

SOC350H1F: New Topics in Sociology: Sociology of Solidarity

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Department of Sociology

University of Toronto

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Location and Time: Thursdays 10:10-1, location posted on Quercus and ACORN

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10-12 and Thursdays 3-4 on Zoom (info on Quercus)

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Statement of Acknowledgement: I wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land. [<https://indigenous.utoronto.ca/about/land-acknowledgement/>]

In the context of this course on solidarity, I encourage students to critically reflect on what this statement of acknowledgement means to you in your social location. For those of us who are settlers, how can we act in solidarity with Indigenous struggles? When has solidarity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people been enacted in social movements? When, and why, has such solidarity failed to emerge?

Read more about the University of Toronto's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada here: <https://www.provost.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/155/2018/05/Final-Report-TRC.pdf>

Course Description: Social movement actors often invoke phrases like “None of us are free until all of us are free”, attributed to the Black poet Maya Angelou, and “An injury to one is an injury to all”, popularized by the Industrial Workers of the World. What can sociology tell us about when, how, and why different groups of people come together in solidaristic political action and the impact of such action? Why do groups come together in solidarity, even when their interests may be at odds with one another? And conversely, under what conditions do people fail to come together in such coalitions, even when their fates are objectively intertwined? In this course, we will look at theories of social solidarity, including early works like Marx, Durkheim, and DuBois. We will examine historical cases of solidarity (and the lack thereof) across lines of race, class, and gender in the suffragette movement, the labour movement, the student movement, and the Civil Rights Movement. Then we will examine contemporary cases involving unionization, migrant rights, Black-Indigenous solidarities, the climate movement, and the global mobilization for human rights in Israel-Palestine. The course will also include a community-engaged learning element that brings our scholarly work on solidarity into present-day Toronto.

Prerequisites: The prerequisites to take this course are SOC201H1, SOC202H1, SOC204H1, plus two of SOC251H1, SOC252H1, SOC254H1. Students without these requirements will be removed at any time discovered without notice.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand and apply sociological theories on how, when, and why people act in solidarity with one another.
2. Use sociological concepts to explain how and why solidarity has been enacted, or not, in historical and contemporary social movements.
3. Engage in active citizenship through participant observation in social movements.
4. Apply sociological theory and empirical literature about solidarity to participant observation in social movements.

Evaluation Components

	Due	Weight
Discussion Board Posts	Weekly	10%
Class Discussion Lead	Various	10%
Project Proposal	September 19	5%
Ethnographic Statement	October 3	10%
Literature Review	October 24	15%
Field Reflections	November 14	20%
Final Paper	November 28	30%

Discussion Board Posts – 10%

Please make at least one post on the discussion board before class. These posts are meant to help you think critically about the readings and come to class prepared. These posts should be about 100 words and can be in the form of a question, a reply to a classmate's post, or simply some thoughts that came to you while reading. It does not need to be polished – the goal is to get you thinking and writing about the course materials.

Here are some questions to guide your thinking:

- What did you find most interesting in the readings?
- What did you have trouble understanding in the readings?
- What are lingering questions in your mind after completing the readings?
- Is there a news article, YouTube clip, podcast, or other media you can share that relates to the readings?
- Is there a concept you learned about in another course that helped you better understand the readings?

Each post is worth 1% (pass/fail) up to a maximum of 10%. You may post multiple times per week, but you will only get credit for one post. To get credit for your post, you must submit your post by Wednesday, 5pm. This is to allow me time to read the posts before our class meetings on Thursdays

and integrate your questions and comments into the lecture. You will not be able to get credit for late posts.

Class Discussion Lead – 10%

Each week, 3-4 students will be responsible for leading class discussion by preparing questions that generate critical thought between and beyond the readings. This should *not* be a presentation about or a summary of the readings. Your questions should expand your and your peers' thinking about the topic for the week, helping you move beyond simple *remembering* and *understanding*, instead reaching the levels of *application*, *analysis*, and *evaluation* as described in Bloom's Taxonomy:

<https://teaching.utoronto.ca/resources/active-verbs-for-blooms-revised-taxonomy/>

Please aim to have 3-4 discussion questions ready for the class. You may divide the labour amongst your group however you see fit – for example, each person could individually contribute one question, or your group could collaborate on all the questions.

After the class, students will submit a short reflection paper on the discussion. This paper should go well beyond a simple summary of the discussion – you should write about your own reactions and thoughts on the questions raised by you and your classmates. You must include elements from all the readings for the week. It may also be helpful to link back to readings in previous weeks.

There are two options for completing this paper:

- *Option 1:* Each student completes an individual paper that is 2 pages long.
- *Option 2:* The group submits a collaborative paper that is 4 pages long. Every member of the group will receive the same grade.

Everyone must agree on the same option in your group; i.e. you cannot have some group members do Option 2 while others choose Option 1.

Solidarity in Action Project

The remainder of your course grade (80%) will come from the *Solidarity in Action* project. Solidarity involves both theory and praxis; as Hunt-Hendrix and Taylor (2023) put it, “solidarity is not only a thought or a feeling, a theory or a principle – it is also something you do, and it must involve others“ (p. xvi). Therefore, a significant part of this course is connecting theory and scholarship on solidarity to real embodiments of solidarity in our communities.

For this project, you will choose an area of social change that you are interested in and investigate how solidarity is enacted, or not, in activism in Toronto. This will entail doing participant observation at *public events* associated with social activism. Detailed assignment instructions will be posted on Quercus and reviewed in class. In order to prepare students to do effective and ethical participant observation, each week we will have project workshops where we discuss the research method and any emergent issues in the field. Please refer to the class schedule for the project workshop topics and recommended readings.

Topic Proposal – 5%

By Week 3, you will choose an area of social change and solidarity and write a one-page proposal that outlines your topic and identifies some organizations that work in your chosen area and possible events you might attend.

Ethnographic Statement – 10%

On Week 5, you will submit a 3-4 page ethnographic statement engaging in critical reflexivity. Students should describe their social location in terms of race/ethnicity, religion, age, gender, sexuality, or other relevant social groupings, and analyze how this may inflect the questions they ask and how they are perceived by other participants. The statement should also provide critical commentary on the ethics of participant observation and how you will ensure ethical behaviour.

Literature Review – 15%

On Week 8, you will submit a 4-5 page literature review drawing on at least eight scholarly sources about the social change area you have chosen. This literature review will not only summarize sources, but synthesize, compare and contrast among them.

Field Reflections – 20%

On Week 10, you will submit fieldnotes from your participant observation along with reflections on how you have learned from these experiences. You should also begin to make connections between your fieldnotes and literature review.

Final Paper – 30%

The final paper should be 8-10 pages long, bringing together all the pieces of the project from previous assignments. While you should draw on the previously submitted assignments, you should be incorporating feedback from your peers, TA, and the professor, so you should not simply copy and paste; in other words, it should be substantively different from your previous work. The final paper should be a cohesive research report with an introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion.

Course Policies

Course Attendance: This course will incorporate significant in-class discussion; therefore, part of your learning experience will be through attendance in class. We will not only discuss the weekly topic in depth, but also have project workshops where we work through and troubleshoot aspects of the *Solidarity in Action* project. Class attendance is therefore mandatory.

Course Communication: The Quercus discussion boards are available as a space to connect with myself, the TA, and fellow students regarding the course material and assignments. If you need help understanding the course material or the assignment requirements, please post your question on Quercus so that the class can benefit from the answers. If your question is sensitive in nature or you don't get a satisfactory answer on Quercus, you may also email me or the TA directly, or attend my office hours on Zoom on Wednesdays 10am-noon or Thursdays 3-4pm.

Community Agreement: During the first class, we will collaboratively draft and sign on to a Community Agreement that establishes a code of conduct and guidelines on how we will maintain a collegial classroom environment, including how we will respectfully engage in discussions of sensitive topics like racism, xenophobia, violence, and discrimination. If a conflict arises, we will

refer back to the Community Agreement to resolve it. As such, all students are expected to familiarize themselves with the Community Agreement and abide by it at all times.

Accessibility: 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 visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/as> or email accessibility.services@utoronto.ca as soon as possible. For specific COVID-19 related accessibility concerns, please visit <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as/covid-19-updates>.

Missed Deadlines and Tests: Students who miss a test will receive a mark of zero for that test unless the reason is a circumstance beyond their control. Within three days of missing a test, students must send the instructor a request for consideration. Students must document their request with one of the following:

- Absence declaration via ACORN
- U of T Verification of Illness or Injury Form
- College Registrar's letter (e.g., in case of personal/family crisis or emergency)
- Letter of Academic Accommodation from Accessibility Services

Students who miss the test or are late in submitting an assignment for other reasons, such as family or other personal reasons, should request their College Registrar to email the instructor.

Late Assignments: Late assignments without a valid excuse will be deducted 5% per day, including weekends and holidays. Each student is entitled to a one-week extension on **one** assignment per term, no questions asked. To use this extension, you must submit the [Extension Request Form](#) at least 24 hours before the due date.

Grade Appeals: If you feel the grade you received is not an accurate reflection of the work that you produced, you may appeal it through the following steps. First, you must wait for at least 24 hours after the grades are released before submitting a regrade request. Then, you must submit a written appeal to your TA in which you address **every** comment you received on your assignment, as well as the rubric categories you scored and the global feedback document. Keep in mind that upon regrading, your mark may go up or down or stay the same.

Turnitin: Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service is described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Assignments not submitted through *Turnitin* will receive a grade of zero (0%), unless a student instead provides, along with their position paper, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own. The alternative (not submitting via *Turnitin*) is in place because, strictly speaking, using *Turnitin* is voluntary for students at the University of Toronto.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is fundamental to scholarship at the University of Toronto and beyond. Academic offenses include, but are not limited to, using someone else's ideas in a paper

or exam without proper citations, submitting your own work for credit in multiple courses, obtaining assistance from others during exams (including having someone edit your work or looking at a classmate’s work), and falsifying illness on the Absence Declaration tool. Please familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>

Generative Artificial Intelligence: Students may choose to use generative artificial intelligence tools as they work through the assignments in this course; this use must follow the course community agreement on AI and must be documented in an appendix for each assignment. The documentation should include what tool(s) were used, how they were used, and how the results from the AI were incorporated into the submitted work. Failure to do so will be considered a matter of academic integrity and will be dealt with accordingly. For security reasons, U of T recommends using AI tools that are supported by the University, such as Copilot. Find more about U of T’s approach to using AI here: <https://teaching.utoronto.ca/teaching-uoft-genai/genai-tools/>

Writing Support: Each college has a writing centre with instructors who can assist you at various stages of writing projects. I highly recommend seeking help from your college writing centre for your reading responses. Find your writing centre here: <https://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/>

Class Schedule

All readings will be made available on Quercus. Every attempt will be made to follow this schedule, but it is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

N.B. Readings listed for the project workshops are optional, but recommended to help you write your assignments.

Date	Topic	Readings	Project Workshop
WEEK 1 Sept 5	Introduction to Sociology of Solidarity	No readings – please read the syllabus carefully.	What kind of social change are you interested in?
WEEK 2 Sept 12	What is Solidarity?	- Hunt-Hendrix and Taylor , <i>Solidarity</i> (Chapter 1) - Scholz , <i>Political Solidarity</i> (Chapter 1)	What is participant observation? - Ulman and McCurdy , “Studying Social Movements”
WEEK 3 Sept 19	Solidarity in the Industrial Age	- Anderson , “Revisiting Marx” - Durkheim , <i>The Division of Labour in Society</i> (Chapters 2 & 3)	What is the role of the researcher? - Thambinathan and Kinsella , “Decolonizing Methodologies”
WEEK 4 Sept 26	Race and Solidarity	- Du Bois , <i>Black Reconstruction</i> (Chapter 16) - Mills , <i>The Racial Contract</i> (intro & Chapter 1)	What are ethical considerations of participant observation?

			- Thorne , “You Still Takin’ Notes?”
WEEK 5 Oct 3	Feminist and Postcolonial Solidarity	- bell hooks , “Sisterhood” - Mohanty , “Under Western Eyes”	What are fieldnotes? How do you take good fieldnotes? - Emerson et al , <i>Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes</i> (Chapters 1-3)
WEEK 6 Oct 10	Labour Movements	- De Leon , “Black from White” - Foster , “From Canadians First to Workers Unite”	What is the role of critical reflection? - Brookfield guide
WEEK 7 Oct 17	Feminist Movements	- Davis , <i>Women, Race & Class</i> (Chapters 2, 3, 7) - Roshanravan , “Me Too and its White Detours”	Check-in: How’s your fieldwork going?
WEEK 8 Oct 24	Student Movements	- Taylor and Hunt-Hendrix (2024), “We Need Outside Agitators” - Patil , “Interrogating Ethnic Studies”	How do we connect theory to participant observation? - Burawoy , “The Extended Case Method”
WEEK 9 Nov 7	Indigenous Rights	- Krebs and Olwan , “Challenging Canadian and Israeli Settler Colonialism” - Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Cornassel , “Unsettling Settler Colonialism”	What are connections between the literature and what you are observing?
WEEK 10 Nov 14	Palestine	- Sukarieh , “Political Imaginaries of Solidarity” - Bakan and Abu-Laban , “Anti-Palestinian Racism, Antisemitism, and Solidarity”	What kind of emotions came up for you in the field? - Lorde , “The Uses of Anger”
WEEK 11 Nov 21	Climate Change	- Curnow and Helferty , “Contradictions of Solidarity” - McGregor , “Indigenous Women, Water Justice and Zaagidowin (Love)”	How do you write a final research paper?
WEEK 12 Nov 28	Final Reflection	No readings	What will you carry forward from your participant observation experience?

Full Reading List (in alphabetical order)

Readings will be posted on Quercus. The bibliographical references are provided here for your convenience.

- Anderson, Kevin B. 2022. "Revisiting Marx on Race, Capitalism, and Revolution." *Monthly Review*. Retrieved September 5, 2024 (<https://monthlyreview.org/2022/03/01/revisiting-marx-on-race-capitalism-and-revolution/>).
- Bakan, Abigail B., and Yasmeen Abu-Laban. 2024. "Anti-Palestinian Racism, Antisemitism, and Solidarity: Considerations towards an Analytic of Praxis." *Studies in Political Economy* 105(1):107–22. doi: [10.1080/07078552.2024.2325300](https://doi.org/10.1080/07078552.2024.2325300).
- Burawoy, Michael. 1991. *Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Curnow, Joe, and Anjali Helferty. 2018. "Contradictions of Solidarity." *Environment and Society* 9(1):145–63. doi: [10.3167/ares.2018.090110](https://doi.org/10.3167/ares.2018.090110).
- Davis, Angela Y. 1983. *Women, Race & Class*. 1st Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books.
- De Leon, Cedric. 2017. "Black from White: How the Rights of White and Black Workers Became 'Labor' and 'Civil' Rights after the U.S. Civil War." *Labor Studies Journal* 42(1):10–26. doi: [10.1177/0160449X16676417](https://doi.org/10.1177/0160449X16676417).
- Du Bois, W. E. B. 2021. *Black Reconstruction: An Essay toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880, & Other Writings*. New York, NY: The Library of America.
- Durkheim, Émile. 2014. *The Division of Labor in Society*. Free Press trade paperback edition. New York: Free Press.
- Emerson, Robert M. 2011. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Second edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Foster, Jason. 2014. "From 'Canadians First' to 'Workers Unite': Evolving Union Narratives of Migrant Workers." *Relations Industrielles* 69(2):241–65. doi: [10.7202/1025028ar](https://doi.org/10.7202/1025028ar).
- hooks, bell. 1986. "Sisterhood: Political Solidarity between Women." *Feminist Review* 23:125–38.
- Hunt-Hendrix, Leah, and Astra Taylor. 2024. *Solidarity: The Past, Present, and Future of a World-Changing Idea*. First edition. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Krebs, Mike, and Dana M. Olwan. 2012. "'From Jerusalem to the Grand River, Our Struggles Are One': Challenging Canadian and Israeli Settler Colonialism." *Settler Colonial Studies* 2(2):138–64. doi: [10.1080/2201473X.2012.10648846](https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2012.10648846).
- Lorde, Audre. 1981. "The Uses of Anger." *Women's Studies Quarterly*.
- McGregor, Deborah. 2015. "Indigenous Women, Water Justice and Zaagidowin (Love)." *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers de La Femme* 30(2–3).
- Mills, Charles W. 2011. *The Racial Contract*. Nachdr. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Mohanty, Chandra. 1988. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Feminist Review* 30:61–88.
- Patil, Vrushali. 2014. "On Coloniality, Racialized Forgetting and the 'Group Effect': Interrogating Ethnic Studies' Meta-Narrative of Race." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 27(3):361–80. doi: [10.1111/johs.12057](https://doi.org/10.1111/johs.12057).
- Roediger, David R. n.d. "Race and the Making of the American Working Class."
- Roshanravan, Shireen. 2021. "On the Limits of Globalizing Black Feminist Commitments: 'Me Too' and Its White Detours." *Feminist Formations* 33(3):239–55. doi: [10.1353/ff.2021.0047](https://doi.org/10.1353/ff.2021.0047).
- Scholz, Sally J. 2008. *Political Solidarity*. University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Snelgrove, Corey, Rita Kaur Dhamoon, and Jeff Corntassel. n.d. "Unsettling Settler Colonialism: The Discourse and Politics of Settlers, and Solidarity with Indigenous Nations."
- Sukarieh, Rana. 2024. "Political Imaginaries of Solidarity: The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) in Toronto." *Social Movement Studies* 1–16. doi: [10.1080/14742837.2024.2321132](https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2024.2321132).

- Taylor, Astra, and Leah Hunt-Hendrix. 2024. "We Need 'Outside Agitators.'" *Jacobin*. Retrieved July 30, 2024 (<https://jacobin.com/2024/05/outside-agitators-columbia-palestine-civil-rights>).
- Thambinathan, Vivetha, and Elizabeth Anne Kinsella. 2021. "Decolonizing Methodologies in Qualitative Research: Creating Spaces for Transformative Praxis." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 20:160940692110147. doi: [10.1177/16094069211014766](https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211014766).
- Thorne, Barrie. 1980. "'You Still Takin' Notes?' Fieldwork and Problems of Informed Consent." *Social Problems* 27(3):284–97. doi: [10.1525/sp.1980.27.3.03a00040](https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.1980.27.3.03a00040).
- Uldam, Julie, and Patrick McCurdy. 2013. "Studying Social Movements: Challenges and Opportunities for Participant Observation." *Sociology Compass* 7(11):941–51. doi: [10.1111/soc4.12081](https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12081).