SOCI 210: Sociological Perspectives

Term  
Fall 2020

Location  
Online

Time  
Tue and Thu 4:05pm–5:25pm

Instructor  
Peter McMahan  
peter.mcmahan@mcgill.ca; (514)398-6839

Office hours  
Mondays 1:00pm–2:30pm

CampusWire and Zoom

Teaching Assistants  
Narjes Hashemi  
narjes.hashemi@mail.mcgill.ca

Winnie Yang  
chih-lan.yang@mail.mcgill.ca

Syllabus  
https://soci210.netlify.com/

Description

This course provides an introduction to sociological analysis. Sociology is a remarkably diverse field of study, and materials covered will by necessity of time not provide a comprehensive view of the discipline as a whole. Rather, the coursework has three specific aims: (1) to introduce students to many of the substantive subjects commonly studied by sociologists, (2) to familiarize students with different perspectives of sociological theory, and (3) to help students read and think critically about social issues.

Resources

The following pages provide details and resources for various aspects of the course:

- Perusall scoring
- Tips and tools for remote small-group discussion

Expectations

Students are expected to (1) closely read the assigned texts, (2) view recorded lectures, (3) participate in group discussions and worksheets, (4) evaluate their group members participation, and (5) complete a final take-home examination. Each of these expectations is detailed below.

Reading

The assigned readings are the core of the course material, and students are expected to carefully and critically read each required text before class. To facilitate students’ engagement with the reading and to help prevent students from falling behind, we will use the online tool Perusall for all required readings. Perusall is a reading platform in which students annotate texts collaboratively alongside one another. More information on how Perusall works and how it is integrated into the course is available here.

To access Perusall through MyCourses, navigate to Content > Perusall (readings) > Perusall, and then click the “Open Link” button. This will take you to the Perusall site and automatically register you as a member of the course. If you are having any trouble accessing the readings through Perusall contact the instructor right away.

Readings will be graded as either complete (1 point) or incomplete (0 points). Student responses must demonstrate a thoughtful and thorough reading of the entire assignment to receive credit. At the end of the semester, the four lowest reading grades will be dropped from the assessment. Reading assessments will contribute 10% to the final grade for the course.

Lectures

All lectures and slide presentations will be pre-recorded and made available on Microsoft Stream. Lectures will be about 10-15 minutes each, with multiple lectures for each class period. Although viewing lectures is not part of the course grade, the content of the lectures will be necessary to do well in the course.

Slides (PDF format) and recordings will be available at least 48 hours before each class.

Group discussions

Scheduled class time will be devoted to small-group discussions and collaborative composition of discussion responses. Starting in the third week of classes, students will be responsible for forming groups of 4 or 5 using MyCourses. Each class period, groups will work together to discuss the readings and draft responses to provided worksheets of discussion questions. These worksheets will be due at 8pm the day after class. It is strongly recommended that students meet during the scheduled class time to discuss the reading, as the instructor and teaching assistants will be available to answer questions and clarify concepts.

Each week, one of the two discussion responses of each group will be chosen at random to be evaluated. The responses will be evaluated according to the following rubric:

- Responses demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the reading and link ideas from the text to themes,
theories, and other topics from class.

6–8 Responses demonstrate a basic understanding of the reading but may miss important implications or connections.

2–5 Responses demonstrate a superficial understanding/engagement of the reading or contain numerous fundamental misunderstandings of the concepts.

0–1 Responses are cursory, or not submitted at all.

Marks for worksheet responses will be given to all members of the group. At the end of the semester, groups will perform peer evaluation that will adjust each participant’s discussion grade up or down by as much as 15%.

Group discussions will contribute 50% to the final grade for the course.

Completing peer evaluation of group members will contribute 5% to the final grade for the course.

Final exam
At the end of the semester, students will be required to complete a take-home exam, due at the time scheduled by the exams office. The exam will be distributed 72 hours before it is due.

The final exam will contribute 35% to the final grade for the course.

Evaluation
The evaluation components for this course (described above), and the dates they are set for, are non-negotiable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group discussions</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completing group peer evaluations</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
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Accessibility
Students with disabilities in need of accommodation please contact the Office for Students with Disabilities (http://www.mcgill.ca/ospd/, phone 514-398-6009). Students may also contact me directly—I will make every effort to accommodate individual circumstances.

Academic integrity
McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see http://www.mcgill.ca/students/arr/honest/ for more information). (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

L’université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l’étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site http://www.mcgill.ca/students/arr/honest/).

Lanugage of evaluation
In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. (approved by Senate on 21 January 2009)

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue).

Grade appeals
Instructors and teaching assistants take the marking of assignments very seriously, and we work diligently to be fair, consistent, and accurate. Nonetheless, mistakes and oversights occasionally happen. If you believe that to be the case, you must adhere to the following rules:

- If it is a mathematical error simply alert the instructor of the error.
- In the case of more substantive appeals, you must:
  1. Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your mark.
  2. Carefully re-read your assignment, all guidelines and marking schemes, and the grader’s comments.
  3. If you wish to appeal, you must submit to the instructor a written explanation of why you think your mark should be altered. Please note that upon re-grade your mark may go down, stay the same, or go up.
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Supplementary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thu, Sept 3</strong></td>
<td>Administrative, syllabus review, motivation</td>
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<td>McIntosh (2017), <em>Wall-E as Sociological Storytelling</em> (video)</td>
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<td>Chelsea Vowel (2016), <em>Beyond territorial acknowledgments</em></td>
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<td><strong>Thu, Sept 8</strong></td>
<td>Making sense of the social world</td>
<td>Erikson (2017), <em>The View from the Fourteenth Floor</em></td>
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<td>Wolman (2009) <em>Fraud U: Toppling a Bogus-Diploma Empire</em></td>
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<td><strong>Thu, Sept 10</strong></td>
<td>Doing social science: methodology and critical engagement</td>
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<td>Little (2016), chapter 2</td>
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<td>Best (2012), chapter 1</td>
<td>Ball (2016), <em>Violence in Blue</em></td>
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<td><strong>Thu, Sept 15</strong></td>
<td>Theoretical anchors</td>
<td>Little (2016), section 4.2</td>
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<td>Erikson (2017), <em>Coming to Terms with Social Life</em></td>
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<td>Ellis (2018), <em>Manxism</em> (video)</td>
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<td><strong>Thu, Sept 17</strong></td>
<td>Modern Society</td>
<td>Little (2016), section 4.1</td>
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<td>Barker and Lowman (n.d.)</td>
<td>Little (2017), <em>Worlds Beyond</em></td>
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<td><strong>Tue, Sept 22</strong></td>
<td>Race, ethnicity, and nationality</td>
<td>Little (2016), sections 11.1–11.3</td>
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<td>Bolnick et al. (2007), <em>The Science and Business of Genetic Ancestry Testing</em></td>
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<td>TallBear (2013), <em>Genomic articulations of indigeneity</em></td>
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<td>Panofsky and Donovan (2017), <em>Genetic Ancestry Testing among White Nationalists</em></td>
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<td><strong>Tue, Oct 1</strong></td>
<td>Gender and Socialization</td>
<td>Little (2016), chapter 5</td>
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<td>Westbrook and Schilt (2014), <em>Doing gender, determining gender</em></td>
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<td><strong>Tue, Oct 6</strong></td>
<td>Gender and intersectionality</td>
<td>Gilchrist (2010), ‘Newsworthy’ Victims?</td>
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Class and inequality

Thu, Oct 8
Cultivating difference: class and culture
Required:
- Little (2016), chapter 22
- Lamont (1992), prologue and chap. 1

Tue, Oct 13
Inequality and stratification in Canada
Required:
- Little (2016), section 9.2
- Erikson (2017), Creating Divisions

Thu, Oct 15
Global inequality and mobility
Required:
- Beck (2010), Remapping Social Inequalities in an Age of Climate Change

Supplementary:
- Piketty (2017), Introduction

Populations and states

Tue, Oct 20
Population: theories of demographic dynamics
Required:
- Little (2016), chapter 20

Thu, Oct 22
Demography and family
Required:
- Little (2016), chapter 14
- Thornton (2001), The developmental paradigm, reading history sideways, and family change

Tue, Oct 27
States, authority, and political participation
Required:
- Little (2016), chapter 17

Thu, Oct 29
Democracy and State autonomy
Required:
- Haney (1996), Homeboys, Babies, Men in Suits

Social change

Tue, Nov 3
Social change and collective behavior
Required:
- Little (2016), chapter 21

Thu, Nov 5
Social movements
Required:
- Mische (2003), Cross-talk in Movements

Groups and institutions

Tue, Nov 10
Studying relations
Required:
- Crossley (2013), Interactions, Juxtapositions, and Tastes

Tue, Nov 17
The structure of organizations and groups
Required:
- Little (2016), chapter 6

Thu, Nov 12
Networks and collective mobilization
Required:
- Gould (1991)

Thu, Nov 19
Institutional analysis
Required:
- DiMaggio and Powell (1983), The Iron Cage Revisited

Supplementary:
- Star and Griesemer (1989), Institutional Ecology; ‘Translations’ and Boundary Objects
Technology and the Internet

**Tue, Nov 24**
Technology and media in social life

**Required:**
- Little (2016), chapter 8

**Thu, Nov 26**
Identity and interaction online

**Required:**
- Tolentino (2019), *The I in the Internet*

**Supplementary:**
- Marwick and boyd (2011)

**Review**

**Tue, Dec 1**
Review and final project work session

**References**


Leroux, Darryl. 2010. “Québec Nationalism and the Production of Difference: The Bouchard-Taylor Commission, the


Tolentino, Jia. 2019. Trick Mirror: Reflections on Self-Delusion. RANDOM HOUSE.

