

SOCIOLOGY 1000  
Introductory Sociology  
Fall 2009 Sections A2, D2  
Grande Prairie Regional College

**Instructor:** Alan Segal [asegal@gprc.ab.ca](mailto:asegal@gprc.ab.ca)  
**Office Hours:** Mondays & Wednesdays: 14.30 – 15  
Tuesdays: 17 – 18; 17:30 – 18  
Or By Appointment  
**Office:** C410, 539-2011

Course Prerequisite: None

Course Description: An examination of the theory, methods, and substance of sociology; of society, culture, economy, and individual behaviour patterns.

**Required Texts:**

Elements of Sociology - John Steckley and Guy Letts  
A Lifetime of Secrets - Frank Warren

**Assignments:**

NOTE: All written work must comply with the College's policy on plagiarism. For a detailed explanation of what it is, refer to page 49 in your Grande Prairie Regional College 2009-10 Calendar.

- All submitted work must clearly stipulate your name and course number, and identify which assignment it is. Your assignments will be sent **only** by email. The address is [gprcassignments@gmail.com](mailto:gprcassignments@gmail.com) *The receipt date and time that accompanies your email messages will count as the official submission time for the work you're handing in. **No attachments are acceptable.*** Cut and paste your work and send it as a regular email.
- Academic assignments for this course emphasize synthesis of ideas in sociology, and the best questions you can think of to advance that synthesis. Conclusions can be valuable but it isn't obligatory to state one. Grammar is important to communicating precise meaning. Therefore, while it will not be valued as highly as content, it will be evaluated and therefore can affect your mark.

ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS EXCEPT THE JOURNALS ARE SUBJECT TO LATENESS PENALTIES OF ONE GRADE LEVEL PER CALENDAR DAY BEYOND THE DUE DATE. JOURNALS WILL BE REDUCED BY ONE GRADE LEVEL FOR EACH TWO-DAY LATENESS PERIOD. THERE IS ALSO A ONE-GRADE PENALTY FOR ASSIGNMENTS THAT ARE LESS THAN THE MINIMUM LENGTH.

Two Journals (F, C- to B-)

**Due Date:** the last class of October and November. Anything pertaining to sociology, class discussions or lectures, class interaction, personal life relevant to our examination of sociology, or course observations and suggestions, is a suitable topic. No research is expected. The purpose is to allow informal communication with the instructor. If you do not hand in a journal you will receive a failing grade on that specific assignment. The minimum length is 300 words.

Midterm Essay: (F, D- to A+)

**Due Date:** The first class of November. This essay is your chance to offer your views, questions, speculation about the postcards in 'A Lifetime of Secrets'. You will select 6 postcards and explain why these registered with you, what general thoughts arose when reading them, and what they suggest about social life. Your discussion of them must include concepts from the main text.

Film Reviews (F, D- to A+):

Throughout the term films will be shown to you. They will be discussed sociologically, employing a variety of ideas mentioned in the main texts. In each class following the conclusion of a film, you will write a sociological analysis, utilizing ideas from the course text. The assignment will be open-book. But you must display a workable knowledge of the ideas you mention. You gain if you can go beyond what is said in class discussion. Some concepts may be stipulated, meaning you must use them. More ideas, though, rather than fewer, will affect your mark positively.

Final Assignment (F, D- to A+):

**Due Date:** The last class of November. Use at least 2 theories and 5 concepts from the main text. Be careful not to confuse concepts and theories. Theories are broad explanations that address substantive areas of human experience. Concepts are ideas that have more limited application or relevance. Analyze sociologically one of the following:

1. A book of fiction, a short story, or a body of work by an author of your choice
2. A television program or series, a movie or collection of films
3. A computer or online game
4. A body of work by a specific creator in any of these areas
5. A song or musical piece, or a body of work by a particular composer.
6. Anything I approve after we have discussed your suggestion.
7. A website with a particular orientation that can be discussed sociologically.

The **minimum length** of this assignment is 1600 words. The purpose is to use ideas from the course to analyze, as you imagine a sociologist would, whatever you write on. No research is required for this assignment.

Discussion Bonus:

Everyone may (but not necessarily will) receive a bonus mark based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. Discussion postings to a

Blackboard/ Moodle discussion forum also will be considered class participation. You will be eligible for a bonus mark only if you display commitment to the course by reading the books and completing all written assignments. Although attendance is not relevant to the regular assignments for the course, it is important to your eligibility for a bonus mark. The bonus mark offers an A, B, C, or D. No plus or minus signs will be used. If you receive a bonus mark, it will be added to your overall grade total prior to working out a final mark. Eligibility for the bonus is nullified if you are absent for more than 5 classes. The bonus effect will not cause more than a 3-level rise in final grades.

**Tabulation of Marks:**

Your final mark will be formulated by adding the grade point value for each letter grade you receive and dividing by the maximum Grade Point total you can attain given the number of required assignments.

**NOTE:** (1) No class averaging will be done. (2) All marks will appear on Blackboard/Moodle. You are responsible for monitoring your grade input, and informing me that a mark has not been entered.

**Grade Equivalency:**

A+	95-100%
A	90-94%
A-	87-89%
B+	83-86%
B	80-82%
B-	77-79%
C+	73-76%
C	65-72%
C-	60-64%
D+	55-59%
D	50-54%
D-	45-49%

**NOTE:** On the College's marking grid there is no D-. Therefore no such final mark will be recorded. However, for the assignments that will be evaluated on a full grading grid, I will use D- as a non-failing mark.

DISCUSSION SEQUENCE

As you consider the questions below for class discussion, keep in mind that quick judgments, or a quick expression of agreement or disagreement, is not what I expect of you.

1. Introduction to course.
2. *Elements of Sociology*: Chapter 1
  - What is sociology? What is a sociological imagination?

- What is a status quo? Provide some examples of this from personal observation.
- Is it possible to live in the world without some aspect of sociological analysis? Keep this question in mind throughout the course, and by the end, compare your response then to whatever yours is today.
- Prepare to explain the types of sociology mentioned. Remember these throughout the course.

### 3. *Elements of Sociology*: Chapter 2

- Research is pertinent to any systematized discipline of understanding. As you read this chapter, try to understand the assumptions of each branch of sociological investigation.
- What differentiates qualitative and quantitative research?
- What elements of research design are introduced here?
- What are semiotics and signifiers?

### 4. *Elements of Sociology*: Chapters 3 & 4

- What are culture, subculture, counterculture, mass culture, popular culture and cultural capital?
- Why distinguish values, mores, and norms from each other?
- What is ethnocentrism?
- What is socialization? How and why do we socialize people? Why do we use the phrase 'agents of socialization'?
- Have you experienced conflicting types of socialization? Have you experienced re-socialization?
- What have been the more substantial forms of socialization you have experienced? What have been the most significant? Be aware that 'substantial' and 'significant' do not always reference the same occurrence or development.

### 5. *Sociology ...* Chapters 5 & 12

- Why would I link chapters on deviance and social change?
- Explain what sociologists think is social change.
- Does stigma apply clearly to deviance and social change?
- How might you comment on deviance if you were 1) a conflict theorist, 2) a functionalist theorist, and 3) a feminist theorist?

### 6. *Sociology ...* Chapters 8 & 11

- Prepare to discuss the relationship of social structure and social interaction.
- What do sociologists refer to when they discuss status? What are social stratification and social class?
- What indicators can you name that display your social status?
- Have you been convinced that ideas of inequality contribute meaningfully to knowing the world sociologically? What categories of inequality are mentioned in your text? Are some categories left out that you believe should be included?

- What are structural sources of poverty? How do these connect to social mobility? What is social mobility?
- What ties together development, debt, dependency, and modernization?

## 7. Sociology ... Chapters 9 & 10

- Explain race and ethnicity.
- Why mention liberal ideology in a chapter on ethnicity and race?
- Why do sociologists refer frequently to race, ethnicity, and discrimination as if they are inseparable?
- In what manner can gender be compared to the other characteristics of inequality listed above? Explain the link between feminist analyses and all forms of inequality, but especially that of gender.
- What are gender, queer theory, and complicit masculinity?
- Speculate as to why gender figures prominently in feminist analysis.

## 8. Sociology..... Chapter 6

- How would you explain 'family' to a being who had no understanding of the concept?
- How easily does your family life fit into the descriptions offered in the text?
- Does the book persuade you that social diversity is accurately and legitimately reflected in the experiences of family in this country?
- What are social institutions and why do we consider the family an integral example of them?

## 9. Sociology.... Chapter 7

- We talk about health as if it has 1 meaning. Variation, however, is the norm more than the exception. How would you explain Health to someone who is unfamiliar with the concept?
- Why link culture to health, as the authors do in this chapter?
- What is the Sick Role?
- What is meant by the 'medicalization of society'?
- Before enrolling in this course, had you thought of 'cultures of medicine'?

*A Lifetime of Secrets:* Identify the entries that registered with you most profoundly. How do you explain their impact on you? At this very early stage of your exposure to sociology, speculate on why people have secrets. What are they, and what social and societal characteristics might contribute to the development of secrets and secretive behavior?