

COURSE ORIENTATION & INTRODUCTION

SOC1101A: Principles of Sociology

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Administration



- Introductions & teaching philosophy

- Class schedule:
 - ▣ Monday, 1:00pm – 3:50pm, STM 224
 - ▣ Wednesday, 1:00pm – 3:50pm, STM 224

- Brightspace: <https://uottawa.brightspace.com>

- Office hours and contact:
Wednesday, 11am – 12:30pm, FSS 10 001
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Course objectives



- *Developing a sociological lens* – What are the key concepts shared among sociologists? How do we construct a sociological question? How do individual experiences/grievances impact our understanding of society?
- *Critical thinking & research methods* – How do we learn to ‘read the world’ as sociologists? What are the key methods for sociological research?
- *Understanding social theory* – What are the theoretical foundations of sociology as a discipline? How can theory support a better understanding of society and social relations?
- *Key concepts & debates in sociology*
- *Examination of core topics and contemporary research*

Required materials

- **Steckley, John (2017), *Elements of Sociology: A Critical Canadian Introduction, 4thEd.***
 - Available at the Campus Store,
<https://www.bkstr.com/ottawastore>
- Additional required (and recommended) materials will be available on Brightspace

Course structure & evaluation

Evaluation format	Weight	Date
Critical Reviews (2)	20%	Wed., July 3 & July 17
Midterm exam	30%	Wed., July 10
Participation & Online comments (10)	10%	10 online comments, due every lecture
Final exam	40%	Tues., July 30 th , 1 – 4pm, MNT 202

Critical Reviews (20%)

- **1st DUE on July 3rd**
- **2nd DUE on July 17th**
- For each review, students must select a topic from the course materials to summarise and discuss using at least one additional scholarly source. Further details, including the rubric, will be posted on Brightspace and discussed in class.
- No more than 3 double-spaced pages, must adhere to APA formatting guidelines

*All submissions are preferred online via Brightspace (.doc, .docx or .pdf). However, you may also choose to submit a paper copy in class.

Midterm exam (30%)



- In class on **Wed., July 10th** , 80 minutes
- Exam will include approximately 90% multiple choice and 10% short answer.

Final Exam (40%)



- During exam period, **July 30th, 1 – 4pm, MNT 202**
- 85% multiple choice, 15% short essays
- Review session & essay question topics will be available on the last day of class – July 24th

Participation (10%)



- Weekly participation on Brightspace (10%)
 - At least 10 lectures, you may skip two and still receive full participation marks
 - Due 1 pm, before each lecture

- You may not make-up missed participation marks

Who are you?



- Turn to your neighbour – introduce yourself!
- Why are you taking this course? What are your expectations?
- How do you define sociology? What role does *perspective* play in understanding society?

Introduction to Sociology



- Sociologists notice social patterns
 - ▣ They recognize that our personal experiences are affected by our sex, age, class, ethnicity, “race,” religion, and sexual orientation
 - ▣ They investigate and challenge the social patterns that other people perceive, for example, that all male nurses are gay (e.g., *Meet the Parents* [2000] movie)

Sociology and Issues



- Sociologists discuss social issues
 - ▣ Sociological research enables us to discuss social issues, such as same-sex marriage, in an informed and critical manner
 - ▣ It helps us understand how socializing influences shape our opinions
 - ▣ It allows us to challenge perceptions such as stereotypes

Sociology as a Discipline



- Sociology is a social science
 - ▣ Sociology shares common interests with other social sciences such as psychology, anthropology, philosophy, social work, economics, history, and political science
 - ▣ However, sociology is unique and does distinguish itself from other disciplines through its history, distinct vocabulary, and set of tools

Sociology and Related Disciplines

Discipline	Emphasis
anthropology	The comparative study of human societies and cultures and the way they developed.
economics	The production and consumption of wealth, including the distribution of goods and services among individuals and groups.
philosophy	Major thinkers and turns of thought in particular societies, and how they have addressed the major questions of life.
political science	Systems of government and how they serve citizens.
psychology	The human mind, the social and biological influences on it, and its functions, especially those affecting behaviour.
social work	The way our understanding of society and individuals can be applied to improving peoples' well-being.
sociology	The development, structure, and functioning of human society, especially as seen in group interaction, social relations, social institutions, and social structures.

What Is Sociology?



- Sociology can be defined as the social science that studies the development, structure, and functioning of human society
- Sociology is difficult to define. It is more productive to explain what sociology *does* than what it *is*
- Sociology involves looking for and looking at social patterns in
 - ▣ Social variables (age, gender, “race,” ethnicity, religion, ability, and sexual orientation)
 - ▣ Social institutions (education, religion, family)
 - ▣ Social interactions

Why Study Sociology?



- It is useful to study sociology to achieve a greater understanding of:
 - ▣ The social world (social practices, attitudes, institutions)
 - ▣ Yourself (how you relate to social patterns)
 - ▣ Others in a multicultural and diverse Canada
 - ▣ Nations and their institutions

The Sociological Imagination



- C. Wright Mills coined the term **sociological imagination**.
 - Society, not the individual is the primary focus
 - The sociological imagination allows us to understand individuals' circumstances as shaped by social forces
 - The sociological imagination helps us to understand the connections between the political and the personal. In many ways, these are interlinked

The Origins of Sociology



- Ibn Khaldûn (1332–1406), an Arab scholar, was the first person to carry out a systematic study of sociological subjects
 - In his book *An Introduction to History*, he developed a systematic approach to studying various types of societies and their histories, cultures, and economies
 - Khaldûn discovered that as societies become more affluent, they also become more soft and senile and fall into demise

The Development of Sociology in Europe

- Sociology emerged as an area of academic interest in France, Germany, and Britain during the 19th century
 - ▣ It developed as a response to dramatic social changes
 - Industrialization
 - Urbanization
 - Population increases

Max Weber:

A Founder of Modern Sociology

- German sociologist
- Weber described how Protestantism and the religion's values, specifically the **Protestant work ethic** and accumulation of **capital** through thriftiness, led to the development of modern capitalism
- However, there is no sociological evidence that capitalism developed primarily in Protestant countries or that other religions do not display a similar work ethic
- Latin American scholars argue that capitalism is rooted in colonialism and colonial exploitation

The Spread of Sociology to North America



- ❑ Sociology emerged in North America during the late 19th/early 20th century
- ❑ North American sociologists sought to understand rapid social changes linked to European immigration
- ❑ The University of Chicago's sociology department is one of the oldest in the United States
- ❑ In the 1920s and 1930s, the "Chicago School" produced several prominent sociologists, such as Everett C. Hughes, George Herbert Mead, Robert Park, Ruth Cavan, Edwin Sutherland, W.I. Thomas, Florian Znaniecki, and Jane Addams

The Development of Canadian Sociology



- In Canada, the first sociology department was founded in 1922 by Carl Addington Dawson at McGill University
- At the same time, the sociological tradition of political economy emerged at the University of Toronto
- Sociology didn't become a significant area of study in Canada until the 1960s and 1970s

The Development of Canadian Sociology, cont'd



- Canadian sociology had a few unique focal points
 - ▣ The relationship between English and French Canada
 - ▣ The development of the Canadian West
 - ▣ The relationship between class and ethnicity
 - ▣ Close collaboration with anthropology

Social Class and Ethnicity:

John Porter

- John Porter (1921–1979)
 - ▣ Examined the relationship between social class and ethnicity
 - ▣ Coined the term **vertical mosaic** to describe hierarchical stratification of racial, ethnic, and religious groups due to systemic discrimination
 - ▣ Potter found that Anglo-Saxon Protestants occupied the top of the hierarchy, followed by French-Canadians while racially marginalized groups concentrate at the bottom of the hierarchy

Early Women Sociologists and the Writing of gender in Canada

- Annie Marie MacLean (1870–1934)
 - ▣ First Canadian woman to obtain a PhD in sociology (University of Chicago)
- Aileen Ross (1902–1995)
 - ▣ First woman hired as a sociologist at a Canadian university (University of Toronto)
- Helen C. Abell (1917–2005)
 - ▣ Founder of rural sociology in Canada

Different Kinds of Sociology



- Sociology as a discipline did not develop uniformly, but diversified into different schools, for example:
 - Structural functionalism
 - Conflict theory
 - Symbolic interaction
 - Feminist theory
 - Postmodern theory

Different Kinds of Sociology, cont'd



□ Macrosociology

- Focuses on the “big picture” of society and its institutions

- E.g., structural functionalism, conflict theory, feminist theory, postmodern theory

□ Microsociology

- Focuses on the plans, motivations, and actions of individuals and small groups

- E.g., symbolic interactionism

Structural Functionalism

- Key representatives: Émile Durkheim, Robert K. Merton, and Talcott Parsons
- Uses an organic or biological analogy for society
 - ▣ Identifies the various **structures** of society (e.g., the family), and describes the **functions** the structure performs to maintain the entire social system and produce social cohesion
- Focuses on explaining social stability over conflict and social change
- This approach has fallen out of favour amongst most practising sociologists

Durkheim and Social Facts

- Émile Durkheim (1858–1917)
 - One of the founders of sociology
 - Coined the term **social fact**
 - Social facts are patterned ways of acting, thinking, and feeling that exist outside of any one individual but exert social control over people
 - Social facts allow sociologists to examine larger social forms rather than focusing on individuals

Durkheim and Social Facts, cont'd



- Every social fact has three essential characteristics:
 1. It was developed prior to and separate from you as an individual
 2. It can be seen as a characteristic of a particular group
 3. It involves a constraining or coercing force that pushes individuals into acting in a particular way

Durkheim and Social Facts, cont'd

- In his book *Suicide* (1897), Durkheim treated suicide as a social fact
 - ▣ Durkheim found that certain groups were more likely to commit suicide: military officers, Protestants, and unmarried people
 - ▣ He found a correlation between suicide and the degree of connection and commitment of individuals to society
 - ▣ Those with strong dedication were more likely to commit suicide
 - ▣ Having a too weak connection to society (integration) could produce suicide as well

Merton's Manifest and Latent Functions

- Robert K. Merton (1910–2003) enhanced the functionalist perspective by noting that there are three different types of functions that any structure can produce:
 - ▣ **Manifest Functions:** intended and easily recognized
 - E.g., Religion fulfills spiritual and emotional needs
 - ▣ **Latent Functions:** unintended and unrecognized
 - E.g., Religion creates a support network
 - ▣ **Latent Dysfunctions:** unintended and produce socially negative consequences
 - E.g., Religion provides justification for judging outsiders negatively

Conflict Theory



- Class divisions are a main source of conflict in all large societies and motor of major socio-historical change
- Conflict theory is based on the four C's
 1. **Conflict:** exists in all large societies
 2. **Class:** has existed in every society
 3. **Contestation:** functions can be contested by asking “Who does this function best serve?”
 4. **Change:** society either will or should be changed

Conflict Theory, cont'd



- Karl Marx (1818–1883)
 - Society is a hierarchy and each group's position in the hierarchy is determined by the group's role in production
 - Marx saw conflict between the **bourgeoisie** (the capitalists) and the **proletariat** (the workers), which would initiate a socialist revolution that would produce an **egalitarian** society
 - Marx's insights about class conflict and capitalist production are still valid and conflict theory found new applications in feminist sociology, queer theory, anti-colonialism, and other critical sociology approaches

Symbolic Interactionism



- The symbolic interaction approach looks at the meaning (the symbolic part) of the daily social interactions of individuals
- Focuses on individuals and small groups and their everyday practices and interactions

Symbolic Interactionism, cont'd



- George Herbert Mead (1863–1931)
 - ▣ Examined socialization, the development of the self, and social roles in the context of human interaction
- Herbert Blumer (1900–1987)
 - ▣ Coined the term **symbolic interaction**
 - ▣ Individuals and groups create and maintain social systems through interaction

Symbolic Interactionism, cont'd



- Erving Goffman (1922–1982)
 - Canadian sociologist
 - Coined the term **total institution** (e.g., prisons, boarding schools, concentration camps), which seeks to regulate, control, and manipulate its residents

Feminist Theory



- Rooted in conflict theory
- Feminist theories address issues of systematic discrimination against women
- Three main “waves” of feminism
 - ▣ First wave: campaign for civil and political rights
 - ▣ Second wave: focus on public and private rights
 - ▣ Third wave: inclusion of LGBTI and racialized individuals

Feminist Theory, cont'd



- Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797)
 - ▣ One of the first feminist analysts
- Harriet Martineau (1802–1876)
 - ▣ One of the first sociologists to systematically examine women's roles in society

Feminist Theory, cont'd



- Dorothy Smith (b. 1926)
 - Developed **standpoint** theory out of her own discrimination in the academic community
 - Standpoint theory challenges objective analysis
 - Knowledge is always developed from a particular standpoint or lived experience
 - The everyday experiences and the female standpoint were largely ignored in (sociological) knowledge developed from the male standpoint

Postmodern Theory



- Postmodern theory seeks to include a diversity of voices, especially those that are often drowned out by powerful voice of dominant groups (white, heterosexual, middle and upper-class men)

Postmodern Theory, cont'd



- Michel Foucault (1926–1984)
 - **Discourses** are ways of speaking about some element of reality
 - **Totalitarian discourse** refers to a universal claim about how knowledge is achieved
 - **Archeology of knowledge** refers to the process of examining how individual discourses developed
 - All knowledge is constructed and thus we must ask: How do we know what we know?

Sociology by Audience



- Sociology as a discipline can also be categorized based on the audience for whom the work is intended:
 - Professional sociology
 - Critical sociology
 - Policy sociology
 - Public sociology

Professional Sociology



- Research designed to generate highly specific information, often with the aim of applying it to a particular problem or intellectual question
- Written in highly technical and specialized language
- Audience: academic and professional readers

Critical Sociology



- Considered by Michael Burawoy (2004) to be the “conscience of professional sociology”
- Aims to make sure that professional sociologists do not become so lost in esoteric debates that they lose sight of the issues of fundamental importance to the discipline
- Example: Michel Foucault and Dorothy Smith
- Audience: academic and professional readers

Policy Sociology



- Generates sociological data to be used in the development of social policies, laws, rules or plans
- The three main areas served by this type of sociology are education, health, and social welfare
- Example: Leonard Marsh's *Report on Social Security for Canada*
- Audience: governments and corporations

Public Sociology



- The role of public sociologists is to make sociology accessible to the public through the use of jargon-free language
- Example: C. Wright Mills
- Audience: those outside of the discipline and the political establishment