

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE

SOCIOLOGY 2700

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND SOCIAL ACTION

(Winter 2012)

3 University Transfer Credits)

(UA, UC, UL, KUC, AU)

STUDENTS SHOULD CONFIRM TRANSFERABILITY TO RECEIVING INSTITUTIONS

Course Prerequisite: SO1000. (Recently the University of Alberta changed its approach to Introductory Sociology. Courses not listed as required or suggested for minors or majors in the discipline, will no longer have a prerequisite at that institution).

Course Description: An inquiry into the characteristics of social action and social change is the focal point of this course. Ideology and social structure, community (grassroots) organizing, and specific social movements will be discussed.

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

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:

Ways of Social Change by Garth Massey

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

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.

Two Journals: (F, C- to C+) Due the second class of February and the third class in March. 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 350 words.

Midterm Essay: (F, D- to A+) Due the first class of March. The minimum length is 1200 words. Using the ideas in chapter 3, you will analyze a social movement in Canada.

Final Assignment – Social Action Class Presentation: (F, A+ to D-)

Due Date: Last class of the term

This will be a group presentation to me. The class will be divided into 2 groups and will undertake two social action projects. The Presentation will consist of a background description of concept and preliminary steps before the Action itself. The purpose of the project, how it developed; what concepts learned in the course were helpful or not, and why; are all items to be addressed. Also, questions you began with regarding this assignment, whether and how they changed, or not, are to be incorporated into your explanation to me of the action project you undertook for the semester. *This final assignment is not simply an academic exercise.*

I will assign two projects in the near future. The class will study from a sociological standpoint, social movements and social action.

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. If you are absent for more than 3 classes you will not receive a bonus grade.

Tabulating Grades:

Each letter grade is worth a precise number of points. Your final mark will be formulated by adding the total number of points for each letter grade you achieve, and dividing it by the maximum points available for all the assignments for the course. 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 totaled 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 Equivalence:

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 assignments that will be evaluated on a full grading grid, I will use D- as a non-failing mark.

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

DISCUSSION SEQUENCE

1. Introduction to course

2. Ways of Social Change - Chapter 1
 - Why would an author begin a book on social change with personal experience? How can we know if our own lives have broader significance or reveal extensive social developments?
 - Why does Massey refer to being modern? How do modern societies resemble or differ from those not considered modern? Explain the logic of becoming a modern person.

3. Ways of Social Change - Chapters 2 & 3
 - How do societies recognize social change? Is this process unlike how individuals recognize it?
 - What's the relationship between policy and change? Research methods can affect what we conclude. What approaches are mentioned in the book?
 - Sociology utilizes various categories of analysis to explain social developments. Which are deemed by Massey to be most relevant to understanding social change?

4. Ways of Social Change - Chapter 4

- What is new knowledge and why would it have social consequences?
- Our society repeats continuously how technology eases social change if not widespread transformation. Apart from the statement this is true, why should we be persuaded of its logical substance?
- Are innovation and social change equivalent?

5. Ways of Social Change - Chapter 5

- Could we have social movements without agency? In western societies at least, agency is a powerful concept. Be ready to explain its meaning(s).
- What differentiates a social movement from social action, or social change?
- Of what significance to a 'movement' is transgressive contention?
- Is all opposition a form of resistance?
- Does Massey persuade you about we should look at social movements? Do you have other ideas regarding the appraisal of them?

6. Ways of Social Change - Chapter 6

7. Ways of Social Change - Chapters 7 & 8

- Prepare an explanation of 'commercial transformation of material and cultural life'. Why does this deserve an entire chapter in a book on social change?
- Does the 'common good' exist in more than a rhetorical way?
- When is social change imposed by the state a better avenue to social transformation than waiting for civic society to achieve results? When might the reverse be preferable?