

McMaster University
Department of Sociology
Sociology 2R03 Perspectives in Social Inequality
September-December 2020
Wednesday 7:00pm-10:00pm
ONLINE FORMAT

Course Instructor: Dr. Lina Samuel
Office Hours: By email/select Zoom sessions
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Teaching Assistants: TBA

Course Description:

This course introduces students to issues in social inequality, both in Canada and globally. Though we live in one of the most advanced and successful nations in the world, as a nation, we have not been able to extend these privileges and successes to all members of society. Many Canadians, particularly those at the bottom-end, have not been able to share in the rewards of being part of an advanced industrial society. This course examines the way in which social inequality has been historically produced, situated, and reinforced. We cover the main tenets of social inequality, social class, and social stratification, from the view of the classical theorists such as Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. We examine the ways in which power and privilege position different groups in society and justify particular social arrangements. After exploring the ‘cannons’ of sociology we examine some of the persistent structural conditions of social inequality in society from more contemporary writers who look at the interconnections of class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, age, and ability, which point to the *processes* producing inequality. In addition to the substantive lectures on inequality based on gender, race, class, we look at the ways in which these variables intersect in the lived experiences of individuals as they attempt to gain access to employment, education, health care and meaningful government support. In doing so, this course examines the intersections between individual agency and social structure, and the role of colonialism and post-coloniality.

Course Learning Objectives:

Through this course, students will:

- Apply sociological theories (both classical and contemporary) to analyze the social inequality;
- Explore the complexity of social inequality and its relationship to power and ideology;
- Interrogate the role of colonialism and racism in perpetuating inequality;
- Gain an understanding of the interconnections of race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, and age, and their role in social inequality;
- Become familiar with the literature concerning intersections of individual agency and social structure;
- Apply knowledge to a contemporary research paper on social inequality.

Course Learning Outcomes for Sociology 2R03

This course addresses three University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (see, <http://cll.mcmaster.ca/COU/degree/undergraduate.html>). By the end of the course the student will be able to critically evaluate the current literature and sociological research in the sociology of inequality. Students will be able to critically evaluate the sociological theories that inform the sociology of inequality. Finally, students will be able to understand the historical and social construction of inequality.

Course Format: Lectures on-line weekly through ECHO 360 (audio lectures). Assessments will be a combination of on-line tests and two writing assignments.

Course Texts

Sernau, Scott. 2020. Social Inequality in a Global Age 6th Edition. London: Sage-Pine Forge Press.

Plus Course Packet with selected readings available at the Bookstore.

It is important you keep up with the readings and assignments. I encourage students to ask questions and discuss work with other students. For the tests you will be responsible for both the required readings as well as lecture material.

Grading:

The grades are based on 3 tests (90 mins) and two writing assignments.

Please also remember to **keep saved copies of your paper** and any written work on a separate file/memory key.

Evaluation:

Term 1 Test: 20%

Term 2 Test: 20%

Term 3 Test : 20%

Writing Assignment #1 (Inequality and Social Theory): (September 30) 4 pages 15%

Writing Assignment # 2: (Making Connections October 28) 5-6 pages: 25%

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials 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 academic credit 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](#).

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](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) 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](#) 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](#) (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

Course Procedures and Policies:

1a. Please submit all assignments on the Avenue Assignment Page prior to the deadline. Do not submit assignments to my email address.

1b. Missed tests

Students who miss a term test will be assigned a mark of zero for that test unless their absence is supported by university approved documentation.

The McMaster Student Absence Form (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>) is a self-reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences that last up to **3 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work.** Please note, this tool cannot be used during any final examination period.

You may submit a maximum of **1 Academic Work Missed request per term.** It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation.

If you are absent more than 3 days, **exceed 1 request per term,** or are absent for a reason other than medical, you **MUST** visit your Associate Dean's Office (Faculty Office). You may be required to provide supporting documentation.

This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.

If your Request is APPROVED and a make-up test is required, you will write the make-up test on the **designated date selected by the instructor.** No student is automatically entitled to a second make up test. It is your responsibility to write the tests on the day in which they are scheduled.

Students should check the web, the white board and the Undergraduate Bulletin board outside the Sociology office (KTH-627) for notices pertaining to Sociology classes or departmental business (eg. class scheduling information, location of mailboxes and offices, tutorial information, class cancellations, TA job postings, etc.).

Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

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1c.Late assignments

- You are expected to complete assignments on time.

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class lecture on the due date. Late assignments will be subject to a penalty of **5%** per day. The Penalty period does include weekends and holidays. **Please make every effort to hand assignments in on the due date.**

Please come see the instructor if you are experiencing any difficulty with the assignment or the material presented in class. Only hard copies will be graded.

Please note that only McMaster emails will be considered official. Emails from other addresses may disappear into the black hole of spam filters.

- You are expected to keep a back-up, hard copy of your assignment in case it is lost.

- **Accommodation provision:**

Medical Certificate must state that you were ill on the due date of the assignment for a one day extension. For a longer extension you must prove that you were sick during a longer period or prove an exceptional, unforeseen circumstance.

2. Grade appeals. The instructor and teaching assistant(s) take(s) the marking of assignments very seriously, and will 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 assignment guidelines and marking schemes and the grader's comments.

If you wish to appeal your assignment grade:

- A. You must submit to the instructor a written explanation of why you think your mark should be altered. Please note statements such as "I need a higher grade to apply to X" are not compelling. Also, please note that upon re-grade your mark may go down, stay the same, or go up.
- B. Attach to your written explanation your original assignment, including all of the original comments. Submit a hardcopy of the package to the instructor during office hours or after the lecture.
- C. You will receive a response via email or in person about your re-grade.

3. Electronic communication and electronic learning technology: Email communication is rapid, convenient, and efficient—and you are encouraged to use it to enhance your learning and experience in the course. With that said, it is essential that you follow a few rules:

- Assignments will be accepted via Avenue to Learn.
- All emails must include the course code (Soc. 2R03) in the subject line.
- All emails should be signed with the student's full name and student number.
- Emails from students will generally be answered within 24 hours of receipt.
- Treat emails as you would any other professional communication.

Emails that do not follow these guidelines will not receive a response.

4. 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.

5. Classroom etiquette

Students are expected to arrive at class on time. Laptops are allowed in class and should be used for taking notes. Other uses, emailing, web surfing will result in the student's being required to turn off the laptop and it may affect your final grade.

Coming to lectures late, leaving early, not attending tutorials will impact your final grade.

Videotaping and recording lectures is strictly forbidden without written permission from the instructor.

Lecture Schedule September-December 2020

Subject to minor adjustments. You are responsible for both the text readings and lecture material for the on-line tests.

Lectures will be accessed weekly through ECHO 360 on your Avenue Content Page

Wednesday September 9 Lecture 1

Introduction to Course, Review Course Outline, Course assessments. Writing Assignment Discussed.

Chapter 1 The Gordian Knot of Race, Class and Gender Pages 3-27

Further Reading (if inclined):

PDF on Avenue Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, *Why Inequality Matters in 1,000 Words or less*. Various Authors. Dec. 2007

Chapter 2 The Great Debate Pages 29-55

Any questions on the writing assignment?

Further Reading (if inclined):

PDF on Avenue Yalnizyan, Armine. 2012. *The Rise of Canada's Richest 1%* Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

PDF on Avenue Mackenzie, Hugh, 2011. *Recession – Proof: Canada's 100 Best Paid CEO's*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Wednesday September 16 Lecture 2

Chapter 3 The Global Divide Pages 57-87 (Globalization)

Wednesday September 23 Lecture 3

Chapter 4 Class Privilege Pages 91-116

(Plus review of Chapters 1,2, 3)

Further Reading (if you are inclined):

Krahn, Harvey. 2006. "Choose Your Parents Carefully: Social Class, Post-Secondary Education, and Occupational Outcomes" Pp. 171-189 in Edward Grabb and Neil Guppy (eds). *Social Inequality in Canada: Patterns, Problems, and Policies 5th edition*. Toronto: Pearson/Prentice Hall. (2009)

Wednesday September 30 Lecture 4

Writing Assignment # 1 due by 11:00pm on Avenue Assignments

Chapter 5 Race and Ethnic Inequality Pages 117-155 (Theorizing Race and Racialization) +Documentary *Race the Power of an Illusion Part 3* (The house we live in)

Further Reading (if you are inclined):

Galabuzi, Grace-Edward. 2006. *Canada's Economic Apartheid: The Social Exclusion of Racialized Groups in the New Century*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Grant, H. and R. Oertel. 1998. "Diminishing Returns to Immigration? Interpreting the Economic Experience of Canadian Immigrants." *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 30 (3): 57-76.

Wednesday October 7 Test 1 (Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4)

OCTOBER 12-18 FALL BREAK!

Wednesday October 21 Lecture 5

Chapter 6 Gender and Sexual Inequality (Theorizing Gender and the contemporary moment)

Pages 157-179

Wednesday October 28 Lecture 6

Writing Assignment #2 Due by 11pm on Avenue Assignments

Chapter 7 Status Prestige pages 181-200

Chapter 8 Power and Politics pages 201-225 (selected pages only, not whole chapter)

Wednesday November 4 Test 2 (Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8)

Wednesday November 11 Lecture 7

Chapter 9 Moving Up-Education and Mobility pages 229-254

From Your Course Packet: Inequality in Canada: A Reader on Intersections of Gender, Race, and Class 2nd edition by Valerie Zawilski. Toronto: Oxford University Press. (2010)

“Legacy of Residential Schools” page 102-121 by Bernard Schissel and Terry Wotherspoon.

From Your Course Packet: Inequality in Canada: A Reader on the Intersections of Gender, Race, and Class. Edited by Valerie Zawilski and Cynthia Levine-Rasky. Toronto: Oxford University Press. (2005).

“ Fighting a “public enemy” of Black Academic Achievement—The Persistence of Racism and the Schooling Experiences of Black Students in Canada” Pages 150-177 by Henry M. Codjoe.

Wednesday November 18 Lecture 8

Chapter 10 Abandoned Spaces, Forgotten Places: Poverty and Place Pages 255-279

From Your Course Packet: Inequality in Canada: A Reader on Intersections of Gender, Race, and Class 2nd edition by Valerie Zawilski. Toronto: Oxford University Press. (2010)

“The Space of Africville: Creating, regulating and remembering the urban ‘slum’, pages 282-295 by Jennifer J. Nelson

“Regional Inequality: Causes and Consequences” By Catherine Corrigan-Brown and Fred Wien page 324-347.

“Persistent Inequalities: Homelessness in Canada” by Tracy Peressini page 367-378.

Wednesday November 25 Lecture 9

Chapter 11 Reversing the Race to the Bottom: Poverty and Policy Pages 281-313

Chapter 12 Challenging the System: Social Movements in a Global Age Pages 315-346

Wednesday December 2 Test 3 (Chapters 9,10, 11, 12)

Wednesday December 9

Concluding Comments. Returning essays. If you have any issues please email me as soon as possible.

Hope you enjoyed the course! Have a Restful Winter break!