

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY
Sociology 2111 FB
Perspectives in Social Thought
Fall 2010

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CLASS TIMES: Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:30-1:00, RB2026

COURSE FORMAT: Lecture-based course with class discussion of material. In order to facilitate a respectful, constructive and conducive learning environment, students are required to turn off all electronic devices during class time, and should not engage in private conversations which are distracting and disruptive to the class.

BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course focuses on the theoretical perspectives of symbolic interactionism and social constructionism. Students will gain an understanding of the significance of these perspectives on social reality and how they allow us to analyze (make sense of) social life, and will learn how to apply them to analyze their own social realities and how they are constructed.

Course goals include the following:

- provide students with the tools to understand how we create and maintain our social worlds through interaction with each other;
- encourage students to bring a critical sociological perspective to bear on understanding their own social worlds; and
- foster the development of crucial academic skills including the ability to think critically, marshal and defend arguments, and clearly express oneself in writing.

EVALUATION:

	<u>Weight</u>
3 in-class tests (Oct. 4, Oct. 25, Nov. 15), each worth 15%	45%
5 conceptual issues papers, 2-3 pp. each (each worth 5%, due Sept. 27, Oct. 18, Nov. 1, Nov. 22, and Dec. 6; details to be discussed in class)	25%
Participation in class discussions	10%
Final exam during end of term exam period	20%

REQUIRED TEXT:

Jodi O'Brien, *The Production of Reality, 4th Edition*. Pine Forge Press, 2006.

DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE:

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Readings to be done BEFORE class</u>
1	Sept 13	Introduction
	Sept 15	What is Real? O'Brien, pp 2-9 Truth, Objectivity, and Agreement, pp 36-39

2	Sept 20-22	Making Distinctions Islands of Meaning, pp 12-22
3	Sept 27	Conceptual paper #1 due
	Sept 27-29	Symbolic Interactionism O'Brien, pp 44-62
4	Oct 4	In-class test #1
	Oct 6	Symbols and Symbolic Meaning O'Brien, pp 64-69 That Powerful Drop, p 84 A Clue to the Nature of Man, pp 84-86
5	Oct 11	Thanksgiving Holiday
	Oct 13	Language O'Brien, pp 69-82 Metaphors We Live By, pp 103-114 Pills and Power Tools, pp 115-119 Recommended: Racism in the English Language, pp 119-126
6	Oct 18	Conceptual paper #2 due
	Oct 18-20	Negotiating Meaning O'Brien, pp 128-139 Becoming a Marijuana User, pp 140-148 The Managed Heart, pp 194-199
7	Oct 25	In-class test #2
	Oct 27	The Social Self O'Brien, pp 236-243 Recommended: The Self, the I, and the Me; Looking-Glass Self, pp 250-257
8	Nov 1	Conceptual paper #3 due
	Nov 1-3	Reference Groups O'Brien, pp 244-248 Reference Groups as Perspectives, pp 257-262 Girls, Media, and the Negotiation of Sexuality, pp 264-276
9	Nov 8-10	Self-Presentation in Interaction Identity Construction and Self-Presentation on Personal Homepages, pp 310-319 Body Troubles, pp 320-332
10	Nov 15	In-class test #3
	Nov 17	Building and Breaching Reality O'Brien, pp 334-345

11	Nov 22	Conceptual paper #4 due
	Nov 22-24	Self-Fulfilling Prophecies O'Brien, pp 345-352 Self-Fulfilling Prophecies, p 382-394 When Belief Creates Reality, pp 395-399
12	Nov 29-Dec 1	Boundaries and Contradictions O'Brien, pp 426-443 Talking Back, pp 507-510
	Dec 6	Conceptual paper # 5 due
	(makeup class for Thanksgiving)	Course Wrap-Up O'Brien, pp 511-518

ASSIGNMENTS

Participation in class discussions:

Class attendance is required. In order to do well in this course, you must attend class on a regular basis. There will be substantial in-class discussions and much of the material covered in lectures will not be found in the reading. In order to participate in class discussions, it is important that you do the readings before coming to class. Readings should be understood as raising issues and offering perspectives, rather than understood as representing the final word on anything. Considerable class time will be devoted to the in-depth discussion and debate of concepts and issues raised in readings.

Obviously you need to attend class to earn your class participation mark, but attendance alone will not allow you to earn marks. Participation in class discussions is a way for you to gain understanding of issues raised in the readings and lectures. Students are expected to contribute to every class discussion. Thus, you need to read and think about the required readings so that you will **be prepared to ask questions and discuss them in class**. Your class participation mark will reflect the degree of thoughtful and critical reflection shown by you as you engage with course material.

In order to facilitate a respectful, constructive and conducive learning environment, students are required to turn off all electronic devices during class time, and should not engage in private conversations which are distracting and disruptive to the class.

Conceptual Issues Papers – questions and detailed instructions posted on Moodle:

In all cases, papers are due by 4:00 p.m. on the due date. Late papers will not be accepted. Each paper must be 2-3 pages long (typed, double-spaced).

In the interests of saving paper, do not print out a hard copy but submit conceptual issues papers via email to BOTH: sdstone@lakeheadu.ca AND vflucky@lakeheadu.ca

For all papers, you are expected, where appropriate, to make reference to readings, class discussions and lectures, in order to substantiate your points. Illustrative examples based on personal experience are also encouraged but be sure to clarify the point you are illustrating.