

223.11 • Introduction to Sociology I: People in Culture (3 hrs.)
Professor: Dennis W. Hiebert, Ph.D.
Email: dennis.hiebert@prov.ca

Providence College
Fall Session, 2010
Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:40-1:55
Lecture Theatre

SYLLABUS

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 conversation between biblical studies and 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.

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. 2011. *Sociology: Seventh Canadian Edition*. Toronto: Pearson Canada.

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

All assigned collateral readings are available as PDF documents under Course Readings at www.provsoc.org .

OPTIONAL READERS:

Macionis, John J., Nijole V. Benokraitis, and Bruce Ravelli, eds. 2010. *Seeing Ourselves: Classic, Contemporary, and Cross-cultural Readings in Sociology* 3rd Canadian Edition. Toronto: Pearson Canada.

Leming, Michael R., Raymond G. DeVries, and Brendan F. J. Furnish, eds. 2009. *The Sociological Perspective: A Value-committed Introduction*. Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock.

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 Introduction to Sociology II: People in Society, 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. Reading Checks (15%)

There will be a reading check at the beginning of some classes according to the class schedule below. The checks will consist of 3-4 multiple-choice questions from textbook chapters and one multiple-choice question from any collateral reading assigned. The questions will appear on the PowerPoint screen, to be answered on a slip of paper and submitted immediately. They will enable you to demonstrate whether you have completed the assigned reading on time with rudimentary comprehension. The questions can only be answered at the time they are given to the whole class; late-comers or absentees will forego the opportunity for credit for that reading. Your grade for this component of the course will accumulate throughout the semester.

2. Critical Thinking Questions (3 x 6%)

Answer any THREE of the four questions in each of the following sets 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 A

Due Date: October 12

- 1) 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?
- 2) What cultural values are expressed by a) the children’s story *The Little Engine that Could*, b) the popular board game *Monopoly*, and c) the video game *Grand Theft Auto IV* (links below)

For a brief version of *The Little Engine that Could*, go to:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Little_Engine_That_Could

OR

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6E9EXooqZBk&feature=PlayList&p=B66FBE8D7F718F31&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=28

Use the following video clip and Wikipedia description of Grand Theft Auto for your analysis:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5sfcDaXvbIo>

AND

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto_IV#Synopsis

- 3) Is Christianity in Canada or the United States today best understood as popular culture, counter-culture, or sub-culture? Why?
- 4) 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.

Set B

Due Date: November 16

- 1) 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 three Providence professors in the same way. What furniture is there, and how is it arranged? What "props" do professors use? What is being communicated, about whom, to whom, etc.?
- 2) 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?
- 3) Sexual orientation has certainly been one of the most controversial issues among Christians recently. What are the implications of the relative biological and social causes of sexual orientation on the position Christians should take on the issue?
- 4) Could everyday conformity to Christian morality be in part a product of Hirschi's social control theory? Explain.

Set C

Due Date: December 16

- 1) Describe the causes, nature, and extent of social mobility your family has experienced, if any, since your parents were born. Were the factors more individual or societal?

- 2) What techniques do the mass media use to “sell” conventional ideas about gender to women and men? Describe a specific example you have observed.
- 3) 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?
- 4) Select one of the red “Seeing Sociology in Everyday Life” bullets at the top of the pages in Macionis and Gerber’s chapter on aging, write out the questions it contains, and then answer them.

3. Book Reaction (22%)

Due Date: November 18

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.

4. Exams (15% x 3)

You will write three exams, each worth 15% of the final letter grade, and each consisting of approximately 25 multiple choice questions plus 7 written definitions and examples of concepts. The multiple choice questions will hold you responsible for only but all the material in the lectures since the previous exam. The definitions will hold you responsible for any definitions given in the lectures, plus any definitions that appear in bold in the assigned chapters from the textbook. There is no comprehensive exam. See the study help posted under Shared Documents in your Blackbaud student portal entitled “How to Study for

and Write (My!) Exams.” The dates of the exams are as follows:

Exam #1	October 7
Exam #2	November 9
Exam #3	December 16

Any request to reschedule a final exam must be approved by the Academic Committee in accordance with the policy in the College Academic Calendar. (http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/programs/registrars_office/calendar/).

E. Grading Summary

1. Grade Components

Reading Checks	15%
Critical Thinking	18% (3 x 6%)
Book Reaction	22%
Exams	45% (3 x 15%)

Note: The last date for **Voluntary Withdrawal** from this course is Friday, Nov. 12.

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

The full text of the academic policies, procedures and regulations of Providence College can be found online in the Student Handbook

(http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/student_life/) and the College Academic Calendar (http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/programs/registrars_office/calendar/).

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 attention. While I am committed to making the classes as interesting and informative as possible, it is neither my role nor my gift to be an entertainer. I am happy to give additional assistance outside the classes to students who find themselves struggling with course material, but only to those who have demonstrated the self-discipline to attend all the classes they possibly can.

2. An ICT-free Classroom

Student use of electronic information and communication technologies, including laptop computers, is not allowed in class. Anyone found using one will be asked to either put it away or leave the classroom. (If you have a special learning need, please consult with me.) While I deeply regret the inconvenience for note-taking this becomes, too many students in the past have abused ICTs in the classroom, distracting themselves and their classmates, and disrespecting the educational enterprise. Our advanced technologies have by now created a need to regain the ability to give sustained total attention to a single focus, a life skill now more in need of nurture than the ability to multi-task, though I well realize that banning ICTs does not guarantee it. As partial compensation, I will post the PowerPoint presentations from my lectures in the Shared Documents for this course in your Blackbaud student portal for one week after each topic is completed, for you to download if you wish.

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://www.providencecollege.ca/college/student_life/).

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 document entitled "Academic Dishonesty: The Problem of Plagiarism in Academic Writing" posted under Shared Documents in your Blackbaud student portal.

4. Late Assignments

Assignments will not be accepted after their due date; a grade of zero will be given for that component of the course. Furthermore, I will **not** receive requests for due date 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 I will make a decision if and when your paper is graded. Assigning a late penalty (usually 10% or one letter grade per week) or waiving the zero grade will be considered only in the cases of medical or personal emergencies as detailed in the cover letter. Computer problems, conflicts with co-curricular activities, changes in employment schedules, or competition for library resources do not constitute such personal 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 me 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 me, of medical reasons for having missed the exam. The format of the exam will be at my discretion, with essay questions likely. Students who do not write an exam by at most two weeks after the exam date will receive a grade of zero for that component of the course. Student athletes who are travelling during a scheduled exam period are required to write their exams 'on the road', invigilated by a coach or supervisor, and are responsible to notify me one week prior to the exam date.

G. 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/>

H. Class Schedule

All assigned readings from other than the Macionis and Gerber text (M&G) are posted under Course Readings at www.provsoc.org. I reserve the right to assign additional readings during the course of the term, or to alter the schedule of topics as I see fit.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading Check</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
Sept. 9	Orientation to the Course		
UNIT I: The Foundations of Sociology			
Sept. 14	What is Sociology?		
Sept. 16	Research Methods	M&G ch.1 “The Sociological Perspective”	
Sept. 21	Sociological Theories	M&G ch.2 “Sociological Investigation” Jaschik, Scott. 2007. “When A University Kills Suicide Research.” <i>Inside Higher Education</i> . July 7.	
UNIT II: Society and the Individual			
Sept. 23	Culture and Society	M&G ch.4 “Society”	
Sept. 28	Culture and Society		
Sept. 30	Socialization	M&G ch.3 “Culture” Clark, Robert A. 2009. “Thinking about Culture: Theirs and Ours.” In <i>The Sociological Perspective: A Value-committed Introduction</i> .	
Oct. 5	Socialization		

Oct. 7	Exam #1	
		M&G ch.5 “Socialization” Levin, Jack. 2008. “Confessions of a Soap Opera Addict” and “Sticks and Stones May Break...” in <i>Sociological Snapshots 5: Seeing Social Structure and Change in Everyday Life.</i>
Oct. 12	Human Interaction	Critical Thinking Set A Due
Oct. 14	Human Interaction	
Oct. 19	Groups and Organizations	
		M&G ch.6 “Social Interaction in Everyday Life” Smith, Allen C. and Sherryl Kleinman. 2011. “Managing Emotions in Medical School.” In <i>Inside Social Life: Readings in Sociological Psychology and Microsociology</i> 6 th ed.
Oct. 21	Providence Lectures	
Oct. 26	Groups and Organizations	
Oct. 28	Human Sexuality	
		M&G ch.7 “Groups and Organizations”
Nov. 2	Social Control and Deviance	
		M&G ch.8 “Sexuality and Society”
Nov. 4	Deviance	
Nov. 9	Exam #2	
		M&G ch.9 “Deviance”
Nov. 11	Remembrance Day (classes cancelled)	
UNIT III: Social Differentiation		
Nov. 16	Social Stratification	Critical Thinking Set B due
Nov. 18	Social Stratification	Book Reaction due

Nov. 23	Faculty Forum	
Nov. 25	Gender Inequality	M&G ch.10 “Social Stratification” M&G ch.11 “Social Class in Canada” Hiebert, Dennis. 2003. <i>Scarcity or Abundance?</i>
Nov. 30	Gender Inequality	
Dec. 2	Race and Ethnicity	M&G ch.13 “Gender Stratification”
Dec. 7	Race and Ethnicity	
Dec. 9	Age Relations	M&G ch.14 “Race and Ethnicity” Fournier, Suzanne, and Ernie Crey. 1998. “Killing the Indian in the Child.” In <i>Stolen From Our Embrace</i> .
Dec. 16	Exam #3 Thursday, 11:00am	Critical Thinking Set C due M&G ch.15 “Aging and the Elderly”