

McMaster University
Department of Sociology
Sociology 2R03 Perspectives in Social Inequality
January – April 2020
Lectures Tuesday 7:00pm-10:00pm
MDCL 1110

Course Instructor: Dr. Lina Samuel
Office Hours: Tuesday 5:30-6:15pm
(please make an appointment)
Office Phone Number: x23617

Email: lsamuel@mcmaster.ca
Office: KTH 632

Teaching Assistants:
No TA Support this term

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: 2 hour lecture once per week (Tuesday).

Course Texts

Sernau, Scott. 2017. Social Inequality in a Global Age 5th 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, one writing assignment.

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

Evaluation:

Term 1 Test: 25%

Term 2 Test: 25%

Term 3 Test : 25%

Writing Assignment: 25%

Procedures and Rules

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and 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 kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

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

DEPARTMENTAL/UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Do NOT fax assignments. Please see your instructor for the most appropriate way to submit assignments.

The Sociology staff do NOT date-stamp assignments, nor do they monitor the submission or return of papers.

1a. 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.

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.

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.

Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)

The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student's religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict. In such cases, the University will provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Please review the [RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences](#) about how to request accommodation.

Academic Accommodation Of Students With Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. [Student Accessibility Services](#) can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

1b.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 not be accepted via email. You must submit hard copies of your assignments
- 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.
- All general questions about the course that are NOT addressed on the syllabus and course website should be asked in class. If you cannot figure something out, chances are your inquiry will be useful for the entire class.

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

4. 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 January – April 2020

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

Tuesday January 7 Lecture 1

Introduction to Course, Review Course Outline, Course assessments. Writing Assignment Passed out.

Tuesday January 14 Lecture 2

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.

Tuesday January 21 Lecture 3

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

Tuesday January 28 Lecture 4

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)

Tuesday February 4 Test 1 (Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4)

Tuesday February 11 Lecture 5

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.

**Chapter 6 Gender and Sexual Inequality (Theorizing Gender and the contemporary moment)
Pages 157-179**

SPRING BREAK FEB 17-23

Tuesday February 25 Lecture 6

Writing Assignment Due

Chapter 7 Status Prestige pages 181-200

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

Tuesday March 3 Lecture 7 Test 2 (Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8)

Tuesday March 10

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.

Tuesday March 17 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.

Tuesday March 24 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

Tuesday March 31 Test 3 (Chapters 9,10, 11, 12)

Tuesday April 7

Review of main concepts. Please come see me if there are any outstanding issues. Passing back Writing Assignments

Have a Restful Spring and Summer break!

For those of you who are graduating, Congratulations! Best wishes!