4MM3 Public Sociology/Public Social Psychology: Winter 2021

**Instructor:** Neil McLaughlin

**Email:** nmclaugh@mcmaster.ca

**Lecture:** Tuesdays, 8:30am to 11:20am   
**Room:** ON-LINE

**Office:** KTH 620

**Office Hours:** By appointment just before or after lecture times above  
**TA:** No TA  
**TA email:** No TA email

# Course Description

There is a lively debate underway among academics, journalists, students and the public about the public responsibility of professors and universities. Should academics engage with the public to inform and/or change society or is the primary responsibility of professors to be scientific and scholarly, engaging with other experts inside academic disciplines to produce reliable knowledge? The most recent discussion of this set of broader issues has been called the public intellectual debate which came to Canada in the 1990s and in sociology it was the public sociology debate which started around 2004. We will start with an overview of the general issues at stake in this debate in both sociology and social psychology. And then we will examine a set of case studies including C. Wright Mills, Robert Merton, Goffman, Arlie Hochschild, Jonathan Haidt, Erich Fromm, Malcolm Gladwell, bell hooks, Tressie McMillan Cottom, the psychologists Erik Erikson, Carole Gilligan and BF Skinner, Du Bois, Fanon, and contemporary theorizing and research on Indigenous issues.

**Course Objectives**

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

Students will learn a theoretical framework to think about public sociology, public social psychology and public intellectuals.

Learn about a number of ways to navigate the professional world of the academia, the market for ideas entered into by of well-known writers and the tensions between activist social psychological scholars and the world of modern professions by looking at in some detail a number of case studies.

Gain practice writing well-crafted scholarly essays.

Gain basic knowledge about some influential books and theoretical traditions in social psychology and sociology.

Be able to thoughtfully discuss the trade-offs involved in public engagement for scholars and intellectuals interested in social psychological issues and articulate positions on these questions based on historical and sociological knowledge.

**Class Format**

I will lecture on the readings and topics related to public sociology and public social psychology outlined below, all recorded on Echo 360 to be listened to at a time of the student’s choice along with PowerPoint slides for students to follow along with. You- Tube videos of some of the thinkers we will be talking about will also be posted on Avenue to Learn (available through the McMaster library with valid student Identification) along with PDF files of the writing of or about the selected thinkers. There will be no books to buy.

I will be available on Zoom to discuss the lectures, readings and videos for the class during all of the class times marked above. Attendance at these Zoom sessions is not mandatory and there is no participation grade associated with them.

Essays will be submitted by Avenue to Learn, and feedback provided also through this on-line system.

# Course Evaluation – Overview

Students will be evaluated by 5 essays where students will answer a question regarding two or three weeks of reading and lectures. The questions will be posted before the class begins. The fuller details of the class are outlined below. If there are changes in the deadlines, it will be clearly marked in the assignment slot on Avenue to Learn.

The specific questions will be posted in the details for the class section on Avenue to Learn, before the class begins.

**Grading: Public Sociology/Public Social Psychology**

Essay on Mills and Hochschild: Friday Jan 29, noon: 15%

Essay on Merton, Goffman and Haidt: Monday Feb 22, noon: 20%

Essay on Gladwell, hooks and Cottom: Friday March 5, noon: 15%

Essay on Erikson, Gilligan, Skinner, Homans and Fromm: Friday March 26: 20%

Final Essay on Du Bois, Fanon, Allport, Indigenous theorizing and contemporary issues: Tuesday April 20: 30%

**Late Policy**

I will grant a 72 hours grace period after these deadlines, where there is no late penalty. After that, there is NO way to get out of a relatively small 1% a late penalty unless you have a formal letter from an official office in the university (SAS or the Dean’s Office). I know it is a tough to go to school during the pandemic, and I am sympathetic. I am also under stress myself. Please do not tell me about the reasons for your lateness: this puts me in an ackward situation, and it potentially puts you in an complex situation. You need not tell me about struggles in your life. You have a 72 hour grace period, and can use the one MSAF form, and have access to sympathetic professionals in the Dean’s office and SAS, all trained to deal with these issues. And even after all that, a 1% penalty is very small, if none of the above works. We will get everyone through and if there are barriers you need help with, consult the SAS office or the Dean’s office.

The final deadline for late essays is April 26, noon: I will submit grades that afternoon. I will take late essays till noon April and the late penalty is capped at 20% penalty even if it is a month or two late.

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

"This course addresses three University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (see http://cll.mcmaster.ca/COU/degree/undergraduate.html). First, sociological theories and social psychological theories are diverse in their claims and in their focus. Gaining knowledge of these diverse theories, will expand the student’s depth and breadth of knowledge. Second, there is no single best way to do sociology or social psychology. As such, this course requires that students consider and critically evaluate competing approaches to doing intellectual work and think about this with evidence. Finally, this course will encourage students to write essays. Writing quality, style and care will count, an important professional skill.

# Required Materials and Texts

McLaughlin and Townsley “Contexts of Cultural Diffusion: A Case Study of the Public Intellectual Debate in Canada,” *CRS* 2011

Michael Burawoy, “For Public Sociology” *ASR* 2004

Arlie Hochschild, “Emotion work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure.” *American Journal of* *Sociology* 1979.

Sterne, J., 2005. C. Wright Mills, the Bureau for Applied Social Research, and the meaning of critical *Cultural Studies*

Robert Merton, “On Sociological Theories of the Middle Range,” 1949.

Randall Collins, “The Passing of Intellectual Generations,” *Sociological Theory* 1986.

Erving Goffman “The Interaction Order,” *American Sociological Review*, 1983.

Jess Graham, Jonathan Haidt and Brian Nosek, “Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations,”

Malcolm Gladwell, “Starting Over”, *The New Yorker*, 2015.

Neil McLaughlin “How to Become a Forgotten Intellectual,” *Sociological Forum* 1998

Robert Wallerstein, “Erikson’s concept of Ego Identity Reconsidered,” JAPA 1994

Robert Friedrichs, “The Potential Impact of BF Skinner upon American Sociology,” *American Sociologist* 1978.

Nancy Chodorow “Born into a World at War,” AI 2002

Carol Gilligan, “In a Different Voice” HER 1977

Howard Garner, “The Enigma of Erik Erikson,” *New York Review of Books,* June 24, 1999.

George Homan “Bringing Men Back in,” *American Sociological Review* 1964,

Angharad Valdivia, “Bell books: Ethics from the Margins.” QI 2002.

Bell hooks, “Choosing the Margins as a Space of Radical Openness,” 1989.

Franz Fanon, “This is the Voice of Algeria,” 1965.

Aldon Morris, “WEB Du Bois at the Center,” *British Journal of Sociology* 2017.

Frances Cherry, “The Nature of the Nature of Prejudice,” *Journal of the History of the* *Behavorial Sciences*,” 2000.

Jeff Denis, “Contact Theory in a Small-Town Settler-Colonial Context,” *American Sociological* Review, 2015.

**OUTLINE**

**Jan 12:** Intro to class

**Jan 19:** Public Intellectuals and the Public Sociology

Michael Burawoy, “For Public Sociology” *ASR* 2005

McLaughlin and Townsley “Contexts of Cultural Diffusion: A Case Study of the Public Intellectual Debate in Canada,” *CRS* 2011

**Jan 26:** Mills and Hochschild

Arlie Hochschild, “Emotion work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure.” *American Journal of Sociology 1979.*

Sterne, J., 2005. C. Wright Mills, the Bureau for Applied Social Research, and the meaning of critical

**Feb 2:** Merton and Goffman/Professional Sociology

Robert Merton, “On Sociological Theories of the Middle Range,” 1949.

Randall Collins, “The Passing of Intellectual Generations,” *Sociological Theory* 1986.

Erving Goffman “The Interaction Order,” American Sociological Review, 1983.

**Feb 9:** Haidt and Professional Social Psychology

Jess Graham, Jonathan Haidt and Brian Nosek, “Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations,”

**Feb 23:** Malcolm Gladwell

Malcolm Gladwell, “Starting Over”, *The New Yorker*, 2015.

**March 2:** hooks and Cottom

Angharad Valdivia, “Bell books: Ethics from the Margins.” QI 2002

Bell hooks, “Choosing the Margins as a Space of Radical Openness,” 1989.

**March 9:** Erikson and Gilligan

Nancy Chodorow “Born into a World at War,” AI 2002

Carol Gilligan, “In a Different Voice” HER 1977

Howard Garner, “The Enigma of Erik Erikson,” New York Review of Books, June 24, 1999.

**March 16:** Skinner and Exchange Theory

George Homan “Bringing Men Back in,” *American Sociological Review* 1964,

Robert Friedrichs, “The Potential Impact of B,F. Skinner,” *The American Sociologist* 1974.

**March 23:** Fromm

Neil McLaughlin, “How to Become a Forgotten Intellectual,” *Sociological Forum* 1998

Neil McLaughlin, “Escape from Freedom Revisited,” *Sociological Theory* 1996.

**March 30:** Du Bois and Fanon

Aldon Morris, “WEB Du Bois at the Center,” *British Journal of Sociology* 2017.

Franz Fanon, “This is the Voice of Algeria,” 1965.

**April 6:** Allport and Indigenous Theorizing

Frances Cherry, “The Nature of the Nature of Prejudice,” *Journal of the History of the* *Behavorial Sciences*,” 2000.

Jeff Denis, “Contact Theory in a Small-Town Settler-Colonial Context,” *American Sociological* *Review*, 2015.

**April 13:** Fromm, Peterson and the future of public social psychology: lecture with no readings

**Class Rules and Regulations**

Please note the following rules. And Consult Avenue to Learn for Instructions for Assignments, Grading Rubrics and all deadlines.

**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](http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf%20)

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.

## 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.

**\*\*NOTE: COURSE CANCELLATION:** Instructors for all courses, except supervised study, thesis and research/study courses, are required to return graded material equal to a minimum of 10% of the session’s total mark prior to the final date by which a student may withdraw from a course without academic penalty.

This year the deadlines for dropping a class are: Term 1 - Fri. Nov. 9, and Term 2 - Fri. Mar.15.

# 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 |