

SOCIOLOGY 1000
(3 UT Credits)
Introductory Sociology – Sections A3
Grande Prairie Regional College
(Winter 2007-8)

Instructor: Alan Segal asegal@gprc.ab.ca

Office Hours: Mondays: 14:30 – 15:30 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

Required Texts:

Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach, 4th Canadian Edition - Henslin...
A Good Book, In Theory - Alan Sears
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 44 in your Grande Prairie Regional College 2007-8 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 gprc_assignments@yahoo.ca Don't forget the underscore between 'GPRC' and 'assignments'. Messages from hotmail accounts appear to be the worst for not receiving replies from me, or for not arriving after they've been sent to me. I strongly recommend you use an entirely different email provider. *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.

Two Journals: (F, C+ to B)

Due February 5th and March 13th. 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.

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 any of the books we use in the course. 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.

Quizzes (F, D- to A+):

Each class in which a new discussion of a chapter or set of chapters begins, a brief multiple choice quiz will be given. By the end of the term, the total score will be tabulated and a percentage worked out. The percentage will be converted to a letter grade.

Essay (F, D- to A+):

Due February 12th. Based on **A Lifetime of Secrets**, you will discuss sociologically, 4 postcards. Explain why you chose them and what significance you detect in them. The essay must be a minimum of 1000 words.

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

Due the last class of March. Using at least 6 concepts or theories (ideas that are substantial and don't have limited application) from the books in the course, 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.

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.

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.

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 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. If you are absent for more than 5 classes you will not receive a bonus grade. .

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. You are responsible for monitoring your grade input, and informing me that a mark has not been entered.

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. Think comprehensively and insightfully about these questions. All classes will begin with an overview discussion of the reading, and move on to consideration of specific issues.

1. Introduction to course. Important items brought to class.

2. Good Book... Preface, Chapters 1 and 2

- What is theory and what value does Sears place on it?
- How might knowledge of theory help you as students of sociology? What makes a theoretical account, an account?
- Why differentiate facts, theories, and opinions? How easily can we turn the familiar to a perception of strangeness? How does this relate to our ideas about order and chaos?
- If I told you to map your social relations, what do you assume you would have to do? How does Sears' discussion of knowledge and its contexts, fit into his book?

3. Sociology... Chapter 1; Good Book, Chapters 3 and 4

- What are sociological perspectives? How would you describe and explain a non-sociological outlook? Is there such a thing as a sociological fact? Is so, what is it? What is a sociological imagination?
- What is a status quo? Provide some examples of this from personal observation.
- Are references to the 'real world' worthwhile to us? How can we be in anything but a real world?
- Did you begin this course with at least an implicit idea of human nature? Does the discussion in Sears' book address what you think or have thought about human nature? What are his ideas about nature?
- Explain Sears' and your survey text's references to social construction.
- Is 'social construction' a sociological perspective?
- What are micro and macro perspectives? What are Conflict Theory and Functionalist Theory? Explain Symbolic Interactionism.

4. Sociology... Chapters 2 & 3; Good Book., Chapters 5 & 6

- What are culture, subculture, material culture, cultural universals and counterculture?
- Why differentiate values, mores, and norms from each other?
- What are cultural change and culture shock? What reasoning do you think may motivate the authors to connect technology, culture, and change?
- What do sociologists refer to when they speak of social relations? How important to Sears, is the correlation of social relations, theoretical thinking, and theories? Evaluate Sears' assumptions about good theorizing.
- Is Talcott Parsons a good example for Sears' purpose in this book?
- Explain social change, and the role of theory in contributing or hindering it.

5. A Lifetime of Secrets

- Which postcards affected you, and what do they tell you about the sociology of human existence?

6. Sociology ... Chapter 4

- What do we cover in our minds when we think of socialization? How and why do we socialize people? Why do we use the phrase 'agents of socialization'?
- What particular socialization influences do you consider especially significant in your development?
- Have you experienced conflicting types of socialization? Have you experienced re-socialization?
- Why do sociologists include the ideas of Charles Cooley and George Mead in a discussion of socialization?

7. Sociology ... Chapter 5

- Prepare to discuss the relationship of social structure and social interaction.
- What do sociologists refer to when they discuss status? What kinds of status do they mention?
- What indicators can you name that display your social status?
- What are institutions? Why are sociologists interested in them? Can you think of any that are not included in the text?

8. Sociology ... Chapters 6 - 8

- 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 social stratification and social class? How do the ideas of Karl Marx, Max Weber, Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore, and Melvin Tumin, add to our perception of stratification? Why differentiate between global and general social stratification?
- What do sociologists mean by race and ethnicity? What perspectives on race are introduced in this chapter?
- Why include sections on multiculturalism in a chapter on ethnicity and race?
- Why do sociologists refer frequently to race, ethnicity, and discrimination as if they are inseparable?
- 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?

- In what manner can gender be compared to the other characteristics of inequality listed above? Explain the link between feminist theories and analyses and all forms of inequality, but especially that of gender.
- What is internal colonialism?

9. Sociology..... Chapter 11

- What is 'economy'? Explain how *capitalism and corporate capitalism*, *socialism*, *corporations*, and *economic sectors*, fit under the 'economy' banner.
- Why study work patterns?
- Identify the macrosociological and microsociological features of equality, economy, and work, and gender.

10. Sociology ... Chapter 10

- What do sociologists mean when they speak of rationalization?
- What connects rationalization to bureaucracy?
- What societal purposes are served or harmed by bureaucracies, organizations, and associations? What are oligarchies?
- Henslin and his co-authors write about purpose and society. What examples of societal purpose can you think of?

11. Sociology..... Chapters 12 and 16

- What varieties of authority and power do sociologists use in their analyses? Do you think some of the distinctions are worthwhile?
- Sociologists often look at Pluralism in different societies. What are they looking at or for?
- What is a Power Elite?
- Why do you think I linked a chapter on power and authority to that on crime and deviance?
- Do you think deviance inheres in each individual, or is developed by social circumstances? What theories on deviance are cited in the book?
- Why do the authors mention relativity in conjunction with deviance?
- Can the law be an instrument of oppression?
- How might you comment on deviance if you were 1) a conflict theorist, 2) a functionalist theorist, and 3) a feminist theorist?

12. Sociology..... Chapters 17 and 18

- We are constantly reminded that we live in an urban and urbanizing environment. What understanding of contemporary life do sociologists communicate when they say this?
- What is Demography? What variables of it do sociologists study?
- What impact on social relations can we see when we investigate demography and urbanization?
- Do you agree with the lists of benefits and problems associated with urban growth?
- Are the economy and urban growth linked?
- What is a Social Movement? Does it interlock with any concept we have discussed in this and the previous set of readings? How does it overlap with demographics, urban models of development, inequality, etc.? What theories are discussed that allegedly explain social movements?
- Is there really a difference between groups and crowds, between demonstrations and riots?
- Does any sociological merit exist by identifying separately, panics, moral panics, rumours, fads, and legends? Can any of these become a foundation of a social movement? Does Canada have a Social Movement?

13. Sociology..... Chapters 13 and 14

- 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?
- Why write a chapter on religion and education together?
- Why talk about Institutionalized Religion? Why do the authors combine religion and capitalism in a separate section in the text?
- What is religion? Is the list of religions on page 414, adequate to your expectations? Should there be deletions or additions?
- Are social class and gender factors in schooling and religion?
- Both Religion and Education are considered social institutions. Why?

14. Sociology.... Chapter 15

- 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'?