

# **SOC496H1: SOCIOLOGY OF CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION**

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**Department of Sociology**

**University of Toronto**

**Winter 2016**

*Location and Time:* SS1078, Thursday, 10AM-12PM

*Office Hours:* Fall: Thurs. 1-3PM, Room 398, 725 Spadina Avenue

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## ***Brief Overview of the Course***

This course is organized as a discussion seminar. This means that you are expected to come to class well prepared to engage in critical discussions of the readings assigned for the day. The seminar is designed to afford you with the opportunity to actively participate in structured discussions, in an environment where you can -- and should -- talk regularly and, in doing so, hone your analytical and communication skills. The seminar also aims to help you develop your research interests and abilities, and improve your writing skills.

This is a theory and research seminar on Creativity and Innovation. Readings are theory-oriented, and discussions will be structured around conceptual and analytical arguments. The main goal is not simply to read theory and discuss it (though we will do much of this), but to learn concepts, theories, and perspectives in order to apply them to the analysis of the social world. In particular, we will concern ourselves with understanding the social factors that shape creativity and innovation.

Creativity and Innovation are big buzzwords these days, claimed to be key for all sorts of social realms, from governmental policies, to corporate practices, scientific advances, and artistic endeavors. Creativity and innovation not only appear frequently in official and popular discourse, but have also become major areas of study in a whole range of academic disciplines. But what exactly are creativity and innovation? Do we know when we see them? The answers might be not so straightforward.

Whereas the popular press often highlights the potential and benefits of creativity and innovation, the sociological literature typically focuses on the constraints to creativity and innovation. In this seminar, we will examine a variety of social factors that both enable and constrain creativity and innovation, including cognitive patterns, dispositional actions, the legal regulation of knowledge exchange, economic forces, organizational and institutional factors, the role of social network, and of locality. By the end of the seminar, you should have acquired a set of analytical tools to understand creativity and innovation as the complex social processes that they are.

We will read varied theoretical perspectives, and empirical research, to understand how different social factors shape creativity and innovation. And we will examine the

workings of creativity and innovation in different areas of activity wherein the creation of ideas is a central task, including the sciences, the arts, product design, cuisine, and corporations. Comparing the processes of creation, diffusion, and reception of ideas across areas of activity will allow us to acquire a better understanding of the various factors that shape creativity and innovation.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The prerequisite to take this course is SOC201H1 or SOC203H1 and a 300+ level SOC course. Students without this prerequisite will be removed at any time they are discovered.

*Class Format, Requirements, and Grading*

1- in-class test, March 3 .....	30%
2- research proposal, due March 17 .....	5%
3- paper, due April 7 .....	35%
4- presentation and leading class discussion .....	15%
5- participation in class discussions .....	10%
6- final paper presentation, April 7 .....	5%

**Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory. Students are responsible for all material presented in class. Students who are unable to attend class are responsible for obtaining information about any announcements that may have been made in class as well as notes on the material covered from their classmates.

Proper documentation from a University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate or college registrar is required to justify an absence.

**Deadlines:** Late work will not be accepted unless submitted with proper documentation from your physician and a University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate, or from your college registrar. See below for details.

**Documentation from your Physician or College Registrar**

If you miss a test or a paper deadline, do not contact the instructor unless you have followed the steps described here.

In case of illness, you must supply a duly completed Verification of Student Illness, or Injury form (available at [www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca](http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca)). A doctor's note is not acceptable. The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work at class or during office hours, within seven days of the missed assignment

If a personal or family crisis prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a

crisis is interfering with your studies). The letter must be placed in a sealed envelop, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work at class or during office hours.

### **Readings**

**BOOK SELECTIONS AND JOURNAL ARTICLES** Book selections and journal articles will be available on the Blackboard course website, under “Course Materials.”

Students are solely responsible for obtaining and reading all required materials before class. Please give yourself enough time to deal with any problems or delays accessing the readings that may arise so you can be sure to come to class prepared to discuss the materials. Problems accessing readings (the packet or online articles) will not excuse failure to demonstrate having done the required readings.

### **Assignments**

#### ***In-class test***

There will be one in-class closed-book test on March 3.

#### ***Make-up test***

Students who miss the test for a valid reason and wish to take a make-up test must give your instructor a written request for special consideration which explains why the test was missed, accompanied by proper documentation from a physician or college registrar (see above). A student who misses a test and the subsequent make-up test for a valid reason will not have a third chance to take the test, and the mark assigned for the test will be a zero.

#### ***Research Proposal***

You must submit a printed copy of a proposal for your final paper on March 17. This proposal should specify the kind of paper you will write (empirical paper, theoretical paper, or research proposal), the topic, and research question. It should include information about the data, theories, and perspectives that will be used for the paper.

#### ***Paper***

You may choose to write an empirical paper, a theoretical paper, or research proposal. The paper will be based on a topic of your choice that is suited to this course. The paper is due on April 7, and it should be no more than 20 pages (all double spaced, 12 point type).

Papers are to be submitted at the beginning of the class on the due date in TWO forms: as hard copy, and electronic copy to be submitted to <http://turnitin.com>. Papers are not to be submitted via email or fax, or to the receptionist at the Department of Sociology.

“Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.” For information about the terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service, go to <http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/teaching/academicintegrity/turnitin/conditions-use.htm>

**Plagiarism:** Be careful to avoid plagiarism. It is a serious academic offense with serious penalties (see the “Code of Behavior on Academic Matters”). If you are using somebody else’s ideas, do not present them as your own. Give proper references if you are using somebody else’s ideas, and use quotation marks if you are quoting. When in doubt, it is always safer to over-reference --you are not going to be punished for that. Please also be aware that turning in an old paper, or large parts thereof, for credit in a second (or third etc.) course, is considered an academic offense that results in students being referred off to the Office of Academic Integrity.

### ***Presentation and Leading Class Discussion***

You will be scheduled to present readings and lead discussion on an assigned day to be arranged with the instructor at the beginning of the term. On the assigned day, you are expected to give a presentation about the readings, and to provide a handout with: a) a summary of the main points of the readings, b) definitions of key concepts used in the readings, and 3) at least two questions related to the readings for class discussion.

### ***Participating in Class Discussions***

You will be evaluated for your contributions to class discussion over the course of the semester. I will consider both the quantity and quality of your contributions. This is a small seminar, organized around class discussions, so student participation is expected. Be sure to allow enough time to read materials closely and critically think about them prior to each class meeting so that you are prepared to participate in class. The quality of your learning experience will hinge upon what each student brings to the classroom.

### ***Final Paper Presentation***

You are expected to give a brief presentation about your paper on the last class of the semester, when your paper is due. The presentation should cover the main ideas in your paper, describe your approach, and explain your analysis and conclusions.

### **Accessibility Needs**

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or

course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible:  
[\\_disability.services@utoronto.ca\\_](mailto:_disability.services@utoronto.ca) or [\\_http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility\\_](http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility_) .

### *Class Schedule*

January 14

INTRODUCTION

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

January 21

CREATING NEW IDEAS

Koestler, Arthur. [1964] 1989. *The Act of Creation*. London: Arkana.

Chapter 5 “Moments of Truth.” Pp. 101-120.

Molotch, Harvey. 2003. *Where Stuff Comes From*. “Inside Stuff: How Professionals Do it.” New York: Routledge.

Chapter 2 “Inside Stuff: How Professionals Do it.” Pp. 22-51.

January 28

COGNITION AND CREATIVE ACTION

Dewey, John. [1916] 1930. *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Chapter 11 “Experience and Thinking.” Pp. 163-178.

Joas, Hans. 1996. *The Creativity of Action*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Chapter 2 “Metaphors of Creativity” (selection). Pp. 70-75, 126-144.

February 4

CREATIVE EFFERVESENCE: SPACE AND PLACE

Oberlin, Kathleen C., and Thomas F. Gieryn. 2015. “Place and Culture-Making: Geographic Clumping in the Emergence of Artistic Schools.” *Poetics* 50:20-43.

Powell, Walter, Kenneth W. Koput, James I Bowie, and Laurel Smith-Doerr. 2002. “The Spatial Clustering of Science and Capital: Accounting for Biotech Firm-Venture Capital Relationships.” *Regional Studies* 36:291-305.

February 11

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND INNOVATION

Fisher, William. 2001. "Intellectual Property and Innovation: Theoretical, Empirical, and Historical Perspectives." Essay prepared for the Programme Seminar on Intellectual Property and Innovation in the Knowledge-based Economy, The Hague.

Dreyfuss, Rochelle Cooper. 2010. "Does IP Need IP? Accommodating Intellectual Production Outside the Intellectual Property Paradigm." *Cardozo Law Review* 31: 1437-1473.

February 18

Reading Week

February 25

STATUS: ORGANIZATIONAL AND SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES

Merton, Robert. 1968. "The Matthew Effect in Science." *Science* 159: 56-63.

Phillips, Damon J., and Ezra W. Zuckerman. 2001. "Middle-Status Conformity: Theoretical Restatement and Empirical Demonstration in Two Markets." *American Journal of Sociology* 107: 379-429.

March 3

*In-class Test*

March 10

INSTITUTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

DiMaggio, Paul, and Woody Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review* 48: 147-160.

Hollingsworth, J. Rogers. 2006. "A Path-Dependent Perspective on Institutional and Organizational Factors Shaping Major Scientific Discoveries." In *Innovation, Science and Institutional Change*, edited by Jerald Hage and Marius Meeus. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 423-442.

March 17

STRUCTURE, VALUES, AND LEGITIMACY

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1993. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Chapter 1 “The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed.” Pp. 29-73.

*Research Proposal Due*

March 24

ADOPTION AND DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION

Burt, Ronald. 2004. “Structural Holes and Good Ideas.” *American Journal of Sociology*. *American Journal of Sociology* 110: 349- 399.

Phillips, Damon. 2011. “Jazz and the Disconnected: City Structural Disconnectedness and the Emergence of a Jazz Canon, 1897-1933.” *American Journal of Sociology* 117: 420-483.

March 31

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AND INNOVATION

White, Harrison C., and Cynthia A. White. 1965. *Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Chapter 3 “A New System Emerges.” Pp.76-110.

Rao, Hayagreeva, Phillippe Monin, and Robert Durand. 2003. “Institutional Change in Toque Ville: Nouvelle Cuisine as an Identity Movement in French Gastronomy.” *American Journal of Sociology* 108: 795-843.

April 7

CONCLUSION

*Final Paper Presentations*

*Final Paper Due*