

223.12 • Sociology II: Social Institutions and Change (3 hrs.)
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Providence College
Winter Session, 2010
Mondays 2:00 & Thursdays 8:30

SYLLABUS

A. Calendar Description of the Course

An introduction to the scientific study of the structure of society, primarily from the perspectives of macrosociology. The foci of this course include an examination of the status of social institutions, the character of social organization, and the process of social change. Special attention will be given to Canadian society.

Note: The combination of this course and 223.11 Sociology I: Social Structure and Differentiation 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. outline the formation, forms, and functioning of diverse institutions and organizations of society, and how they change;
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 collective 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, J. J., and L. M. Gerber. 2008. *Sociology: Sixth Canadian edition*. Toronto: Pearson Prentice-Hall Canada.

McLaren, Brian D. 2007. *Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crises, and a Revolution of Hope*. Thomas Nelson Publishers.

All assigned collateral readings are available as PDF documents in your Blackbaud student portal under “Shared Documents” for this course.

OPTIONAL READERS:

Macionis, John J., Nijole V. Benokraitis, and Bruce Ravelli, eds. 2007. *Seeing Ourselves: Classic, Contemporary, and Cross-Cultural Readings in Sociology*, 2nd Canadian Ed. Toronto: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Leming, M. R., R. G. DeVries, and B. 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 McLaren, were also used in 223.11 Sociology I: Social Structure and Differentiation, taught in the fall 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. These questions will enable you to demonstrate whether you have completed the assigned reading on time with rudimentary comprehension. They 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 5%)

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 #1

Due Date: February 11

- a) If God would choose an economic system for a society, what would it look like? How would it compare to our economic system? Are there some clues in the Bible (e.g. think of the formation of the nation of Israel)?
- b) If God would choose a political system for a society, what would it look like? How would it compare to our political system? Are there some clues in the Bible (e.g. think of the formation of the nation of Israel)?
- c) Contrast the pluralist, power-elite, and Marxist political-economy models of societal power. Which do you think is the best explanation for what is happening in our society?
- d) Many have observed that while our society seems to be growing less accepting of traditional institutionalized religion, there is, at the same time, a growing interest in spirituality. How would sociology explain this?

Set #2

Due Date: March 22

- a) Though families are clearly changing in post-industrial, postmodern society, on balance, do you think they are becoming weaker or not? What evidence can you cite?

b) In light of the functions of schooling, the social inequality of schooling, and the problems in schooling, are you inclined to think more or less favourably about private Christian schools? Why?

c) Do you think mass media function more to reflect society or shape society? Why?

d) Explain why health is as much a social and spiritual issue as a biological issue.

Set #3

Due Date: April 19

a) Evaluate urbanism as a way of life. Is it good for individuals? For society?

b) In what respects do some recent social movements (e.g. environment, animal rights, gun control) differ from older movements (e.g. civil rights, gender equality)? Which would you prefer?

c) What traits render Canada a “mass society”? Do you consider yourself and most of your friends to be “other-directed”?

d) Is Christianity part of the problem of global stratification, or part of the solution? In what sense?

3. Book Review (15%)

Due Date: March 8

Write a formal book review (i.e. 3rd person, etc. – 4-5 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font) of McLaren’s *Everything Must Change*. Note that your writing is now required to be more “scholarly” than the informal, personal book reaction assigned in Sociology I. Your review should **not** focus on outlining the contents of the book, but rather should demonstrate that you have interacted critically with the material, identifying its strengths and weaknesses while bringing fresh observations or applications to it. Though McLaren is not writing as a sociologist, what sociological topics, themes or concepts are evident in the text? How might sociology and Christianity inform each other?

Your paper will be graded on the quality of its content and composition, with special attention given to your ability to adhere to the expectations of “academic” writing. Help in all aspects of essay writing can be found in the *Providence College Academic Formation Guide* available in the Providence Bookstore. See also the study help posted under Shared Documents in your Blackbaud student

portal entitled “How to Write a Book Review.”

4. Documentary Film Analysis (10%)

Due Date: April 8

View one of the documentary films listed below, and write a 3-page response to it, connecting it to one or more topics/chapters covered in this course. Many of the documentaries are available in the Learning Resource Centre, and others are available from <http://www.freedocumentaries.org/>. You may select an alternative documentary of a social issue relevant to this course that you have not viewed prior to this semester, but only with **prior** approval from me.

What did you find most interesting or provocative in the documentary? Why? How do specific sociological perspectives and/or concepts help to understand the issue? What is your personal, sociologically-informed reaction to the issue(s)? Your response should demonstrate your ability to interact critically with the content of the documentary, identifying its strengths and weaknesses, while bringing fresh observations or applications to it.

The Corporation (2004) **RECOMMENDED**

Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price (2005)

Who Killed the Electric Car? (2006)

Why We Fight (2005)

Refugees of the Blue Planet (2006)

The Fog of War (2004)

Food, Inc. (2009)

A Crude Awakening (2007)

Capitalism: A Love Story (2009)

Noam Chomsky: Rebel Without a Pause (2005)

The World According to Monsanto (2008)

The Garden (2009)

The War on Democracy (2007)

5. Exams (3 x 15%)

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	February 8
Exam #2	March 18
Exam #3	April 19

Any request to reschedule a final exam must be approved by the Academic Committee in accordance with the policy in the College Academic Calendar.

E. Grading Summary

1. Grade Components

Reading Checks	15%
Critical Thinking Questions	15% (3 x 5%)
Book Review	15%
Documentary Analysis	10%
Exams	45% (3 x 15%)

Note: The last date for **Voluntary Withdrawal** from this course is Friday, March 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

In addition to the policies outlined in the *Student Handbook*, the complete academic policies, procedures, and regulations of Providence College can be found online at http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/student_life/.

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. ICTs in Class

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 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 Providence College “Academic Policies, Procedures, and Regulations” found in the Academic Calendar at http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/prospective_students/registrars_office/calendar/, as well as the policy on Academic Dishonesty in the Student Handbook. 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. Collateral Readings

All of the following are posted in your Blackbaud student portal under “Shared Documents” for this course.

Bouma-Prediger, Steven. 2001. *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker. Chapter 3: “Is Christianity to Blame? The Ecological Complaint against Christianity.”

Fraser, David A., and Tony Campolo. 1992. *Sociology Through the Eyes of Faith*. San Francisco: HarperCollins.

Chapter 13: Theological Paradigms.

Chapter 16: The Kingdoms of this World and the Kingdom of God.

Chapter 17: Blending Sociology and Faith.

- Knight, G., and J. Greenberg. 2008. "The Mass Media." In *New Society* 5th ed., edited by R. J. Brym. Toronto: Thomson Nelson.
- Leming, M. R. 2009. "Is Faith a Social Construction?" In *The Sociological Perspective: A Value-Committed Introduction*. edited by M. R. Leming, R. G. DeVries, and B. F. J. Furnish. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.
- Leonard, Annie. 2009. "The Story of Stuff." <http://www.storyofstuff.com/>
- Levine, Jack. 2008. *Sociological Snapshots 5: Seeing Social Structure and Change in Everyday Life*. Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press.
"Let the System Do It! Taking Care of Society's Problems can Hurt."
"Americans are Moving to the Margins of Society: They No Longer Trust Mainstream Solutions."
- Postman, N. 1995. "Virtual Students' Digital Classroom." *The Nation*. October 9.
- Schultze, Q. J. 2002. *Habits of the High-Tech Heart: Living Virtuously in the Information Age*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. Chapter 1: "Discerning Our Informationism."
- Smith, James K.A. 2006. "Students as Consumers: One Prof Weighs In." *Chimes*, 101:8.

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

All assigned readings from other than the Macionis & Gerber text (M & G) are posted in your Blackboard student portal under “Shared Documents” for this course. Full bibliographic references are given in the collateral readings listed above. 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>Assignments Due</u>
Jan. 11	Orientation to the Course		
Unit I: Social Institutions			
Jan. 14	Political Economy		
Jan. 18	Political Economy		
Jan. 21	State and Polity	Levin, <i>Sociological Snapshots</i> M & G ch.16 Leonard, “The Story of Stuff”	
Jan. 25	State and Polity		
Jan. 28	Religion	M & G ch.17 Fraser & Campolo ch.13 “Theological Paradigms”	
Feb. 1	Religion		
Feb. 4	Missio Dei (classes cancelled)		
Feb. 8	Exam #1	M & G ch.19 Leming “Is Faith a Social Construction?”	
Feb. 11	Video: <i>Things I Cannot Change</i>		Critical Thinking Set #1 Due

Feb. 15	Louis Riel Day (classes cancelled)	
Feb. 18	Education	M & G ch.18
Feb. 22	Education	
Feb. 25	Mass Media	M & G ch.20 Postman "Virtual Students' Digital Classroom" Smith "Students as Consumers"
Mar. 1-5	Reading Week (classes cancelled)	
Mar. 8	Mass Media	Book Review Due
Mar. 11	Health and Medicine	Knight "The Mass Media" Schultze "Discerning our Informationism"
Unit II: Macro Social Dynamics		
Mar. 15	Population	M & G ch.21
Mar. 18	Exam #2	
Mar. 22	Urbanization	Critical Thinking Set #2 Due
Mar. 25	Environment	
Mar. 29	Collective Behaviour	M & G ch.22 Bouma-Prediger "Is Christianity to Blame?"
Apr. 1	Social Movements	
Apr. 5	Social Change	M & G ch.23 Fraser & Campolo ch.16 "The Kingdoms of this World"
Apr. 8	Globalization	Documentary Film Analysis Due
Apr. 12	Video: <i>No Logo: Brands, Globalization, and Resistance</i>	M & G ch.24 M & G ch.12
Apr. 15	Christianity and Sociology	Fraser & Campolo ch.17 "Blending Sociology and Faith"
Apr. 21	Exam #3	Critical Thinking Set #3 Due

