

# **SOCIOLOGY 2700**

## **Grande Prairie Regional College**

### **SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND SOCIAL ACTION**

(3 UT Credits)

(Winter 2007-8)

Instructor: Alan Segal

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Office Hours: Mondays: 14.30 – 15.30 Or By appointment

Course Prerequisite: SOCIOLOGY 1000

#### Course Description:

An inquiry into the characteristics of social action and social change. Ideology and social structure, community (grassroots) organizing, and specific social movements will be discussed.

#### Required Reading:

Solutions to Social Problems: From the Bottom Up: Successful Social Movements – Stanley Eitzen and Kenneth Stewart

Articles posted to Blackboard or distributed in class

#### Assignments:

NOTE: All written work must comply with the College's policy on plagiarism. For a detailed explanation of what it is, refer to page 44 in your Grande Prairie Regional College 2007-8 Calendar.

- All submitted work must clearly stipulate your name and course number, and identify which assignment it is. Your assignments will be sent *only* by email. The address is [gprc\\_assignments@yahoo.ca](mailto:gprc_assignments@yahoo.ca) Don't forget the underscore between 'GPRC' and 'assignments'. Messages from hotmail accounts appear to be the worst for not receiving replies from me, or for not arriving after they've been sent to me. I strongly recommend you use an entirely different email provider. *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.

- Academic assignments for this course emphasize synthesis of ideas in sociology, and the best questions you can think of to advance that synthesis. Conclusions can be valuable but it isn't obligatory to state one. 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.

Two Journals: (F, C+ to B)

Due February 6<sup>th</sup> and March 14<sup>th</sup>. Anything pertaining to the sociology of social action, class discussions or lectures, class interaction, personal life relevant to our discussions, or course observations and suggestions, is a suitable topic. No research is expected. The purpose is to allow informal communication with the instructor. If you do not hand in a journal you will receive a failing grade on that specific assignment. The minimum length is 300 words.

Midterm Essay: (F, A+ to D)

Due March 7<sup>th</sup>. The minimum length is 1200 words. Pick two contrasting theories regarding social movements and social action, and apply them to a social movement in Canada.

Final Essay or Project: (F, A+ to D)

To be discussed. The due date for this assignment is the last class day of the term.

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.

**Discussion Bonus:**

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 Blackboard 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. If you are absent for more than 5 classes you will not receive a bonus grade. .

**Tabulation of Marks:**

Your final mark will be formulated by adding the grade point value for each letter grade you receive and dividing by the maximum Grade Point total you can attain given the number of required assignments.

NOTE: (1) No class averaging will be done. (2) All marks will appear on Blackboard. You are responsible for monitoring your grade input, and informing me that a mark has not been entered.

## DISCUSSION SEQUENCE

1. Introduction to course
2. Solutions..... Preface and Chapter 1:

Is there more than rhetorical meaning to democracy? Is there more than rhetorical meaning to 'democratic action'? Think of the structural sociological theorists you are familiar with, and inquire how they would answer the previous questions.

What is a social movement? If you have thought of it before this course, did you think of it as a generic experience? Does Canada have social movements? Do such movements matter? Could we end up with considerable and effective social action but little social movement. What are the prerequisites of social change?

Prepare to discuss Zinn's piece on civil disobedience? Do you agree the rule of law has maximized injustice?

3. Solutions..... Chapter 2

How exemplary of movements to eliminate inequality, are the specific sections of this chapter?

4. Solutions.... Chapter 4

Does [promoting responsibility of any type count as a social movement? Is the goal sufficiently worthy? Ought we to weigh the worthiness of an objective before imagining it as a foundation for social change? What forms of pressure were asserted against the various corporations mentioned?

5. Solutions... Chapters 5 & 6

Is there a new frontier of change and social movement in the world? If so, do its 'fronts' have anything in common with each other? Which of the items mentioned are you most drawn to? Does social action assume universal responses from people of very diverse societies? Is citizen activism more than a comforting rubric?