



DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER 2013

SO1020 INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Sections A3

(University Transfer: Alberta, Calgary, Lethbridge, Kings, Concordia,
Canadian, Athabasca, Augustana, Grant MacEwan)

INSTRUCTOR: Alan Segal

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OFFICE: C410

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OFFICE HOURS:

Mondays and Tuesdays: 13:30 - 14.15. Wednesdays: After the Night Class. Or by appointment.

PREREQUISITE(S)/CO-REQUISITE: None

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

How To Do Critical Discourse Analysis - David Machin & Andrea Mayr

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: *Social Problems* analyzes the construction and creation of social problems. The analysis looks at concepts, assumptions, ideologies, politics, and perceptions of social problems.

CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS: 3 University Credits

DELIVERY MODE(S): Class and Group Discussion, Lectures, Film Analyses

TRANSFERABILITY: *** Grades of 'D' or 'D+' may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students must be aware it is their responsibility to contact receiving institutions to ensure transferability.

GRADING CRITERIA:

GRADING CONVERSION CHART			
Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Designation
A+	4.0	95 – 100	EXCELLENT
A	4.0	90 – 94	
A-	3.7	87 – 89	FIRST CLASS STANDING
B+	3.3	83 – 86	
B	3.0	80 – 82	GOOD
B-	2.7	77 – 79	
C+	2.3	73 – 76	SATISFACTORY
C	2.0	65 – 72	
C-	1.7	60 – 64	
D+	1.3	55 – 59	MINIMAL PASS
D	1.0	50 – 54	
F	0.0	0 – 49	FAIL
WF	0.0	0	FAIL, withdrawal after the deadline

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.

EVALUATION:

Academic assignments for this course emphasize synthesis of ideas from a sociological standpoint, and the best questions you can think of to advance that synthesis. Analysis does not mean just reporting what others have said on a topic. Important as this is, other authors’ ideas or conclusions are valuable because they add insight or specific details that help you to ask questions about the topic you have selected. My assignments are a philosophical inquiry that is advanced through your

and others` investigations. Deciding what questions are worth raising is an important part of analysis. Conclusions can be valuable but aren't obligatory for any of my assignments.

Tabulating Grades:

All of your assignments will receive a letter mark. At the end of the course I will add the Total Grade Points you have received based on the letter-grades your assignments have received. The grid above shows you the Grade Point Value for each letter. Maximum Grade Points available from all your assignments for this course is 12.6. Attaining a Grade Point Total of 12.6 is the same achievement as receiving 100%. When I have your Total Grade Point I will divide it by 12.6. A percentage will be worked out and a final grade determined according to the grid.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

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, refer to the Student Conduct section of the College Admission Guide at

<http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/> or the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/**

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Midterm Essay: Due the First Class of March (F, D- to A+) [Maximum 4 Points Out Of 12.6 = 32%]
Select a feature of our sociocultural lives that is seen as a social problem or, from your position, should be seen as one. Use ideas communicated in the opening lectures for the course and also those from any other pertinent source. You may advocate for or against what is understood as a problem, or overlooked as one, but you must utilize critical analysis while doing so. Therefore, the essay must be a discussion of social conditions as well as a simple conclusion that something is right or wrong. *As this is a Sociology course, sociological concepts among others, must be incorporated into your discussion. And more than just opinion is required.* Research is expected (MLA Style). YouTube or anything similar to it is not an academic source. You may use it but not to exclude, or reduce the number of, more reliable sources.
Minimum length for this assignment is 1200 words.

Film Analysis (One): Due Date TBA (F, D- to A+) [Maximum of 4 Points Out Of 12.6 = 32%]
Throughout the term a variety of films may be shown. I will select one, later in the semester, for which you will submit a discussion paper exploring the concepts of problem-creation or problem-debunking, as they might apply to the film you are analyzing. What do the makers of the movie want us to think after viewing it? The expected length is a minimum of 1000 words.

Two Journals: Due Dates: Second Class of February, Third Class of March (F, C- to C+) [Maximum of 4.6 Points In Total Out Of 12.6 = 36%]

Anything pertaining to the sociology of creating, encouraging, criticizing, or averting the construction of social problems is open for journal discussion. Whatever we touch on in class discussions or lectures, class interaction; details from your personal life that are relevant to our course observations and suggestions, is a suitable topic. No research is necessary or expected. The purpose is to allow informal communication with the instructor. Grammar and general writing clarity are expected in all written assignments in university courses. While recognizing that we speak and write informally when communicating our personal observations, the journals should be coherent and as articulate as possible. Evaluations will reflect this expectation. Minimum length is 350 words.

*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.

**** JOURNALS ARE SUBJECT TO LATENESS PENALTIES OF ONE GRADE FOR EACH DAY PAST THE DEADLINE. THERE IS ALSO A ONE-GRADE PENALTY FOR ASSIGNMENTS THAT ARE LESS THAN THE MINIMUM LENGTH.**

*****ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE SENT BY EMAIL, TO MY COLLEGE ACCOUNT:**

asegal@gprc.ab.ca ALSO, YOU MUST INCLUDE THE WORD 'ASSIGNMENT' IN THE SUBJECT LINE, AND INDICATE WHICH ASSIGNMENT IT IS.

Discussion Bonus: (A, B, C, D)

Every person in the course **may** receive a bonus mark based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. Discussion postings to a 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 3 classes. The bonus will not result in more than a 3-level rise in final grades.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

University courses provide the best intellectual and perhaps social experience, when students arrive prepared for the day's work. My classes are heavily discussion-oriented and therefore require commitment from students.

1. Read assignments.
2. Participate in class conversation about the material.
3. Complete all written work.
4. Indicate on submitted material your name; section and course number; and which assignment is being sent to me.
5. All written work must be sent via email to asegal@gprc.ab.ca You MUST use the word 'assignment' in the subject line.
6. *** Electronic Devices: People who must have contact with others during class time may leave their cell phones on 'vibrate', and leave the room if a response 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 SCHEDULE:

1. Introduction to SO1020
2. M & M: Introduction (Pages 1 – 10)

Class Discussion: What do the authors (and many sociologists) have in mind when they say meaning is created? What is Critical Discourse Analysis? To what do 'critical' and 'discourse' refer? Prepare to discuss these early pages.

3. M & M: Chapter 1 - Making Active Choices; Lecture on Semiotics and Signifiers

Class Discussion: What is linguistic determinism? Explain the social semiotic theory of communication. In what ways might ideology, discourse, and power be connected?

4. M & M: Chapter 2 - Analyzing Semiotic Choices

Class Discussion: Identify the primary points in the chapter.

5. M & M: Chapter 4 - Representing People (Pages 77 – 96)

Class Discussion: How could the concepts of social actors, representational strategies, be relevant to a course on social problems?