

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE

SOCIOLOGY 1000  
**INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY**

(Winter 2012)

3 University Transfer Credits

(UA, UC, UL, KUC, AU, MU, CdnUC, ConUC)

STUDENTS SHOULD CONFIRM TRANSFERABILITY TO RECEIVING INSTITUTIONS

**Course Prerequisite:** None. This course is a general introduction to sociology. SO1000 is prerequisite to courses mandated for a minor or major in the field. For the University of Alberta, Sociology courses not specific to either a minor or a major do not require SO1000 to enrol in them.

**Course Description:** Introductory Sociology examines the theories, methods, and substance of sociology. These develop insight into how societies and individuals are shaped and modified by characteristics of social life, such as culture, socialization, stratification, group processes, economics, and social movements.

**Mode of Delivery:** Class and Group Discussion, Occasional Lectures, Film Analyses

**Electronic Devices:** People who must have contact with others during class time may leave your cell phones on 'vibrate', and leave the room if a response from you 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.

**Instructor:** Alan Segal [asegal@gprc.ab.ca](mailto:asegal@gprc.ab.ca)

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays: 14.00 – 14.25  
After each of the evening courses on those nights.  
By Appointment

**Office:** C410, 539-2011

**Required Reading:**

*Sociology For Everyone* - Bruce Ravelli, Michelle Webber, John Patterson  
*A Lifetime Of Secrets* – Frank Warren

**Plagiarism:** In an academic setting , presenting others' work as your own is a serious violation. However, referencing articles and books and online academic products do not prevent you from building on their ideas and speculations. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, consult Page 50 of Grande Prairie Regional College Admissions Guide.

**Assignments:**

*All work must clearly stipulate your name and course number, and identify which assignment it is. Written assignments must be sent only by email. Only assignments sent through your GPRC email accounts are acceptable. Nothing will be assessed if it arrives via a different email account.* The receipt date and time that accompanies your email messages will count as the official submission time for the work you're handing in. No attachments are acceptable. Cut and paste your work and send it as a regular email message.

All assignments will go to [gprcassignments@gmail.com](mailto:gprcassignments@gmail.com)

Academic assignments for this course emphasize synthesis of ideas in sociology, and the best questions you can think of to advance that synthesis. Analysis does not mean just reporting what others have said on a topic. Important as this is, other authors' ideas or conclusions are valuable because they add insight or specific detail that helps you to ask questions about the topic you have selected. My assignments are a philosophical inquiry that is advanced through your and others' investigations. Research is one kind of investigation. 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. 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.

ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS EXCEPT THE JOURNALS ARE SUBJECT TO LATENESS PENALTIES OF ONE GRADE LEVEL PER CALENDAR DAY BEYOND THE DUE DATE. JOURNALS WILL BE REDUCED BY ONE GRADE LEVEL FOR EACH TWO-DAY LATENESS PERIOD. THERE IS ALSO A ONE-GRADE PENALTY FOR ASSIGNMENTS THAT ARE LESS THAN THE MINIMUM LENGTH.

**Film Analyses (Minimum of Two):** (F, D- to A+)

Throughout the term films will be shown to you. They will be discussed sociologically, employing a variety of ideas mentioned in the main text. Following the showing of a film, you may be asked to write an essay of at least 1200 words, that sociologically analyzes ideas from the course text. I will select some ideas or theories that must be included in the analysis, and you will add at least the same number from any part of the book, including those we haven't reached or discussed. You should not reduce this to whether the film deserves praise, or your appraisal of the plot design. Your exploration should concentrate on the sociological value of the piece. In all of these **you must completely capitalize, or write in bold font, the first use of a theory or concept.** I have to be convinced that you understand these; an explanation of them the first time they appear in your essay, therefore, is required. You must display a workable knowledge of the ideas you mention. You gain if you can go beyond what is said in class discussion.

Due dates for these essays will be five days following the showing of the film.

**Two Journals:** (F, C- to C+)

Due Dates: First class of February and the last class of April.

Anything pertaining to sociology, class discussions or lectures, class interaction, personal life, relevant to our examination of sociology, or course observations and suggestions, is a suitable topic. No research is expected. The

minimum length is 300 words.

**Discussion Bonus:** (A, B, C, D)

Everyone 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 books 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. The bonus mark offers an A, B, C, or D. No plus or minus signs will be used. If you receive a bonus mark, it will be added to your overall grade total prior to working out a final mark. Eligibility for the bonus is nullified if you are absent for more than 4 classes. The bonus will not result in more than a 3-level rise in final grades.

**Tabulating Grades:**

The total Grade Points available from your assignments is 12.6, which will increase if you write more than 2 film reviews. All marks will be totalled and divided by this number. A percentage will be derived based on this calculation, and the percentage will be reconverted to a final grade according to the grid below.

NOTE: No class averaging will be done.

**Grade Equivalency:**

A+	95-100%
A	90-94%
A-	87-89%
B+	83-86%
B	80-82%
B-	77-79%
C+	73-76%
C	65-72%
C-	60-64%
D+	55-59%
D	50-54%
D-	45-49%

**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.

**NOTE:** Some postsecondary institutions may not accept a final grade of D and D+.

**DISCUSSION SEQUENCE**

1. Introduction to SO1000

## 2. SFE Chapter 1

Class Discussion: Objective and Subjective ideas and theories of deviance (and conformity).

What is sociology? What is a sociological imagination? Prepare an explanation of the different types of sociology introduced in the chapter. What are hegemony, discourse, political economy, status, relations of production?

## 3. SFE Chapters 3 & 4; Lifetime Of Secrets

Class Discussion:

What do sociologists mean when they allude to culture, subculture, counterculture, mass culture, popular culture, material and non-material culture; and cultural capital? Can you think of examples that solidify these terms? Why distinguish values, mores, and norms from each other? Explain ethnocentrism and socialization. In what sense might these be connected? Who or what are 'agents of socialization'? What have been the more substantial forms of socialization you have experienced? What have been the most significant? Be aware that 'substantial' and 'significant' do not always reference the same occurrence or development. Have you experienced conflicting types of socialization? Have you experienced re-socialization? Number all the pages of the 'Lifetime' book, with Page 1 being the page of the Introduction. Roughly categorize the different postcards. We will discuss your classifications in class. Speculate on what might contribute to the development of secrets and secretive behavior.

## 4. SFE Chapters 5 & 12; LOS

Class Discussion:

Why might I link chapters on deviance and social change? What do sociologists think social change refers to? What social factors play into social change? Are social change and social movements always connected? If not, what characteristics of them clarify the lack of connection? What is stigma, and does it apply clearly to deviance and social change? Is deviance an individual or a group designation? **From this point onward in this course, you will have to think of deviance and social dissent simultaneously.** How might you comment on deviance and social dissent if you were a conflict theorist, a functionalist theorist, or a feminist theorist? Is a theory also a paradigm? Which of the postcards in LOS indicate a response to social change? Which of them indicate a form of dissent? What are they dissenting from?

## 5. SFE Chapter 2

### Class Discussion:

Research is pertinent to any systematized discipline of understanding. As you read this chapter, try to understand the assumptions of each branch of sociological investigation. What differentiates qualitative and quantitative research? How might each approach affect how we interpret sociologically, the society in which we live? What elements of research design are introduced here? Can a study provide reliable but invalid data?

## 6. SFE Chapter 7

### Class Discussion:

How would you explain the relationship between social structure and social interaction? What do sociologists refer to when they discuss status? What are social stratification and social class? What indicators can you name that display your social status? Have you been convinced that ideas of inequality contribute meaningfully to knowing the world sociologically? What categories of inequality are mentioned in your text? Are some categories left out that you believe should be included? What are structural sources of poverty? How do these connect to social mobility? What is social mobility? Do any of these intersect with the idea of meritocracy?

Some sociologists tie together development, debt, dependency, and modernization? They are convinced the tie creates the apparatus to which most of the world is subordinate. How might these sociologists explain the value of the tie-in?

## 7. SFE Chapters 8 & 9; LOS

### Class Discussion:

Why mention ethnicity and race in the same chapter? Prepare a sociological explanation of each of the categories. Why do sociologists refer frequently to race, ethnicity, and discrimination as if they are inseparable? What might the existence of discrimination in our country imply for our belief that Canada is a pluralistic society? What is cultural pluralism? In what manner can gender be compared to the other characteristics of inequality listed above? Explain the link between feminist analyses and all forms of inequality, especially that of gender. What sociological or theoretical value is established by discussing ethnicity, race, sexuality, and gender, from the viewpoint of poststructuralist theory?

Ask yourself the same question when thinking about the link between gender and sexuality on one hand, and queer theory on the other? What does the concept of assimilation encompass? Would we have exploitation if genuine assimilation were achieved? If discrimination didn't exist, could sociologists still speak of exploitation?

What are hegemonic masculinity, transgenderism, identity, pan-sexuality? The authors of the text mention these items as they lead into their reference to racialization. Can you see the fit with racialization? Are you persuaded by it?

Prepare to discuss the postcards that you connect to gender and sexuality, ethnicity and race. Do any of the

postcards suggest discrimination? If so, what types are suggested?

#### 8. SFE Chapter 10

Class Discussion:

What prominence does media have in your life? Can you edit it out when you want to? Are some elements of media more prominent in your existence, experience, and development, than others? Why do we differentiate between media and mass media? Can you imagine social cohesion without media? What theoretical perspectives cited in the chapter most closely reflect what you think about media?

Presumably, you have been raised to consider religion an important aspect of personal and social life, even if you or your family follow no religion and may not believe in any god. How, then, does a chapter appear that asks you to look at religion as a form of deviance? What concepts does Bereska marshal together in her analysis? She writes of truth and also of religion. Is this a reasonable tie-in? Is the inclusion of religion as a system of truth-creation treated similarly to her treatment of science as a truth-creation system? Be prepared to elaborate on your response(s). Are Foucault's ideas relevant to these 2 chapters?

#### 9. SFE Chapter 6; LOS

Class Discussion:

How would you explain 'family' to a being who had no understanding of the concept? Do the definitions presented in this chapter cover your ideas of what is a family? Can you perceive your family life in the descriptions offered in the text? Social Diversity is cited in the text because it has a powerful influence in sociological analyses. Do the authors persuade you that social diversity is accurately and legitimately reflected in the experiences of family in this country?

What are social institutions and why do we consider the family an integral example of them?

Offer examples from LOS that address family life from as many sociological angles as you can detect in them.

#### 10. SFE Chapter 11; LOS

Class Discussion:

We talk about health as if it has singular meaning. Variation, however, is the norm more than the exception. How would you explain Health to someone who is unfamiliar with the concept? Think back to our study of culture. What observations do you have about Canadian culture and Canadian discourses about health? What is the Sick Role? What is meant by the medicalization of society? Could we consider these as discourses of health? Be ready to explain the idea of 'discourse', and how a sick role and medicalization might be examples of it.

Identify the LOS entries that registered with you most profoundly. How do you explain their impact on you? Finally, at this very early stage of your exposure to sociology, which of the discipline's ideas would you enlist to analyze the entire book as a single text, rather than individual cards?