Canadian Society: Social Problems, Social Policy, and the Law

Fall 2021

**Instructor:** Dr. Erica Speakman

**Email:** hiltze@mcmaster.ca

**Lecture:** Tuesdays and Fridays 11:30-12:20   
**Room:** Virtual/Synchronous

**Office:** Zoom

**Office Hours:** Fridays from 1-2 via Zoom  
**TA:** TBD

# Course Description

In this course, we will explore social problems in the Canadian context using various sociological lenses in an effort to better understand them. In addition, we will also be considering how social policy and the law can both solve, as well as exacerbate certain social problems. Over the course of the semester, we will be examining social problems related to: Inequality, Intimate Relations, Health and Illness, Crime and Criminal Justice, and the Environment

# Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

* Understand the dominant theoretical and methodological perspectives that are utilized to study social problems, as well as appreciate the strengths and limitations of these approaches
* Gain a critical understanding of the impact that the individual and society has on shaping and responding to social problems
* Be able to apply concepts learned to current situations and events in the community, and around the world.
* Enhance their critical thinking, writing, and organizational skills through course assignments

# Required Materials and Texts

* **Required**: Tepperman, L., Guzman, C., & Sendroiu, I. (2019). *Picturing Social Problems*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780190169329
  + Please note that this is a **custom courseware** that is only available at the McMaster bookstore. You are free to purchase the text in its entirety if you wish to do so
* All other assigned and supplemental readings will be posted on Avenue to Learn

# Class Format

The format for this course will be synchronous. We will meet each week during our scheduled lecture time via Zoom. For students who do not already have access to Zoom, you can gain access through McMaster University at no extra cost. Here is the link: https://uts.mcmaster.ca/services/computers-printers-and-software/zoom/ For those of you who are unable to attend the live lectures, the sessions will be recorded and posted to Avenue to Learn for a period of **48 hours**, after which time the content will be removed. While attendance is not mandatory, it is certainly encouraged.

# Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Tutorial Participation (10%) – Throughout the Term
2. Quizzes (4 Quizzes - 5% each = 20%) – Due: Sept. 21; Oct. 5; Nov. 9; Nov. 23
3. Midterm Exam (15%) – Due Oct. 22
4. Final Assignment (25%) – Due Nov. 12
5. Final Exam (30%) - TBD

# Course Evaluation – Details

## Tutorial Participation (10%), Throughout the Term

Each of you has been assigned to a tutorial. The expectation is that you attend the tutorial and engage with the class discussions/exercises. The mark will be based on the quality of your participation, not just quantity

## Quizzes (5% Each = 20%), Due: Sept. 21; Oct. 5; Nov. 9; Nov. 23, 2021

Throughout the term, you will complete FOUR quizzes that will be based on both lecture and reading material. The questions will consist of multiple choice and true or false, and will be administered through Avenue to Learn. The quiz will take place at the start of lecture.

## Midterm Exam (15%), Due: Oct. 22, 2021

The exam will be based on both the lectures and the readings. It will consist of multiple choice and true or false questions. The exam will be administered through Avenue to Learn. The exam will be held during lecture time.

## Final Assignment (25%), Due Nov. 12, 2021

For this course, you will compose a research paper focusing on one particular Canadian social problem and how we might solve it. Further details will be provided both in lecture and on Avenue to Learn

## Final Exam (30%), TBD

The exam will be based on both the lectures and the readings. It will consist of multiple choice and true or false questions. Please note that the exam is **not cumulative.** The date of the exam will be scheduled by the office of the registrar

# Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DATE | TOPIC | READINGS | DUE |
| Week 1 (Sept. 6 – Sept. 10) | Introduction to the Course  Understanding Social Problems | Text: Ch. 1  Best: *Damned Lies and Statistics - Introduction* |  |
| Week 2 (Sept. 13 – Sept. 17) | Economic Inequality | Text: Ch. 2  ***Supplemental:*** “*Building Understanding: The First Report of the National Advisory Council on Poverty – Chapter 2*” |  |
| Week 3 (Sept. 20 – Sept. 24) | Racism and Ethnic Inequality | Text: Ch. 3  “The Residential School System”  ***Supplemental:***  *BLM Canada Website*  “*Anti-Asian Discrimination on the Rise in Canada, U of T Researchers Find*” | **Quiz 1 Due September 21** |
| Week 4 (Sept. 27 – Oct. 1) | Gender Inequality | Text: Ch. 4  ***Supplemental:*** *“Experts fear the pandemic may have devastating effects on working moms”* *- The National Post* |  |
| Week 5 (Oct. 4 – Oct. 8) | Sexualities and Family Life | Text: Ch. 5 and Ch. 11  ***Supplemental:*** *‘Historic moment’: Conversion therapy officially banned in Saskatoon” - Global News* | **Quiz 2 Due October 5** |
| Week 6 (Oct. 11 – Oc. 15) | **Reading Week** | **No Readings!** |  |
| Week 7 (Oct. 18 – Oct. 22) | **Review/Midterm Exam** | **No Readings!** | **Midterm Exam is Due October 22** |
| Week 8 (Oct. 25 – Oct. 29) | Aging | Text: Ch. 6  Webster. *COVID-19 highlights Canada's care home crisis* |  |
| Week 9 (Nov. 1 – Nov. 5) | Health and Illness | Ch. 9  ***Supplemental:*** *“Changing the minds of the vaccine hesitant requires actually listening to them” - Maclean’s* |  |
| Week 10 (Nov. 8 – Nov. 12) | Schools | Text: Ch. 13  Supplemental: *“Safe Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Panel – Final Report - HWDSB* | **Quiz 3 Due November 9**  **Final Assignment Due November 12 by 11:59pm** |
| Week 11 (Nov. 15 – Nov. 19) | Work | Text: Ch. 12 |  |
| Week 12 (Nov. 22 – Nov. 26) | Crime and Criminal Justice | Text: Ch. 7  *“2 Years After Legalizing Cannabis, Has Canada Kept Its Promises?” - The New York Times* | **Quiz 4 Due November 23** |
| Week 13 (Nov. 29 – Dec. 3) | The Environment | Text: Ch. 15 |  |
| Week 14 (Dec 6 – Dec. 10 | **Review** | **No Readings!** |  |

# Course Policies

## Submission of Assignments

Please submit assignments to the appropriate assignment folder on Avenue to Learn. Faxed or e-mailed assignments will not be accepted. Your assignments should be double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman.

## Late Assignments

The due dates for assignments are fixed and non-negotiable. There will be a deduction of 2% per day for all late assignments, unless you submit a McMaster Student Absence Form (http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf).The MSAF is a self- reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences for medical or other reasons that last up to 3 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work worth less than 25% of your overall. In these cases, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”. Please note these regulations have changed beginning Fall 2015.

This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence. If you are absent for more than 3 days, or exceed one request per term, you MUST visit your Associate Dean’s Office. You may be required to submit supporting documentation.

**No Assignments Will Be Accepted 2 Weeks Past the Due Date**

## Absences, Missed Work, Illness

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

## Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## Turnitin.com

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more information please refer to the [Turnitin.com Policy](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

# University Policies

## Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academiccredentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academiccredit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity)**.**

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty

* Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
* Improper collaboration in group work.
* Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

## Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](https://sas.mcmaster.ca/) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca%20) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [*Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities*](http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf)policy.

## Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a [RISO](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/02/Academic-Accommodation-for-Religious-Indigenous-and-Spiritual-Observances-Policy-on.pdf) accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Code-of-Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities.pdf) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

## Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

## Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

## Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

## Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

## Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

| **MARK** | **GRADE** |
| --- | --- |
| 90-100 | A+ |
| 85-89 | A |
| 80-84 | A- |
| 77-79 | B+ |
| 73-76 | B |
| 70-72 | B- |
| 67-69 | C+ |
| 63-66 | C |
| 60-62 | C- |
| 57-59 | D+ |
| 53-56 | D |
| 50-52 | D- |
| 0-49 | F |