

SOCIOLOGY 1000
INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY
(Fall 2011)

Grande Prairie Regional College
3 University Transfer Credits

Course Prerequisite: This course is a general introduction to sociology. Should you become interested in registering in other courses in the discipline, SO1000 must be completed as a prerequisite to those. No prior experience in sociology is necessary to enrol in this course.

Course Description: Introductory Sociology examines the theories, methods, and substance of sociology. These develop insight into how societies and individuals are shaped and modified by characteristics of social life, such as culture, socialization, stratification, group processes, economics, and social movements.

Mode of Delivery: Class and Group Discussion, and Occasional Lectures

Instructor: Alan Segal asegal@gprc.ab.ca

Office Hours: Tuesdays: 16.15 – 17.00 Thursdays: 16.30 – 16.50
Or By Appointment

Office: C410, 539-2011

Required Reading:

Sociology For Everyone - Bruce Ravelli, Michelle Webber, John Patterson
A Lifetime Of Secrets – Frank Warren

Plagiarism: In an academic setting, presenting others' work as your own is a serious violation. However, referencing articles and books and online academic products do not prevent you from building on their ideas and speculations. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, consult Page 50 of Grande Prairie Regional College's Admissions Guide.

Assignments:

Oral Presentations (3 in Total): (F, D- to A+)

In-Class Film Presentation - During the course, various films will be shown to you. I will select members of the class ahead of time to present an analysis of these films, and lead a conversation about them from a sociological perspective.

Individually or in pairs (you will choose this by the fourth class or I will assume you will present alone), you will consider the films from a list of sociological theories or concepts that I will identify in advance. Once assigned, you can't alter the arrangement.

Instructor-Student conversation is the second of the 3 oral presentations required for this course. Either individually or in groups of two, we will discuss one of the articles not yet selected, from those I will hand out to the class throughout the term. Utilizing theory and sociological concepts, you will examine the logic, or theoretical questions, you have about the article. Per person, you should expect a 20-minute conversation that is casual but also substantive. Groups should anticipate 40 minutes of discussion.

In-Class *Lifetime* Presentation (Individual) - The course syllabus indicates usage of Frank Warren's book. The presentations will start those classes when his book is scheduled. You will indicate to the class 4 postcards that reflect the sociological questions for that particular class. You will tell us why the postcards are good choices given the point in the course we have reached. For example, if we have been talking about inequality, you could outline for us the sociological value of the cards. You will have to demonstrate knowledge of the relevant sociology, and try to offer alternative interpretations of the cards. Then the entire class will enter into a discussion of their selections.

Presentation Dates: To be decided.

Tabulating Grades:

The total Grade Points available from your assignments is 12. All marks will be totalled and divided by this number. A percentage will be derived based on this tabulation, and the percentage will be reconverted to a final grade.

NOTE: No class averaging will be done.

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 course assignments, I will use D- as an additional non-failing mark.

NOTE: Some postsecondary institutions may not accept a final grade of D and D+.

Electronic Devices: For those people who must have contact with people during class time, you may leave your cell phone on 'vibrate', and leave the room if a response from you is required. Otherwise, texting or use of phones will result in you having to miss that particular class. Please do not put me in a position of having to do this.

DISCUSSION SEQUENCE

1. Introduction to SO1000

2. SFE Chapter 1

Class Discussion: Objective and Subjective ideas and theories of deviance (and conformity).

What is sociology? What is a sociological imagination? Prepare an explanation of the different types of sociology introduced in the chapter. What are hegemony, discourse, political economy, status, relations of production?

3. SFE Chapter 2

Class Discussion:

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? How might each approach affect how we interpret sociologically, the society in which we live? What elements of research design are introduced here? Can a study provide reliable but invalid data?

4. SFE Chapters 3 & 4; Lifetime Of Secrets

Class Discussion:

What do sociologists mean when they allude to culture, subculture, counterculture, mass culture, popular culture, material and non-material culture; and cultural capital? Can you think of examples that solidify these terms? Why distinguish values, mores, and norms from each other? Explain ethnocentrism and socialization. In what sense might these be connected? Who or what are 'agents of 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. Have you experienced conflicting types of socialization? Have you experienced re-socialization?

Number all the pages of the 'Lifetime' book, with Page 1 being the page of the Introduction. Roughly categorize the different postcards. We will discuss your classifications in class. Speculate on what might contribute to the development of secrets and secretive behavior.

5. SFE Chapters 5 & 12; LOS

Class Discussion:

Why might I link chapters on deviance and social change? What do sociologists think social change refers to? What social factors play into social change? Are social change and social movements always connected? If not, what characteristics of them clarify the lack of connection? What is stigma, and does it apply clearly to deviance and social change? Is deviance an individual or a group designation? **From this point onward in this course, you will have to think of deviance and social dissent simultaneously.**

How might you comment on deviance and social dissent if you were a conflict theorist, a functionalist theorist, or a

feminist theorist? Is a theory also a paradigm?

Which of the postcards in LOS indicate a response to social change? Which of them indicate a form of dissent? What are they dissenting from?

6. SFE Chapter 7

Class Discussion:

How would you explain the relationship between 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? Do any of these intersect with the idea of meritocracy?

Some sociologists tie together development, debt, dependency, and modernization? They are convinced the tie creates the apparatus to which most of the world is subordinate. How might these sociologists explain the value of the tie-in?

7. SFE Chapters 8 & 9; LOS

Class Discussion:

Why mention ethnicity and race in the same chapter? Prepare a sociological explanation of each of the categories. Why do sociologists refer frequently to race, ethnicity, and discrimination as if they are inseparable? What might the existence of discrimination in our country imply for our belief that Canada is a pluralistic society? What is cultural pluralism? 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, especially that of gender. What sociological or theoretical value is established by discussing ethnicity, race, sexuality, and gender, from the viewpoint of poststructuralist theory? Ask yourself the same question when thinking about the link between gender and sexuality on one hand, and queer theory on the other? What does the concept of assimilation encompass? Would we have exploitation if genuine assimilation were achieved? If discrimination didn't exist, could sociologists still speak of exploitation? What are hegemonic masculinity, transgenderism, identity, pan-sexuality? The authors of the text mention these items as they lead into their reference to racialization. Can you see the fit with racialization? Are you persuaded by it?

Prepare to discuss the postcards that you connect to gender and sexuality, ethnicity and race. Do any of the postcards suggest discrimination? If so, what types are suggested?

8. SFE Chapter 6; LOS

Class Discussion:

How would you explain 'family' to a being who had no understanding of the concept? Do the definitions presented in this chapter cover your ideas of what is a family? Can you perceive your family life in the descriptions offered in the text? Social Diversity is cited in the text because it has a powerful influence in sociological analyses. Do the authors 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?

Offer examples from LOS that address family life from as many sociological angles as you can detect in them.

9. SFE Chapter 10

Class Discussion:

What prominence does media have in your life? Can you edit it out when you want to? Are some elements of media more prominent in your existence, experience, and development, than others? Why do we differentiate between media and mass media? Can you imagine social cohesion without media? What theoretical perspectives cited in the chapter most closely reflect what you think about media?

Presumably, you have been raised to consider religion an important aspect of personal and social life, even if you or your family follow no religion and may not believe in any god. How, then, does a chapter appear that asks you to look at religion as a form of deviance? What concepts does Bereska marshal together in her analysis? She writes of truth and also of religion. Is this a reasonable tie-in? Is the inclusion of religion as a system of truth-creation treated similarly to her treatment of science as a truth-creation system? Be prepared to elaborate on your response(s). Are Foucault's ideas relevant to these 2 chapters?

10. SFE Chapter 11; LOS

Class Discussion:

We talk about health as if it has singular meaning. Variation, however, is the norm more than the exception. How would you explain Health to someone who is unfamiliar with the concept? Think back to our study of culture. What observations do you have about Canadian culture and Canadian discourses about health? What is the Sick Role? What is meant by the medicalization of society? Could we consider these as discourses of health? Be ready to explain the idea of 'discourse', and how a sick role and medicalization might be examples of it.

Identify the LOS entries that registered with you most profoundly. How do you explain their impact on you? Finally, at this very early stage of your exposure to sociology, which of the discipline's ideas would you enlist to analyze the entire book as a single text, rather than individual cards?