

## **Sociology 5111 FA/FDE: Problems and Issues in Sociology**

Instructor: Dr. Antony Puddephatt  
Class Location: RB 3006  
Class Time: Monday 2:30pm-5:30pm

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### **Introduction to the Course:**

Broadly, this course explores ontological, epistemological, and practical considerations to do with the production of knowledge, and how this relates to our own field of sociology. We begin by considering reflections on graduate student culture and the theoretical landscape of sociology in Canada and in more global terms. We then explore the sociology of science, beginning with the pioneering work of Robert Merton, and then contemplating modern applications. From here we move on to constructionist (and post-constructionist) accounts of knowledge through Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of scientific habitus and fields, and Sandra Harding's feminist and post-colonial account of science. We continue with a focus on our own field of sociology, and how these broader issues of knowledge production apply to us. Specifically, we consider the structure and dynamics of our discipline in relation to others, the potential of public sociology, and what a sociology unique to Canada might look like. The intention is to provide an overview of the professional field of sociology in the Canadian context, consider the major debates and issues, and encourage you to formulate your own intellectual positions in relation to the various problems raised.

### **Required Texts:**

1. Bruno Latour. 1993. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
2. Pierre Bourdieu. 2004. *Science of Science and Reflexivity*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
3. Sandra Harding. 2008. *Sciences from Below: Feminisms, Postcolonialities, and Modernities*. Duke University Press.

### **Mark Breakdown:**

- |                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Position Essay              | 30% |
| 2. Position Essay Presentation | 10% |
| 3. Seminar Presentation        | 20% |
| 4. Weekly Summaries            | 20% |
| 5. Seminar Participation       | 10% |

### **Explanation of Assignments**

#### **1. Position Essay (30%)**

You are to write a term paper (20-30 pages, double-spaced, times new roman) that focuses on a theme relevant to the course (sociology and politics of knowledge, science, social science). You

might want to focus on a particular theorist, school of thought, or set of ideas, or you may want to map out a debate or controversy in the field. You may or may not want to integrate your own specialty research area into the discussion, to put the abstract arguments into context and provide concrete examples. Either way, it is expected you develop (a) a clearly defined thesis; (b) a good overview of the relevant literature (some reading outside of the class will be necessary to do this); (c) the construction of a sound and logical central argument; and (d) a conclusion that reflects on the contribution of the paper and points to future directions. The topic is intentionally open-ended, to allow you to explore what is of most interest, and develop a strong academic paper in so doing. I encourage you to get thinking about paper topics early, and please check in with me about your ideas as they develop (due end of term, date TBA).

## **2. Position Paper Presentation (10%)**

You are to present your paper as a work in progress during the seminar, with the help of visual aids (e.g. powerpoint slides). The idea is to get experience presenting your own work, as well as encountering and dealing with critical feedback from others. Such feedback from the class is intended to help you improve your arguments and your final paper (December 5).

## **3. Seminar Presentation**

For one week of your choosing, you are responsible for leading discussion on the course readings. Your job is to ensure that the class participates in discussion, and answers questions about the key ideas of the work for that week. Handouts, audio-visual aids, etc are optional. The main thing you will be graded on is the coverage of the major ideas, and your ability to “make the class work” in encouraging active discussion (week of your choice).

## **4. Weekly Summaries**

Each week that you are not presenting, you are expected to hand in a brief summary and critical discussion of the readings, outlining the key ideas, and what you believe are the major contributions and problems of the arguments encountered. This is to be a maximum of 2 single-spaced pages, using 12 pt times new roman (an additional page can be added for references). These are due prior to the start of the seminar that week. I will only count your best 5 summaries for grading, in case you are sick or overly busy with other things some weeks. You may not hand in a summary the week that you are to lead the seminar presentation.

## **5. Participation**

Because this is a seminar class, participation is very important. This grade evaluates your preparedness for class, and your ability to demonstrate knowledge of the key ideas of the readings, and to provide insightful comments/analysis/critique in this regard. The quality of your participation is more important than the quantity (i.e. irrelevant or tangential contributions are not worth much in comparison to those that are more directly “on point”).

## **Course Schedule:**

### **September 12: Welcome and introduction to the Course**

#### *PART 1: The Sociology of Knowledge: Culture, Theory, Structure*

### **September 19: Graduate Culture in Sociology**

1. Puddephatt, Antony, Benjamin Kelly, and Michael Adorjan. 2006. "Unveiling the Cloak of Competence: Cultivating Authenticity in Graduate Sociology," *The American Sociologist*, 37(3): 84-98.
2. Andreou, Chrisoula. 2007. "Understanding Procrastination," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 37(2): 183-193.
3. Wohl, Hannah, and Gary Alan Fine. 2017. "Reading Rites: Teaching Text work in Graduate Education," *The American Sociologist*, 48(2): 215-232.

### **September 26: Theoretical Landscapes in Sociology**

1. Abend, Gabriel. 2008. "The Meaning of Theory," *Sociological Theory*, 26(2): 173-200.
2. Stokes, Allyson and John McLevey. 2016. "From Porter to Bourdieu: The Evolving Speciality Structure of Canadian Sociology, 1966-2014," *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 53(2): 176-202.
3. Akinyede, Oluwatomi and Antony Puddephatt. 2021. "Reflecting on the History of Sociology in Nigeria: Strategies to Enhance Endogenous Theory within a Global Dialogue," *The American Sociologist*, 52(3): 610-637.

#### *Part II: The Sociology of Science*

### **October 3: Robert Merton: Pioneer in the Sociology of Science**

1. Merton, Robert. 1973. "The Puritan Spur to Science," pp 228-253 in *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. D2L
2. Stephen Cole. 2004. "Merton's Contribution to the Sociology of Science," *Social Studies of Science*, 34(6): 829-844.
3. Val Burris. 2004. "The Academic Caste System: Prestige Hierarchies in PhD Exchange Networks," *American Sociological Review*, 69(2): 239-264.

October 10: Study Break!

### **October 17: From Social Constructionism to Non-modernism: Latour's Actor-Networks**

1. Latour, Bruno. 1993. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.

**October 24: Critical and Reflexive Accounts of Science**

1. Bourdieu, Pierre. 2004. *Science of Science and Reflexivity*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

**October 31: Feminist and Postcolonial Accounts I**

1. Sandra Harding. 2008. *Sciences from Below* (chapters TBA)

**November 7: Feminist and Postcolonial Accounts II**

1. Sandra Harding. 2008. *Sciences from Below* (chapters TBA)

*Part III: The Sociology of Sociology***November 14: Disciplinarity and Interdisciplinarity**

1. Andrew Abbott. 2001. *Chaos of Disciplines*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. (chapters 1&3) D2L
2. Jacobs, Jerry. 2013. *In Defense of Disciplines: Interdisciplinarity and Specialization in the Research University*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. (chapters 2&5) D2L

**November 21: For Public Sociology?**

1. Burawoy, Michael. 2005. "For Public Sociology," *American Sociological Review*, 70(1): 4-28.
2. Creese, Gillian, A.T. McLaren, and J. Pulkinghman. 2009. "Re-thinking Burawoy: Reflections from Canadian Feminist Sociology," *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 34(3): 601-622.
3. Puddephatt, Antony and Taylor Price. 2017. "Symbolic Interaction, Public Sociology, and the Potential of Open-Access Scholarly Publishing," *Qualitative Sociology Review*, 13(4): 142-158.

**November 28: Institutional Visions for Canadian Sociology?**

1. Mathews, Ralph. 2014. "Committing Canadian Sociology: Developing a Canadian Sociology and a Sociology of Canada," *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 51(2): 107-127.
2. Puddephatt, Antony and Neil McLaughlin. 2015. "Critical Nexus or Pluralist Discipline? Institutional Ambivalence and the Future of Canadian Sociology," *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 52(3): 310-332.
3. Michalski, Joseph. 2016. "The Epistemological Diversity of Canadian Sociology," *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 41(4): 525-556.

**December 5: Student Paper Presentations and Discussion**

1. Students take turns presenting on their term papers and enjoying critical discussion about their work and ideas
2. We wrap up the seminar, discussing key lessons learned, practical considerations, and ideas for future career development

Thanks for the participating in the class, enjoy the winter break!

## **Lakehead University Regulations:**

### **IX Academic Dishonesty**

The University takes a most serious view of offences against academic honesty such as plagiarism, cheating and impersonation. Penalties for dealing with such offences will be strictly enforced.

A copy of the "Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures" including sections on plagiarism and other forms of misconduct may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar.

The following rules shall govern the treatment of candidates who have been found guilty of attempting to obtain academic credit dishonestly.

(a) The minimum penalty for a candidate found guilty of plagiarism, or of cheating on any part of a course will be a zero for the work concerned.

(b) A candidate found guilty of cheating on a formal examination or a test, or of serious or repeated plagiarism, or of unofficially obtaining a copy of an examination paper before the examination is scheduled to be written, will receive zero for the course and may be expelled from the University.

Students disciplined under the Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures may appeal their case through the Judicial Panel.

Note: "Plagiarism" shall be deemed to include:

1. Plagiarism of ideas as where an idea of an author or speaker is incorporated into the body of an assignment as though it were the writer's idea, i.e. no credit is given the person through referencing or footnoting or endnoting.
2. Plagiarism of words occurs when phrases, sentences, tables or illustrations of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a writer's own, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on the format followed) are present but referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given.
3. Plagiarism of ideas and words as where words and an idea(s) of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a written assignment as though they were the writer's own words and ideas, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on format followed) are present and no referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given.