your choice.
2. A television program or series, a movie or collection of films.
3. A computer or online game.
4. A body of work by a specific creator in any of these areas.

5. A song or musical piece, or a body of work by a particular composer. This can also apply to art of various forms, architecture, etc.
6. Anything I approve after we have discussed your suggestion.
7. A website with a particular orientation that can be discussed sociologically.
8. Any of the films I have shown you in class.

NOTE:

1. Grammar is important to communicating precise meaning. Therefore, while it will not be valued as highly as content, it will be evaluated and therefore can affect your mark.
2. All written assignments are subject to lateness penalties of one grade level per calendar day beyond the due date.
3. A one-grade-level penalty will be applied for assignments that are less than minimum length.

ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE SENT BY EMAIL, TO MY COLLEGE ACCOUNT:

asegal@gprc.ab.ca

- **YOU MUST INCLUDE THE WORD 'ASSIGNMENT' IN THE SUBJECT LINE, AND INDICATE WHICH ASSIGNMENT IT IS.**
DO NOT SEND ATTACHMENTS. WRITE IN THE ACTUAL EMAIL WINDOW OR USE THE WORD PROGRAM YOU ENJOY MOST AND THEN COPY AND PASTE.

Discussion Bonus Mark:

Every person in the course may (but not necessarily will), receive a bonus mark based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. Discussion postings to a Moodle discussion forum also will be considered class participation. You will be eligible for a bonus mark only if you display commitment to the course by reading the book and completing all written assignments. Although attendance is not relevant to the regular assignments for the course, it is important to your eligibility for a bonus mark.

Eligibility for the bonus is nullified if you are absent for more than 2 classes.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

University courses provide the best intellectual and perhaps social experience, when students arrive prepared for the day's work. My classes are heavily discussion -oriented and therefore require commitment from students.

1. Read assignments.
2. Participate in class conversation about the material.
3. Complete all written work.
4. Indicate on submitted material your name; section and course number; and which assignment is being sent to me.
5. All written work must be sent via email to asegal@gprc.ab.ca You MUST use the word 'assignment' in the subject line.
6. *** Electronic Devices: People who must have contact with others during class time may leave their cell phones on 'vibrate', and leave the room if a response is required. Otherwise, texting or use of phones will result in you having to miss that particular class. Please do not put me in a position of having to do this.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and there will be penalties. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the Student Conduct section of the College Admission Guide at <http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/>

Or the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at <http://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/>

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

Instructors reserve the right to use electronic plagiarism detection services on written assignments. Instructors also reserve the right to ban the use of any form of electronics (cell phones, Blackberries, iPods, tablets, scanning pens, electronic dictionaries, etc.) during class and during exams.

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Week 1 *Introduction to SO1000*

Week 2 *Thinking Critically... Chapter 1 - The Sociological Imagination*

Class Discussion:

What is a sociological imagination? Do you think it's bound to a specific type of knowledge?

Week 3 *Thinking critically..... Chapter 2 - Sociological Paradigms*

Class Discussion:

What is a paradigm? How does the concept fit with sociology? Is belief a paradigm?

Be prepared to attempt explanations of the paradigms introduced in the chapter.

Week 4 *Thinking Critically..... Chapter 3 - Sociology as Critical Thinking*

Class Discussion:

Is Westhaver justified in connecting critical thinking with sociological imagining?

Week 5 *Thinking Critically.... Chapter 4 - Becoming Mindful of Social Context*

Class Discussion:

If the author of your text joined us one day, what do you think he would say that could explain what he means by action?

Would sociology benefit from professionals who are critically astute and mindful, but who also defer from social action? What varieties of social action does Westhaver mention, and what varieties can you think of?

Identify the connectors between relationship and action. Is social action possible without subjective meaning?

In debates around action, we sometimes argue over feasibility as well as possibility. Keep this in mind as we delve more deeply into the ramifications of action.

Week 6 *Thinking Critically.... Chapter 5 - Social Relationships and Social Status Positions*

Class Discussion:

What is status? What is social status, and master status?

Using this chapter, prepare a summary of your status that you can share with some in the class.

Identify the more pronounced aspects of your socialization.

Do you agree with Westhaver that social norms and social roles are ambiguous and contradictory?

Week 7 *Thinking Critically...Chapters 6 & 7 Social Relationships.....*

Class Discussion:

Obviously, the key concepts here are institution and culture. We will discuss both.

But first you need to discuss with me the class what each encompasses.

How do authority, power, myth, mythology, and identity, figure in our imagining of 'institution' and 'culture'?

Can humans exist outside culture?

When Westhaver mentions transformation, he assumes linkages between critical thought, imagination, social action, and cultural effect. We will discuss the assumption.

Week 8 TC... Chapter 8 - Social Inequality and Social Stratification

Class Discussion:

Stratification is a concept with wide reference in society, among many disciplines. Are we exaggerating its significance?

What is inequality? When we say something is unequal, are we actually talking about inequality?

Could a society be stratified without inequality? Can it be stratified and still experience a lot of social mobility?

Week 9 Thinking Critically ... Chapter 9 - Classed Social Relationships

Class Discussion:

This chapter extends our discussions of chapter 8. Be ready to use the particular details of this chapter as we revisit chapter 8's themes.

Week 10 Thinking Critically Chapters 10 & 11 - Gendered ... Ethno-Racialized

Class Discussion:

We have covered previously the relationship of macro conditions to micro experience. These chapters bring us to two highly important aspects of sociological analysis: gender and race.

What does Westhaver tell you about both? How does he explain both, as concepts and frameworks from which social perceptions, adaptations, and actions emerge?