

**223.11 • Sociology I: Social Structure and Differentiation** (3 hrs.)  
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Providence College  
Fall Session, 2008  
Tuesdays 8:30 & Fridays 2:00

## SYLLABUS

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### A. Calendar Description of the Course

An introduction to the scientific study of the structure of society, primarily from the perspectives of microsociology. The foci of this course include the nature of sociology in general, the relations of individuals to society, and the systematic differences between people. Special attention will be given to Canadian society.

Note: The combination of this course and 223.12 Sociology II: Social Institutions and Change is designed to be equivalent to 6 credit hour Introduction to Sociology courses at major Canadian universities (e.g. University of Manitoba, SOC 1200).

### B. Purpose of the Course

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. summarize and characterize the general nature and focus of sociology in contrast to the humanities and other social sciences;
2. compare the various theoretical perspectives and methods employed by sociologists to locate and explain various social phenomena;
3. demonstrate knowledge of differing Christian approaches to the integration of theology and sociology, as well as the relevance of biblical teachings to sociological issues;
4. identify and describe how individuals shape and are shaped by society in everyday life;
5. interpret his or her own experience of and contribution to society, and thereby enhance self-understanding;
6. express encouragement toward her or his own potential for more enlightened and satisfactory social relationships;
7. display an appreciation of and commitment to the common good and well-being of human life.

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#### *Note re. Syllabus:*

It is the student's responsibility to retain their course syllabi for use as support for possible future applications to other educational institutions for transfer of credit.

## C. Textbooks

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

Macionis, John J., and Linda M. Gerber. 2008. *Sociology: Sixth Canadian Edition*. Toronto: Pearson Prentice-Hall Canada.

Quinn, Daniel. 1992. *Ishmael: An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit*. New York: Bantam/Turner Books.

### OPTIONAL READERS:

Macionis, John J., Nijole V. Benokraitis, and Bruce Ravelli, eds. 2007. *Seeing Ourselves: Classic, Contemporary, and Cross-cultural Readings in Sociology* 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Edition. Toronto: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Leming, Michael R., Raymond G. DeVries, and Brendan F. J. Furnish, eds. 1989. *The Sociological Perspective: A Value-committed Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

### Notes:

- The Macionis & Gerber text will guide you to its own website, which you can access with a code supplied in your copy of the textbook. This site contains many supplementary student resources such as review material, learning exercises, and practice tests for each chapter. You would do well to make use of this internet resource to enhance your learning throughout the duration of this course.
- All of these texts, except Quinn, will also be used in 223.12 Sociology II: Social Institutions and Change, taught in the winter semester.
- For a reference tool that pairs sociological concepts with biblical texts as one form of the academic conversation between sociology and biblical studies, see the ACTS Concepts Project at <http://www.actsoc.org/concepts.htm>.

## D. Course Requirements

### 1. Book Reaction (22%)

**Due Date: November 14**

Write an informal, personal reaction to Quinn's "underground classic," *Ishmael* (4-5 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font). Your reaction should **not** outline the contents of the book, but rather should discuss what you found most interesting or provocative and what thoughts of your own it stimulated. Quinn is not writing as a Christian or even as a sociologist, but he reinterprets biblical themes and manifests a "sociological imagination." What do you think of his ideas? What effects do they have on your thinking? Your response should demonstrate your ability to interact critically with the material, identifying its strengths and weaknesses while bringing fresh observations or applications to it.

Your paper will be graded on the quality of its content (14%), rhetoric (4%), and technical competence (4%). Help in all aspects of essay writing can be found in the *Providence College Academic Formation Guide* available in the Providence Bookstore.

### 2. Critical Thinking Questions (3 x 6%)

Answer each of the following questions in 1 page, for a total of 3 pages per set (do not retype the question as part of your response). These exercises are designed to help you see the world sociologically, that is, to stimulate your "sociological imagination." Your answers should demonstrate thoughtful interaction with the perspectives and concepts of course lectures and readings.

Set #1

**Due Date: October 3**

a) In what ways does using the sociological perspective make us seem less in control of our lives? In what ways does it give us greater power over our surroundings?

b) What cultural values are expressed by the classic children's story *The Little Engine that Could* and the popular board games *Snakes and Ladders* and *Monopoly*? For a brief version of the story, go to:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Little\\_Engine\\_That\\_Could](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Little_Engine_That_Could)

a) Is Christianity in Canada or the United States today best understood as popular culture, counter-culture, or sub-culture? Why?

Set #2

**Due Date: November 4**

- a) Discuss the possibility that Horton's *looking-glass self* may be God, and the possibility that Mead's *taking the role of the other* in the development of *the I and the Me* may occur with God as the significant other.
- b) Chapter 6 of your Macionis and Gerber textbook illustrates Erving Goffman's ideas with a description of a physician's office. Investigate the offices of several Providence professors in the same way. What furniture is there, and how is it arranged? What "props" do professors use? How are the offices of physicians and professors different? Why are they different?
- c) Do you think that God intends that churches, as formal organizations, be bureaucracies? Do you see any evidence of McDonaldization in church and para-church organizations?

Set #3

**Due Date: December 5**

- a) Could everyday conformity to Christian morality be in part a product of Hirschi's social control theory? Explain.
- b) What techniques do the mass media use to "sell" conventional ideas about gender to women and men? Describe a specific example.
- c) If prejudice is an attitude and discrimination is an action, should Christians be any more concerned about one than the other? Which one, if targeted, would most effectively reduce or eliminate the other? Why?

3. Exams (20% x 3)

You will write three exams, each worth 20% of the final letter grade, and each consisting of approximately 30 multiple choice questions plus 7 written definitions and examples of concepts. Each exam will hold you responsible for only but all the material in the lectures and assigned readings covered since the previous exam; there is no comprehensive exam. See the separate class handout entitled "How to Study for and Write (My!) Exams." The dates of the exams are as follows:

<b>Exam #1</b>	<b>September 30</b>
<b>Exam #2</b>	<b>October 31</b>
<b>Exam #3</b>	<b>December 9</b>

## E. Grading Summary

### 1. Grade Components

Book Reaction	22%
Critical Thinking	18%
Exam #1	20%
Exam #2	20%
Exam #3	20%

Note: The last date for **Voluntary Withdrawal** from this course is Friday, Nov. 13.

### 2. Grading Scale

Final course letter grades and their Grade Point equivalents will be calculated using the following scale:

<i>Percent</i>	<i>G.P.</i>	<i>Quality</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>G.P.</i>	<i>Quality</i>
91 – 99 = A+	4.0	Exceptional	67 – 69 = C+	2.5	Satisfactory
85 – 90 = A		Excellent	63 – 66 = C	2.0	Adequate
80 – 84 = A-			60 – 62 = C-		
77 – 79 = B+	3.5	Superior	57 – 59 = D+	1.0	Marginal
73 – 76 = B	3.0	Good	53 – 56 = D		Poor
70 – 72 = B-			50 – 52 = D-		
			< 50 = F	0.0	Failure

## F. Course Policies

In addition to the policies outlined in the *Student Handbook*, the complete academic policies, procedures, and regulations of Providence College can be found online ([http://prov.ca/college/ac\\_pol-proc-reg.aspx](http://prov.ca/college/ac_pol-proc-reg.aspx)), or in the Library, Admissions Office, or Dean's Office.

## 1. Class Attendance

Full attendance at all classes is expected, because active listening, thinking and discussing are primary learning experiences in this course. Questions on exams will be designed to reward class attendance and alertness. While the instructor is committed to making the classes as interesting and informative as possible, it is neither his role nor his gift to be an entertainer. Students who find themselves struggling with course material are welcome to seek additional individual assistance from the instructor outside the classes, but only if they have demonstrated the self-discipline to attend all the classes they possibly can.

## 2. ICTs in Class

Student use of information and communication technologies for purposes other than class note-taking is not allowed in the classroom, as students are expected to give their total attention to class activities. Use of cell-phones or ipods is never appropriate in the classroom, and use of laptop computers to play games, write blogs, chat with others, browse the internet, or engage material not related to the class is always distracting to classmates and disrespectful to the instructor. Unlike some other post-secondary institutions, Providence has not yet found it necessary to ban laptops from the classroom, or prevent wireless internet access in classrooms. Only judicious use of them will keep it that way.

## 3. Academic Integrity

Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all its various forms, and will be held accountable for doing so by the policy on Academic Conduct in the Student Handbook (<http://prov.ca/studentLife/handbook.aspx>). One particularly problematic breach of academic integrity is plagiarism, which is stealing from the ideas and writings of another person and passing them off as one's own. For an elaboration of the nature, types, and prevention of plagiarism, see the Providence College document entitled "Academic Dishonesty: The Problem of Plagiarism in Academic Writing," in the Providence College Academic Formation Guide available in the Providence Bookstore, or in the Providence College "Academic Policies, Procedures, and Regulations" ([http://prov.ca/college/ac\\_pol-proc-reg.aspx](http://prov.ca/college/ac_pol-proc-reg.aspx)).

#### 4. Late Assignments

Late assignments will be accepted up to one week after their due date, but their grades will be reduced by 10%, which equals one letter grade. Late papers will **not** be accepted more than one week after their due date, and students who do not submit a paper by at most one week after the due date will receive a grade of zero for that component of the course. The instructor will not receive requests for extensions. If you feel an extension is warranted, attach a cover letter to your assignment when you hand it in, explaining why it is late, and a decision will be made by the instructor when your paper is graded. A waiving of the 10% late reduction, or the one week deadline, will be granted only in the cases of personal or medical emergencies as detailed in the cover letter. Computer problems, conflicts with co-curricular activities, competition for library resources, and/or long weekends before or after due dates do not constitute such emergencies. Failure to plan ahead, or to maintain a margin of time for unforeseen events prior to the due date, does not warrant an extension either.

#### 5. Missed Exams

Students who miss an exam are responsible to contact the instructor within one week of the exam date if they still wish to write the exam. Permission to do so will be given to only those students who present evidence, acceptable to the instructor, of medical reasons for having missed the exam. The format of the exam will be at the discretion of the instructor, with essay questions likely. Students who do not write an exam by at most 2 weeks after the exam date will receive a grade of zero for that component of the course.

#### G. Assigned Readings on Reserve in Library

Clark, Robert A. 1989. "Thinking about Culture: Theirs and Ours." Pp. 61-80 in *The Sociological Perspective: A Value-committed Introduction*, edited by Michael R. Leming, Raymond G. DeVries, and Brendan F. J. Furnish. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Engle, John. 2007. "Culture's Unacknowledged Iron Grip." *Chronicle of Higher Education*. February 2. (Class handout)

Hiebert, Dennis. 2003. *Scarcity or Abundance?* Unpublished manuscript. (Class handout)

Smith, Allen. C. and Sherryl Kleinman. 2004. "Managing Emotions in Medical School." Pp. 92-105 in *Inside Social Life: Readings in Sociological Psychology and Microsociology* 4<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Spencer E. Cahill. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing.

Snow, David and Leon Anderson. 2004. "Salvaging the Self from Homelessness." Pp. 127-138 in *Inside Social Life: Readings in Sociological Psychology and Microsociology* 4<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by Spencer E. Cahill. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing.

## H. Mega Websites

All of the following provide links to hundreds of other sociology sites.

Sociology and Anthropology Sources

<http://www.socsciresearch.com/r7.html>

The SocioWeb

<http://www.socioweb.com/~markbl/socioweb/>

Sociology Resources on the Web

<http://www.uic.edu/depts/soci/Soclinks.html>

Sociology Internet Resources

<http://vax.wcsu.edu/socialsci/socres.html>

A Sociological tour through cyberspace

<http://www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/index.html>

Sociosite

<http://www2.fmg.uva.nl/sociosite/>

Christian Sociological Society

<http://www.christiansociology.com/>

## I. Class Schedule

The readings appearing beside each class topic are to be read in conjunction with that class. All assigned readings from other than the Macionis & Gerber text (M & G) are on reserve in the Learning Resource Centre. Ask for them by title at the front desk. Full bibliographic references are given in the Assigned Readings on Reserve above. The instructor reserves the right to assign additional readings during the course of the term or to alter the schedule of topics as he sees fit.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Sept. 5	Orientation to the Course	
<b>UNIT I: THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIOLOGY</b>		
Sept. 9	What is Sociology?	M & G ch. 1
Sept. 12	Sociological Theories	M & G ch. 4
Sept. 16	Research Methods	M & G ch. 2
Sept. 19	Research Methods	
<b>UNIT II: SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL</b>		
Sept. 23	Culture and Society	M & G ch. 3
Sept. 26	Culture and Society	Engle "Culture's Iron Grip" Clark "Thinking about Culture..."
Sept. 30	<b>Exam #1</b>	
Oct. 3	Socialization	M & G ch. 5
Oct. 7	Socialization	Snow & Anderson "Salvaging the Self..."
Oct. 10	<b>Thanksgiving (classes cancelled)</b>	
Oct. 14	Human Interaction	M & G ch. 6

Oct. 17	Human Interaction	Smith & Kleinman “Managing Emotions...”
Oct. 21	Groups and Organizations	M & G ch. 7
Oct. 24	Groups and Organizations	
Oct. 28	Human Sexuality	M & G ch. 8
Oct. 31	<b>Exam #2</b>	
Nov. 4	Social Control and Deviance	M & G ch. 9
Nov. 7	Deviance	<b>Critical Thinking #2 due</b>
Nov. 11	<b>Remembrance Day (classes cancelled)</b>	

### UNIT III: SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION

Nov. 14	Social Stratification	M & G ch. 10	<b>Book Reaction due</b>
Nov. 18	Social Stratification	M & G ch. 11	
Nov. 21	Gender Inequality	Hiebert “Scarcity or Abundance” M & G ch. 13	
Nov. 25	Gender Inequality		
Nov. 28	Race and Ethnicity	M & G ch. 14	
Dec. 2	Race and Ethnicity		
Dec. 5	Age Relations	M & G ch. 15	<b>Critical Thinking #3 due</b>
Dec. 9	<b>Exam #3</b>		