

SOCIOLOGY 203 – Social Problems
SOC 203-A1 (53088), Fall 2015
 Tues & Thurs 2:00-3:20 PM SAB 325
 Department of Sociology, University of Alberta

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“The sociological imagination is the capacity to shift from one perspective to another – from the political to the psychological; from examination of a single family to comparative assessment of the national budgets of the world...It is the capacity to range from the most impersonal and remote transformations to the most intimate features of the human self – and to see the relationship between the two.”

- C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (1970: 7)

“The fascination of sociology lies in the fact that its perspective makes us see in a new light the very world in which we have lived all our lives....It can be said that the first wisdom of sociology is this— things are not what they seem.”

- Peter Berger, *Invitation to Sociology* (1963: 21, 23)

“To young Canadians: ...There are great challenges before you, from the overwhelming nature of climate change to the unfairness of an economy that excludes so many from our collective wealth, and the changes necessary to build a more inclusive and generous Canada. I believe in you. Your energy, your vision, your passion for justice are exactly what this country needs today.”

- Honourable Jack Layton, Posthumous *Letter to Canadians* (August 20, 2011; <http://www.ndp.ca/letter-to-canadians-from-jack-layton>)

Course Description & Objectives:

In the Calendar, SOC 203 is described as: “Selected structural issues in various societies, including inequality, population growth, environment, and human rights.”

As the above Mills and Berger quotes suggest, sociology is a form of detective work, the understanding and results of which always relate back to us personally, but more importantly in terms of our larger society. Sociologists attempt to reach a deeper understanding of people within their social and natural environment. Such understanding is required for many things but perhaps nowhere more important than for addressing social issues or 'social problems'. Jack Layton, the Leader of the NDP party of Canada who died in 2011, wrote a letter to all Canadians prior to his death where he reconfirmed the primacy of social justice in order to address social problems and make the country a better place to live for everyone. In this class you'll be introduced to the definition and development of social problems by examining a variety of structural and institutional issues, and the ways that they are socially constructed. In way of doing this we'll examine music lyrics, spoken word poetry, video and documentaries related to specific cases, research, and sociologists' experiences, all of which will help you to develop and expand your own 'sociological imagination'.

Objectives of this course:

1. Introduce students to sociology and its role in identifying and understanding social problems.
2. Learn and articulate sociological concepts and theories toward developing a deeper understanding of why social problems recur and endure.
3. Understand and develop proficiency in applying sociology's key perspectives to societal issues.
4. Develop an ability to critically analyze social problems that are encountered in everyday life, the media and as presented in popular music lyrics and spoken word poetry.

Required Textbooks (please ensure that you have the correct edition):

1. Holmes, M. Morgan, Linda A. Mooney, David Knox, and Caroline Schacht. 2015. *Understanding Social Problems, Fifth Canadian Edition*. Nelson Education.
2. Other readings as assigned. Supplemental readings will be available electronically through Moodle or through Internet links.

Note: Policy about course outlines can be found in section 23.4(2) of the University of Alberta Calendar (GFC 29 SEP 2003)

Pre-Requisite: None

Registration:

Students are responsible for ensuring they are officially registered. Check your Class Schedule on Bear Tracks to confirm that you are properly registered in this course and section. You must be officially registered to receive marks: instructors are not allowed to mark the exam of an unregistered student or to add a student name to the official class list. If you have difficulty registering, speak with the Sociology Undergraduate Advisor (5-27 HM Tory Building).

Class Format & Ground Rules (PLEASE READ):

This class follows a lecture format utilizing multiple media to stimulate thought and illustrate concepts. In order to make this format more interactive, I ask that you respect the following:

- Due to the increasing number of emails I receive requesting information on materials already covered in lecture, I reserve the right to reply that you should speak with your classmates who were in attendance for those lecture notes.
- I will not provide or discuss any grades via e-mail, nor do I discuss course and assignment grades in comparison to other students in the class. Grades can be accessed through the course eClass site, or you can discuss them with me during my office hours.
- Phones must be turned off or silenced at all times during class and exams. If it's an expected emergency (e.g. health related, child care issue, etc.) please quietly step out into the corridor before taking the call.
- Arriving late and/or leaving early disturbs others. If it's unavoidable, use the closest door to leave and sit in a place or move in a way that creates the least disruption – for example if you come in late sit in the nearest empty seat or, if you have to leave early, find a seat that will allow you to leave with as little disturbance as possible. If coming late or leaving early on a regular basis cannot be avoided, please let me know.
- Although the class size, physical space, and teaching format make interaction difficult, I do ask that students express their views, raise questions, and challenge taken for granted assumptions about society. For this to be possible, it is necessary that we all come to class with an open mind and willingness to listen to other points of views and perspectives that may challenge our own values and ways of thinking. Therefore, whoever is speaking (instructor or fellow student) must be heard in silence. Talking and whispering disturbs others who are listening, and is a sign of disrespect. If you have something to contribute to the discussion, or topic under consideration, share it with the class; otherwise save it for a later and more private opportunity outside of class.
- I strongly advise regular attendance at class. Assigned readings and lectures overlap and while not identical, they are complementary and mutually reinforcing. Students who attend regularly and read the assigned chapters and readings in advance have greater comprehension and retention, and perform better on examinations.
- If you decide to not attend class be aware of the risk. The University holds students responsible for any information provided during class time. If you will be missing classes occasionally, or regularly, I recommend you find a classmate who is willing to lend you their notes and fill you in on what was missed. My lecture notes will not be posted online or loaned.
- Please do not take photos of lecture PowerPoint slides – see “Recording of Lectures” below.
- SOC 203 is an eClass section. If you have access to Bear Tracks, your CCID and Password allows you to access the eClass Moodle course site for SOC 203. An up-to-date version of this course syllabus will be posted there.
- Finally, if you are having trouble in this class, please come see me sooner rather than later. Sooner – there is a good chance that we can work together to address any issues. Later – there is a good chance that you will be left with a lower grade than you would like.

Recording of Lectures

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify Dr. Caine by e-mail within two working days from the date of the missed exam (or as soon as possible, given the circumstances underlying the absence). Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.3(1) and 23.5.6 of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Course Requirements:

Your final grade for SOC 203 will be based on two exams and two written assignments:

Course Requirement	Value	Important Dates
Music Analysis #1	10%	Due September 29, in class
Midterm Exam	30%	October 8, during class time
Music Analysis #2	30%	Due November 26, in class
Final Exam	30%	Check Bear Tracks

Music/Poetry Analysis Assignment

This two-part assignment is intended to allow students to explore and analyze social problems related to the course as identified in popular music lyrics and poetry through the selection of a song or poem of their choice. The chosen lyrics/text will be analyzed at the beginning of the course and then re-analyzed at the end of the term using the tools and understanding gained over the course of the term. Detailed descriptions of Assignments #1 and #2 will be provided in class and posted on the eClass Moodle site. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day (including weekends) and you will not receive any written comments on the grading rubric. Papers not handed in will receive a zero grade.

Examinations

Both Midterm and Final examination use an objective format and consist of multiple-choice questions. Exam questions will be drawn from the textbooks and materials used in the class period. Prior to midterm and final exams access to example exam questions will be made available through the Moodle site.

Missed Exams

If a midterm exam is missed and a documented excuse is provided to the satisfaction of the instructor, a re-write will be undertaken on a date and time chosen by the professor. If the re-write is missed for whatever reason, the student will receive a zero grade.

The final exam cannot be rescheduled. Under extenuating circumstances (as outlined in 23.3.2 and 23.5 of the University Calendar) students who cannot write the final exam, or cancel their final exam during the exam period, must provide documentation and apply to their Faculty for a deferred exam within two working days following the missed exam, (or as soon as possible, given the circumstances underlying the absence). Please note that, as per 23.3(2)c of the Calendar, “a deferred final examination will not be approved if a student (a) a student has not been in regular attendance where attendance and/or

participation is required, and/or, (b) excluding the final exam, has completed less than half of the assigned work.” If approved by the student’s Faculty, the deferred final exam is scheduled for: Saturday, January 16th, 2016 at 9:00 am: Location: BUS 1 06

Grading: Final grades for SOC 203 are determined using the following contract:

	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>4-Point Value</i>
Excellent	96 – 100	A+	4.0
	91 – 95	A	4.0
	85 – 90	A-	3.7
Good	80 – 84	B+	3.3
	75 – 79	B	3.0
	70 – 74	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	66 – 69	C+	2.3
	62 – 65	C	2.0
	58 – 61	C-	1.7
Poor Minimal Pass	54 – 57	D+	1.3
	50 – 53	D	1.0
Fail	0 – 49	F	0.0

Please note: There is no rounding-up policy in this course. For example, a final course average of 94.2%, 94.5%, or 94.9% all receive a final % grade of 94 (**not** 95) and thus a letter grade of “A”. The only exception to this policy is the following: if the final % grade is on the margin of the next letter grade and there is a pattern of substantial and consistent improvement in performance over the term, then rounding up to the next letter grade may be considered by Dr. Caine.

Writing Assistance

Many students have difficulty writing. Editing each other’s work and carefully editing your own work are ways to improve your writing. I recommend contacting:

Student Success Centre (located in SUB 2-300, Tel: 780-492-2682, website:

<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/academicsupport/>).

Centre for Writers: Offer free one-on-one writing support. Past experience has shown that seeking early help will avoid the last minute backlog of students needing writing assistance. Another option may be to hire a tutor – visit Info Link to inquire about their tutor registry.

Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Students who require accommodations in this course due to a disability affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning, or mental or physical health are advised to discuss their needs with Student Accessibility Services(SAS): Room 1-80 SUB, 780-492-3381 (ssds.ualberta.ca).

Please inform me of any special accommodations recommended by SAS for your participation in SOC 203. Students registered with SAS who will be using accommodations in the classroom, or who will be writing exams through SAS, are required to provide me with a “Letter of Introduction” as early as possible. Those students who need accommodated exams must submit their “Exam Instructions and Authorization” form at least one week before each

COURSE OUTLINE

*Note: Be aware that this outline of readings may change over the course of the term.
You are responsible for attending class, and checking eClass & your email for such notices*

Week 1

September 1: Introduction and Overview of course and assignments
September 3: Reading: Chapter 1 – *Thinking About Social Problems*

Week 2

September 8: Reading: Chapter 1 – *Thinking About Social Problems* (Continued)
September 10: Reading: Chapter 2 – *Illness and Health Care*

Week 3

September 15: Reading: Chapter 3 – *Alcohol and Other Drugs*
September 17: Reading: Chapter 4 – *Crime and Violence*

Week 4

September 22: Reading: Chapter 5 – *Family*
September 24: Reading: Chapter 6 – *Youth and Aging*

Week 5

September 29: Reading: Chapter 7 – *Gender Inequality* ***ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE***
October 1: Reading: Chapter 9 – *Sexualities*

Week 6

October 6: No Readings

October 8 - Mid Term Exam (covering all materials since the first class)

Week 7

October 13: Reading: Chapter 8 - *Critical Studies in Race and Ethnicity*
October 15: Reading: Chapter 8 - *Critical Studies in Race and Ethnicity (cont'd)*

Week 8

October 20: Reading: Chapter 10 - *Poverty - National and International Issues*
October 22: Reading: Chapter 10 - *Poverty - National and International Issues Cont'd*

Week 9

October 27: Reading: Chapter 11 - *Work & Unemployment*
October 29: Reading: Chapter 12 - *Problems in Education*

Week 10

November 3: Reading: Chapter 12 - *Problems in Education (Continued)*

November 5: Online Readings - *The Other Side Immigration*

Saunders, Doug. 2012. "The Immigrant Answer - What would a Canada of 100 million feel like? More comfortable, better served, better defended." *The Globe and Mail*. May 17, 2012. Available on eClass site.

Giese, Rachel. 2011. Arrival of the Fittest: Canada's Crime Rate is Dropping as Immigration Increases. Is there a connection? *The Walrus* June, 2011. Available on eClass site. <http://thewalrus.ca/arrival-of-the-fittest/>

Week 11

November 10: No Class - Fall Break

November 12: No Class - Fall Break

Week 12

November 17: Reading: Chapter 13 - *Environmental Problems*

November 19: Selected Readings on *Sociology and the Environment* - Available on eClass site.

Laszewski, Chuck. 2008. "The Sociologists' Take on the Environment" *Contexts*, 7(2): 20-24.

Richards, Tadzio. 2010. "The Heartland and the Double Bind." *Corporate Knights*, 33.

Week 13

November 24: No Readings

November 26: No Readings – *Social Change* *** ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE ***

Week 14

December 1: Last Class – *Music Assignment: Showcase of music/poetry*

December 3: Last Class – *Conclusions and Course Review*

Final Exam: Non-Cumulative

Only covers all materials after the Midterm Exam
(Consult Bear Tracks for date, time and location)

Academic Honesty:

All students should consult the information provided by the [Office of Judicial Affairs](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

Students involved in language courses and translation courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” Students in language courses should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, excessive editorial and creative help in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

University Policy on Academic Misconduct:

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

Please familiarize yourself with the “Don’t Cheat” sheet at:

<http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/StudentAppeals/DontCheatsheet.aspx>

The U of A considers plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence to be serious academic offences. Plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence can be avoided if students are told what these offences are and if possible sanctions are made clear at the outset.

Instructors should understand that the principles embodied in the Code are essential to our academic purpose. For this reason, instructors will be fully supported by Departments, Faculties and the University in their endeavours to rightfully discover and pursue cases of academic dishonesty in accordance with the Code.

30.3.2(1) Plagiarism

No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student’s own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

30.3.2(2) Cheating

30.3.2(2)a No Student shall in the course of an examination or other similar activity, obtain or attempt to obtain information from another Student or other unauthorized source, give or attempt to give information to another Student, or use, attempt to use or possess for the purposes of use any unauthorized material.

30.3.2(2)b No Student shall represent or attempt to represent him or herself as another or have or attempt to have himself or herself represented by another in the taking of an examination, preparation of a paper or other similar activity. See also misrepresentation in 30.3.6(4).

30.3.2(2)c No Student shall represent another's substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the Student's own work.

30.3.2(2)d No Student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course Instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project, assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has previously been obtained by the Student or which has been or is being submitted by the Student in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

30.3.2(2)e No Student shall submit in any course or program of study any academic writing, essay, thesis, report, project, assignment, presentation or poster containing a statement of fact known by the Student to be false or a reference to a source the Student knows to contain fabricated claims (unless acknowledged by the Student), or a fabricated reference to a source.

30.3.6(4) Misrepresentation of Facts

No Student shall misrepresent pertinent facts to any member of the University community for the purpose of obtaining academic or other advantage. See also 30.3.2(2) b, c, d and e.

30.3.6(5) Participation in an Offence

No Student shall counsel or encourage or knowingly aid or assist, directly or indirectly, another person in the commission of any offence under this Code.

The Truth In Education (T*I*E) project is a campus wide educational campaign on Academic Honesty. This program was created to let people know the limits and consequences of inappropriate academic behaviour. There are helpful tips for Instructors and Students. The following procedures are drawn from the Code of Student Behaviour as approved by GFC and the Board of Governors. The guidelines summarize what instructors must do when they have reason to believe that a student has plagiarized, cheated, misrepresented facts or participated in an offence.

30.5.4 Procedures for Instructors in Cases Respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour

30.5.4(1) When an Instructor believes that a Student may have committed an Inappropriate Academic Behaviour Offence [30.3.2] or that there has been Misrepresentation of Facts [30.3.6(4)] or Participation in an Offence [30.3.6(5)] in cases respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour in the course that he or she instructs, the Instructor will meet with the Student. Before such a meeting, the Instructor shall inform the Student of the purpose of the

meeting. In the event that the Student refuses or fails to meet with the Instructor within a reasonable period of time specified by the Instructor, the Instructor shall, taking into account the available information, decide whether a report to the Dean is warranted. (CLRC 30 MAY 2002) (EXEC 7 APR 2003) (CLRC 27 NOV 2003)

30.5.4(2) If the Instructor believes there has been a violation of the Code, the Instructor shall, as soon as possible after the event occurred, report that violation to the Dean and provide a written statement of the details of the case. The instructor may also include a recommendation for sanction. (CLRC 27 NOV 2003).

Possible Sanctions

One or more of the following sanctions given in 30.4.3 (2) and (3) of the Code are commonly used for plagiarism, cheating, participation in an offence, and misrepresentation of facts.

- 30.4.3(2) a.i A mark reduction or a mark of 0 on any term work or examination for reason of Inappropriate Academic Behaviour (GFC 24 SEP 2007);
- 30.4.3(2) a.ii Reduction of a grade in a course
- 30.4.3(2) a.iii A grade of F for a course.
- 30.4.3(2) a.iv A remark on a transcript of 8 (or 9 for failing graduate student grades), indicating Inappropriate Academic Behaviour in addition to 30.4.3(2)a.i, 30.4.3(2)a.ii, 30.4.3(2)a.iii
- 30.4.3(3) b Expulsion
- 30.4.3(3) c Suspension

The following sanctions may be used in rare cases.

- 30.4.3(3) e Suspension of a Degree already awarded
- 30.4.3(3) f Rescission of a Degree already awarded

30.6.1 Initiation of an Appeal

30.6.1(1) When a Student has been found to have committed an offence under the Code of Student Behaviour or an Applicant is found to have committed an offence under the Code of Applicant Behaviour (Section 11.8 of the GFC Policy Manual), whether or not that Student or Applicant has been given a sanction, the Student or Applicant may appeal that decision, except in the case of a decision of the Discipline Officer under 30.5.6(2)e.ii, which remains final and is not subject to appeal. In cases where a severe sanction has been recommended to the Discipline Officer, once the student receives the final decision of the Discipline Officer, the student can appeal the decisions of both Dean and the Discipline Officer at the same time. The written appeal must be presented to the Appeals Co-ordinator in the University Secretariat within 15 Working Days of the deemed receipt of the decision by the Student or Applicant. The finding that an offence has been committed, the sanction imposed or both may form the basis of appeal. The written appeal must also state the full grounds of appeal and be signed by the Appellant. The appeal shall be heard by the UAB. (CLRC 30 MAY 2002) (CLRC 25 SEP 2003) (EXEC 01 MAY 2006) (GFC 24 SEP 2007) (BEAC 17 OCT 2007)