

University of Toronto- St. George Campus  
SOCIOLOGY 102H1F  
Summer 2016  
INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY: SOCIAL INEQUALITIES  
Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:00pm- 8:00pm in LM159

**Instructor Information**

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Blackboard/Course web site: Portal

Teaching Assistants: TBD

**Course Catalogue Description**

What causes the emergence, persistence and decline of inequalities based on class, gender, race, ethnicity and country of residence? Variations in artistic, mathematical, athletic and other skills are strikingly evident; this course explores why they are associated with varying rewards, including income, power and prestige.

**Course Description**

Welcome to Sociology! It is clear that inequality is rife within our society and ALL other societies around the world. Next year will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the “Summer of Love”, a watershed moment of the 1960s international “counterculture movement”, which among other things, strongly advocated for an end to discrimination based on factors including age, sex, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientations. The legacies of this movement are clear and persist today. Since that turbulent and exciting period of the 1960s, societies around the world have taken enormous strides toward promoting equality and reducing discrimination on a large number of fronts. Yet, one need not look far to find evidence that the project of the countercultural movement is unfinished. At the very moment that this syllabus is being drafted, our House of Commons is holding an evening emergency debate on the “Attawapiskat crisis”, concerning the frighteningly deplorable living conditions of Aboriginal Canadian young people living on the Attawapiskat reserve in Northern Ontario. Today, many women who graduate from university with undergraduate degrees will, statistically speaking, go on to earn significantly less income over their lifetimes than their male counterparts who graduate with the exact same degrees. Videos posted on YouTube of police officers violently assaulting African American young men appear to be becoming “commonplace”. And the US states of Georgia and Florida have recently passed disturbing pro-LGBTQ discrimination laws under the guise of “religious freedom”. While the US is poised make history by nominating its first female presidential candidate for the upcoming general election, she may very well face a republican candidate who,

in December of last year, publicly supported a “total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States...” What explains these strange “social facts”?

This course explores the social phenomenon of “inequality”. As advertised in the course catalogue, we will focus on investigating how it is that various forms of inequality emerge, persist over long periods of time, and sometimes (but often not) decline. Although there are countless forms of inequality, because this is an introductory survey course, we are unfortunately, due to time constraints only going to be able to cover a select number of different types. These include inequality based on: gender; sexual orientation; class; race; ethnicity; ability; and physical appearance. We will also explore global inequality across societies, as well as the ways in which crime, law and criminal justice produce and reproduce social inequalities. As per the course catalogue, some of the material we cover will address the notion of “raw talent” and its relationship to inequality. By the end of this course it should be clear that, although variations in raw talent are associated with variations in rewards such as income, power and prestige, these associations are very much modified and mediated by other factors related to inequality including access to education, family lineage, and wealth.

In this course we will treat “inequality” as a serious social problem. As such, in delivering this course, I treat it very much as an introduction to social problems and social policy, two large and influential subfields in the discipline of sociology. Consequently, a significant part of this course will be devoted to discussing social policies. Students will come out of this course with a solid understanding of the types of social policies which evidence shows perpetuate or increase social inequalities, and those types of policies which evidence suggests are effective in either reducing or eliminating social inequalities.

### **Prerequisites and Exclusions**

Exclusions: SOC101Y1; SOC100H5; SOCA01H3

### **Learning Outcomes**

My teaching philosophy is reflected by the three main learning goals I have for students in this course: academic discovery; career preparation; and communication mastery.

#### Discovery

The most basic learning goal that I have for students is to come away at the end of the semester learning something that they did not know before. However, this goes far beyond learning new terminology, theories or concepts, and memorizing some new statistics. These are important and will play a role in this course. However, my primary aims for students are to a) gain fresh insight and new perspectives on a number of both familiar and unfamiliar topics, problems and issues; and b) to come away from the course looking at social inequality in a new light (ambitious I know, but certainly achievable).

We will also strive to **engage** the material we read/listen to/watch. Throughout the course, I will endeavor to provide ample opportunity in lectures for students to ask questions, raise concerns, voice criticisms, and engage the material. I will routinely invite participation from students in class (oral and written). Socrates would be the first to say that we learn and discover best through active discussion and dialogue.

## Career Preparation

I am a strong believer that an undergraduate university education in sociology should serve as a strong preparation for paid employment both outside and inside academia. This means that the goals of this course are more than simply preparation for upper year sociology courses, graduate training in the social sciences, or careers in research and academia (though these are all wonderful and very rewarding pursuits). This also means that the goals of this course must transcend equipping students with transferrable skills such as critical thinking and written communication.

Also, I will expect students to be keeping up with both domestic and international current events on a week-to-week basis. I will also take time in class each week to go over and discuss current events related to the subject matter of this course.

Secondly, I will encourage students to approach this course and the material we cover from the perspective of their career/professional aspirations. This includes class discussions and written reflections. Along with engaging the material with the goal of discovery, it is equally important to engage the material and question how it can be usefully *applied* in practical settings. We will also regularly discuss the professional and policy applications/implications of the concepts and theories we discuss in class.

Finally, bearing in mind that many of you are seeking to enter research professions both within and outside the ivory towers (i.e. professorships, associate researchers, policy analysts, government researchers, and statisticians), a key aim of this course will be to aid in the development of strong analytical skills. Along with the goals and strategies discussed above, this will be accomplished through a strong focus on **rigorous** exposure to sociological theory and research methods.

## Communication Mastery

An integral part of professional training is the **mastery** of oral and written communication skills. Clear, confident, and elegant speaking along with flawless writing skills are necessities in today's job market. As such, the perfection of these skills will be key learning goal for this course. In particular, the skills focused on will be free writing (examinations), public forum discussion (in class participation), oral argumentation (in class participation), and academic writing (term paper).

## Textbook

*Sociology as a Life or Death Issue* by Robert Brym

Available through the University of Toronto bookstore.

Additional required readings will also be posted on Portal.

## Evaluation Components and Grading Policies

Cross-National Policy Term Paper- Due June 15 at 2:00pm [30%]

Students will select a social policy geared toward reducing inequality that is in operation in some country around the world OTHER than Canada which they believe may help alleviate inequality in this country. They will prepare a short critical analysis of the policy in which they must do three things. First, they must describe and explain the social policy in some level of depth and detail. Second, they must draw on sociological research and theory to explain how and why this social policy can, in some way, reduce and/or alleviate a form of social inequality. Third, they must justify why they believe such a social policy

would be useful and effective in Canada. This justification entails demonstrating that such a policy does not CURRENTLY exist in Canada. It also involves a persuasive thesis arguing how and why such a policy might be able to reduce or alleviate a form of social inequality that is currently persistent in Canada.

#### Midterm Examination- May 30 (2 hours) [30%]

The midterm examination will cover material covered in BOTH lecture and readings right up to and including the lecture that occurs directly before the midterm.

#### Final Examination- Scheduled by the Registrar's office (3 hours) [40%]

The final examination will be CUMULATIVE and will cover material from BOTH lectures and readings introduced throughout the entire course. Students will be expected to **demonstrate mastery** of course content, themes, theories, and concepts. No aids are permitted, however, information regarding the structure of the exam and style of questions will be provided in class.

### **MAKEUP ASSIGNMENTS AND DEADLINE EXTENSION**

#### **Documentation from your Physician or College Registrar**

If you miss a test or a paper deadline, **do not** contact the instructor or a TA unless you have followed the steps described here. Telling the professor or TA why you missed a deadline or a test will not be considered.

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 my office hours.

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 envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work** at class or during my office hours.

*You must submit both forms within three days of the missed test or assignment.* You are not entitled to write a make-up test if you wrote the regularly scheduled test. All requests will be screened and students eligible to write a make-up will be informed by e-mail.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Cheating and misrepresentation will not be tolerated. Students who commit an academic offence will face serious penalties. Prevent plagiarism by ensuring that all work is properly cited. Please see below for a list (not exhaustive) of academic offences. If you require more information, please visit the Code of Behaviours on Academic Matters at <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.

**“It shall be an offence for a student knowingly: (a) to forge or in any other way alter or falsify any document or evidence required by the University, or to utter, circulate or make use of any such forged, altered or falsified document, whether the record be in print or electronic form; (b) to use or possess an unauthorized aid or aids or obtain unauthorized assistance in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work; (c) to personate**

**another person, or to have another person personate, at any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work; (d) to represent as one's own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e. to commit plagiarism (for a more detailed account of plagiarism, see Appendix "A") ; (e) to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere; (f) to submit any academic work containing a purported statement of fact or reference to a**

If you cannot submit your paper in class, go to room 225 at 725 Spadina Avenue no later than 4:45 p.m. on the due date, use the date/time stamp on the top page of your paper, put it into the drop box for 100-level courses, **then notify your TA that your paper is there.**

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

## **Class Format**

This class will be taught using a traditional lecture format. Each class will begin with housekeeping topics, such as discussing assignments, the class schedule, office hours, etc. If possible, I will discuss a current event in the news that pertains to our course; however, this will not always be possible or appropriate. I will then provide a lecture that complements and/or supplements the week's assigned readings. What this means is that the lectures do not necessarily build off the readings, and they certainly do not provide an overview or summary of them. Rather, the readings should be understood as a resource that provides a unique and specific illustration of a broader topic that we cover in class. While I will integrate material from the assigned readings into the lecture, please note that this will not always occur. Thus, in order to succeed in the course, it will be **essential** to attend **all** lectures **and** keep up with **all** assigned readings, as materials from the lectures and readings are equally testable. While the class will be taught using a lecture format, the floor will always be open to questions discussion, and debate, permitted there is enough time. I will endeavor to adhere to the course schedule below, however, please be advised that we may, at any time, move ahead or fall behind in the schedule. The order of lectures might change, and lecture topics and/or assigned readings might change, be added or eliminated. With that said, however, if there are any changes to the assigned readings, you will be provided with at least a week's notice, and the reading (like all others) will be provided on black board.

## Tentative Course Schedule

Please note that the lecture topics and readings are subject to change at any time throughout the semester. Advanced notice will be provided and changes will be reflected assignment and examination expectations. Any additional or changed readings will be provided to students on black board.

### Lecture One (May 9)- Welcome (Regrettably) to the study of Social Inequality

TOPICS: Introduction to the Major Sociological Paradigms

ASSIGNED READINGS: None

### Lecture Two (May 11)

TOPIC: Stratification

ASSIGNED READINGS: 1) Brym- Chapter 5

2) 2016 Federal Budget- Chapter 1 (available on Portal)

### Lecture Three (May 16)

TOPIC: Gender Inequality

ASSIGNED READINGS: 1) Brym- Chapter 6

2) “Help Paying for Child Care”- Excerpt from the UK Government’s Website (available on Portal)

### Lecture Four (May 18)

TOPICS: Inequality with Respect to Sexual Orientation

ASSIGNED READINGS: 1) State of Georgia House Bill Number 757, 2016

2) Uganda Anti-Homosexuality Act, 2014

3) Section 159 of the Criminal Code of Canada (all 3 readings available on Portal)

### May 23- Victoria Day (Classes Cancelled)

### Lecture Five (May 25)

TOPICS: Racial Inequality

ASSIGNED READING: 1) Statement of Apology- to former students of Indian Residential Schools (available on Portal)

### Midterm Examination (May 30)

**Lecture Six (June 1)**

TOPIC: Ethnic Inequality

ASSIGNED READING: 1) Brym- Chapter 9

**Lecture Seven (June 6)**

TOPIC: Inequality with Respect to Ability

ASSIGNED READINGS: 1) Ontario Human Rights Code, pp.1-10 (available on Portal)

**Lecture Eight (June 8)**

TOPIC: Age Inequality

READINGS: “Age Discrimination, Inclusive Design, and Older Workers” – By Krista James, Rachel Kelly, and Alexandre Blondin (available on Portal)

**Lecture Nine (June 13)**

TOPIC: Inequality and Crime

ASSIGNED READINGS: 1) Brym- Chapter 2

**Lecture Ten (June 15)**

TOPIC: Global Inequality

ASSIGNED READING: NONE