
SOC 100: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

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*Winter 2017; Tues/Thurs, 3.30-4.50pm; Tory Lecture 12
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CONTENTS

Course Overview	2
Course Policies & Regulations	4
Reading Schedule	6
Notices I am required to include.....	9

COURSE OVERVIEW

What is society? How can we assess problems affecting huge numbers of people? What keeps individuals together in societies? What sort of effect do shared cultures, practices, and values have on the individual? How far does the individual's membership of a group determine his or her chances in life? Do some groups exercise control over the rest of society? As the name of the course suggests to the meanest intelligence, Soc 100 provides a general introduction to and overview of the academic study of sociology. These are some of the questions that sociologists think about and try to answer; we'll be looking at these and others in order to give you an idea of the ways we can think systematically and coherently about society as a whole.

Of course, in an introductory lecture course, there are limits on what we can do: we'll only really be able to skim the surface of social thought, and give you a general picture of what's going on. Instead of providing all the answers, then, the objective of the course is to help you think about and formulate some of the questions, and the ways they can be developed. If you decide to take more sociology courses, you'll have some idea what sort of area you might specialize in, and how to go about approaching the problems therein; if this is the only sociology course you join, I hope you'll take away some idea of the general framework sociologists work in.

The course will begin with a general overview of the main theoretical models of society, in which we'll consider the most common ways sociologists frame their questions. We'll then turn to the question of social structures as a whole – in essence, asking what it is that makes a group of people into a coherent society. We'll then look at a variety of social institutions: we'll investigate how sociologists analyse specific instances of societies organizing themselves through things like the state, or the influence of the mass media. Finally, we'll turn to concrete questions of social differentiation, thinking about categories like gender, class, or ethnicity. In this way, we'll build up a language you can use to talk about social problems in general.

How the course is taught:

You'll be learning about sociology through a combination of lectures and the course textbook, *Starting Points: A Sociological Journey* by Lorne Tepperman (2nd edition, Oxford University Press, 2015; ISBN 978-9-19-900682-3). You should **buy the textbook as soon as possible**. Each lecture will be on a specific topic – such as gender or politics – connected to one of the chapters in the coursebook. You should read the relevant chapter in advance – full details are on the reading list below. The lectures summarise the main points in the reading, and try to build on them as well, going beyond what's in the book to consider the topic from a variety of angles. The Powerpoint slides from my lectures will be available on the course eClass site at the end of the week in which the lecture is held; if I forget to put them up, please feel free to remind me. However, **if attendance falls below 75% for two classes in succession, slides will not be posted**. You'll be getting information about the topic from two sources – from my lectures, and from the coursebook. It's up to you to use these two different perspectives to develop your own picture of the topic. In the exams, you'll be asked questions stemming from both lectures and the coursebook; therefore, you won't be able to skip one of them and rely entirely on the other.

As adults at university, you are the one who's responsible for your own learning. As your professor, I can give you an overview of a subject so you know where to look to learn more – but if I give you a series of facts to learn by rote, you'll never practice thinking and learning on your own. The most important thing you'll learn at university is how to learn for yourself: this process starts now. If you can't find the answer to your question in the coursebook or in lecture notes, I'm always happy to help you if you have any questions: feel free to grab me after to class, to come to my office hours, or send me an email. (If I don't reply within 48 hours, feel free to send me a reminder – however, I don't answer student emails over the weekend.)

Assessment:

You'll be evaluated by performance in three multiple choice exams. The exam dates are as follows:

- **1st Midterm Exam:** In class, 11th Feb. 25% of final grade, on material from 10th Jan – 9th Feb.
- **2nd Midterm Exam:** In class, 15th Mar. 25% of final grade, on material from 28th Feb – 21st Mar.
- **Final Exam:** Date TBA; check Bear Tracks and eClass for announcements. 50% of final grade, on material from 28th Mar – 13th Apr, **and on entire term as a whole.**

The **midterms** will consist of **50 multiple-choice questions**, covering only material from the dates indicated. The **final** exam will contain **100 multiple-choice questions** – the first fifty on material from the dates specified, and the second fifty on material from the whole semester. Your **final grade will be calculated from your *total score* out of 200 for all three exams**. A single sample exam can be found on eClass, and practice questions are on the textbook website at www.oupcanada.com/StartingPoints2e. The sample exam only covers the first few weeks of material and is intended *only* to; there are no other sample exams.

Please **inform me in advance, as soon as possible** if you are unable to attend the exam, or if you require special arrangements for sitting it. If you are unexpectedly prevented from attending the exam at the last minute, let me know **at once**: I do not want to have to chase up missing students. If you do not excuse yourself at least 24 hours before the exam, I will need documentation to support your excuse. **If you miss a midterm, you must sit a deferred exam**; you cannot transfer the weight of a missed midterm to the final. The date for *all* deferred midterms is **11 a.m. on Saturday 8th April**. If you miss one of your midterms, it is *your responsibility* to ensure that you are free at that time on that day.

The grade boundaries will be *approximately* as follows, subject to adjustment to represent the curve of the class:

<i>Description:</i>	<i>Percentage:</i>	<i>Grade:</i>
Excellent	95-100%	A+
	88-94.5%	A
Good	84-87.5%	A-
	80-83.5%	B+
	76-79.5%	B
Satisfactory	72-75.5%	B-
	68-71.5%	C+
	64-67.5%	C
Poor/Minimal Pass	60-63.5%	C-
	56-59.5%	D+
Fail	50-55.5%	D
	0-49%	F

COURSE POLICIES & REGULATIONS

In class

As a rule, **please show others the same respect you would want them to show to you.** You are adults, and are expected to behave as such. **Please don't disrupt the class** by, for example, chattering, watching YouTube, eating noisily, or failing to attend to your personal hygiene. If you arrive late or have to leave early, please sit near the door, so your entry or exit cause minimal disruption: I know your best friend is sitting in the middle of the ninth row, but you can wait to pass on that gossip about Tallulah and Clint till after class.

You should **feel free to ask questions, to challenge my interpretation, or to voice your own opinion** on the topics at hand – I will be very glad of a chance to rest my voice. Sometimes students ask questions that are interesting but tangential – it may lead us too far off track. If this is the case, I may defer it till the end of the lecture, so that we can ensure the whole class gets through the essential material before moving on to other issues. Please do disagree with me and with one another. However, **you should always be respectful of other's opinions.** If you disagree with your fellow students, try to find common ground in your opinions first; this will help you identify exactly where you diverge, making for a more productive discussion, as well as a more civil atmosphere. **I will treat your opinions with the same courtesy you treat those of others.**

Problems with the work

If you are having problems with the class, **it's much better to speak to me as soon as possible.** It's easier for me to help you find a solution earlier on in the problem; it's harder once you are far behind with the work. You **don't need to tell me all the details of your problem** (though anything you do say will, of course, be treated in confidence). Remember: if you fall far behind in class, it might be better to withdraw and resit it later, in order to avoid a Fail on your transcript. **You can withdraw from a course up until 5th April.** I'm always willing to help those with problems, and make allowances where necessary. Don't forget the help offered by the Student Counselling Service (<http://www.uhc.ualberta.ca/StudentCounsellingServices.aspx>).

Exams

1ST MIDTERM: IN CLASS, 16TH FEB. 25% OF FINAL GRADE, ON MATERIAL FROM 10TH JAN – 9TH FEB.

2ND MIDTERM: IN CLASS, 23RD MAR. 25% OF FINAL GRADE, ON MATERIAL FROM 28TH FEB – 21ST MAR.

FINAL EXAM: DATE TBA; CHECK BEAR TRACKS AND eCLASS FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS; 50% OF FINAL GRADE, HALF ON MATERIAL FROM 28TH MAR – 13TH APR, AND HALF ON ENTIRE TERM AS A WHOLE.

If you know in advance that you will be unable to attend a midterm, you must **let me know as soon as possible.** You will be required to write the missed midterm at **11am on Saturday 8th April.** If you miss an exam unexpectedly, then you must let me know your reason **within 48 hours.** If you have a good reason and can **support your excuse with evidence** (such as a Statutory Declaration from the University), then you will be allowed to resit. **Please do not embarrass yourself or me by turning up with a lengthy excuse but no documentation** of it. I am much happier when a student honestly admits to having overslept or forgotten the exam than when I have to hear a lengthy and improbable story as an excuse. I am not **authorized to grant a deferral for final exams.** For this, you will need to speak directly to your Faculty Office

Other disciplinary matters

You are expected to be fully aware of the Code of Student Behaviour. Full details can be found on the Academic Calendar, and at <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/governance/StudentAppealsRegulations.cfm>.

My responsibilities to you

In addition to class time, I will be **available in my office (Tory 6-22) on Wednesdays from noon till 2**. I may be available at other times by appointment, though I rarely come down to campus on days I do not teach. **Email** is usually the best option; if I don't reply within **48 hours**, feel free to send me a reminder. I do not normally reply to emails sent over the weekend. Please formulate your question as exactly as possible – and see if you can come up with a couple of possible answers for it. I am here to help guide you through the subject, **not to spoon-feed you every detail**. It's your responsibility to research questions before asking me – e.g. looking in the textbook. As a general guideline, you should try to answer questions of detail yourself before you turn to me, whilst questions about putting things together are ones I can help you with more easily (“I understand this and this and this, but I don't see how it all fits together”). The more precise your question is, the more likely it is that I'll be able to give a helpful answer.

If you wish to appeal any of the grades I give you, and are not satisfied with the way I resolve the situation, you can find **details on appeals and procedures for making complaints in Sections 23.4 and 23.8 of the University Calendar** (<http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/>).

Dealing with problems

Of course, sometimes everything comes tumbling down at once. You have four midterms, you fall sick, and your boyfriend or girlfriend leaves you for your best friend. If this happens, it's better to **let me know as soon as possible**. I'm happy to help you get back on your feet and make allowances, provided you can show me that the problems are genuine, not just the result of too many late nights on Whyte Avenue. Therefore, **please provide documentation** for any illnesses or other external problems.

If you are finding trouble adjusting to the workload in university, in finding the most effective way to plan your studies, or more generally in developing your study skills, you might want to consult the Student Success Centre (<http://www.studentsuccess.ualberta.ca>). I am also happy to help you with this: feel free to stop by my office hours. If you're having persistent problems with organization or deadlines, I'll want evidence that you are developing a strategy to overcome these difficulties before making allowances in grading your work; the Student Success Centre can help you develop such a plan.

There is also help available for more serious issues. If you're feeling a sense of meaninglessness, if you're always tired and low-energy, constantly restless, anxious, or overwhelmed, or if you're feeling worthless, helpless, or hopeless, then you may be depressed. Mental health issues affect a large proportion of the population, including a number of prominent individuals such as Winston Churchill and Max Weber; please do not feel ashamed if you find yourself suffering such feelings. I am able to provide a sympathetic ear if you want to stop by, but you may also want to consult people with professional training. The Student Union's Peer Support Centre offers a 'free, confidential, and non-judgemental place to talk to someone for support,' where you can speak to another student about your difficulties (<http://www.studentsuccess.ualberta.ca>). The University provides trained counsellors at the Student Counselling Service, who can work with you to help overcome your problems (<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/current-students/counselling>). If you are concerned about a friend, you can call Protective Services (780 492 5050, <http://www.protectiveservices.ualberta.ca>).

University should be a place of trust, in which we feel safe among familiar friends. Unfortunately, there are too many people who take advantage of that atmosphere of trust. The Sexual Assault Centre can provide free, confidential guidance in such circumstances: they will support you and help connect you with other services. They can be found at <https://uofa.ualberta.ca/current-students/sexual-assault-centre> (tel 780-492-9771).

Finally, please remember to look out yourselves and for one another. Don't forget to take a break for coffee, or to spend time with friends. If your friend seems a bit too drunk, keep an eye on him or her. If someone on your corridor seems withdrawn or isolated, introduce yourself and take them out for a drink. As Durkheim teaches us, strong social bonds are important to all of us as individuals; it's up to all of us to foster them.

READING SCHEDULE

The reading schedule states the general theme of each class, along with the **obligatory reading** from the coursebook. You should obtain the coursebook as soon as possible:

Tepperman, Lorne, *Starting Points: A Sociological Journey*, (Oxford University Press, 2015)
ISBN 978-9-19-900682-3

You can find sample tests and other learning materials under ‘Student Resources’ on the coursebook website at www.oupcanada.com/StartingPoints2e

1. *The foundations of sociological thought*

Our opening sessions will outline some of the basic ideas and approaches that sociologists take by looking at the three main theoretical approaches they adopt. “Theory” doesn’t just mean a lot of abstract concepts, though – a social theory tries to find a good set of concepts and models to test against social reality. Unfortunately, sociologists can’t always agree on what that reality is – which is why they have so many different theories about it.

- Tues 10th Jan:** **Introduction**
Overview of sociology; explanation of syllabus.
- Thurs 12th Jan:** **Society as a system of inequality: Critical & Conflict Theories**
Tepperman Ch.1
- Tues 17th Jan:** **The social life of individuals: Symbolic Interactionism**
Tepperman Ch.1
- Thurs 19th Jan:** **Society as a functioning whole: Structural Functionalism**
Tepperman Ch.1

2. *The social world: structures and organisation*

Our second unit asks questions about society as a whole. What do we mean when we use the word “society”? What is it that makes a group of individuals into a society that we can analyse? What do groups share that makes them a society instead of just a crowd? Are societies held together by something other than self-interest of individuals?

- Tues 24th Jan:** **Culture**
Tepperman, Ch.5
- Thurs 26th Jan:** **Culture**
Tepperman, Ch.5
- Tues 31st Jan:** **Personal Identity**
Tepperman, Ch.4
- Thurs 2nd Feb:** **Personal Identity**
Tepperman, Ch. 4
- Tues 7th Feb:** **Socialisation**
Tepperman, Ch. 5 (once again)

Thurs 9th Feb: **Socialisation**
Tepperman, Ch. 5 (again)

Tues 14th Feb: **Exam Review & Revision Session**
Preparation for first midterm.

Thurs 16th Feb: **FIRST MIDTERM EXAM: 25% OF FINAL GRADE**

Tues 21st Feb: **Reading Week: No class**

Thurs 23rd Feb: **Reading Week: No class**

3. Social institutions

The third section of the course looks at some of the most important institutions and arrangements that societies have used to manage themselves. Whilst the previous unit looked at society in the background, as it were, this unit looks at some of the ways groups have consciously tried to organize themselves or integrate their members more thoroughly. For example, we'll be thinking about politics and government from a sociological perspective, or phenomena such as the mass media.

Tues 28th Feb: **Sociology & Politics**
Tepperman, Ch. 15

Thurs 2nd Mar: **Sociology & Politics**
Tepperman, Ch. 15

Tues 7th Mar: **Deviance**
Tepperman, Ch. 6

Thurs 9th Mar: **Education**
Tepperman, Ch. 12

Tues 14th Mar: **The mass media**
Tepperman, Ch. 14

Thurs 16th Mar: **The mass media**
Tepperman, Ch. 14

Tues 21st Mar: **Guest lecture**
Presentation by Sexual Assault Awareness Centre

Thurs 23rd Mar: **SECOND MIDTERM EXAM: 25% OF FINAL GRADE**

4. Differences and division in society

Having looked at some of the ways society works as a whole, and the collective institutions that affect it, we'll turn in our final unit to a few of the major divisions in social groups. We'll be looking at the ways societies treat different groups of their members, and ask how far societies are structured into different classes inherently. We'll be exploring how far categories like gender or ethnicity can reveal something about society.

Tues 28th Mar:	Class & Inequality Tepperman, Ch. 9
Thurs 30th Mar:	Class & Inequality Tepperman, Ch. 9
Tues 4th Apr:	Gender & sexuality Tepperman, Ch.7
Thurs 6th Apr:	Gender & sexuality Tepperman, Ch.7
Tues 11th Apr:	Race & ethnicity Tepperman, Ch. 8
Thurs 13th Apr:	Race & ethnicity Tepperman, Ch.8; Ch. 10

FINAL EXAM: DATE & LOCATION TBA – CHECK BEAR TRACKS

NOTICES I AM OBLIGED TO INCLUDE

At several points in the semester, we will encounter the theories of Max Weber, who suggested that the modern world is trapped in an ‘iron cage’ of rationalization, embodied in bureaucracies that run according to strict rules, and are unable to deviate from them. This section of the outline is an excellent example: the rules oblige me to include the following notices on my outline. Most of this is common sense. However, because the university thinks we are all stupid and hence unable to work this out for ourselves, or find the appropriate regulations online, here they are:

Required Notes:

Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.

Academic Integrity:

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 (see <http://tinyurl.com/8dq67y>) and avoid any behaviour that 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 University.

Learning and working environment:

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the student ombudservice: (<http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/>). Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures can be found in the GFC Policy Manual, section 44 available at <http://gfcpolicymanual.ualberta.ca/>.

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 instructor 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.

Plagiarism and Cheating:

All students should consult the “Truth-In-Education” handbook (<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>) regarding the definitions of **plagiarism** and its consequences when detected. **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. An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. Before unpleasantness occurs consult <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/> ; also discuss this matter with any tutor(s) and with your instructor.