

TO: Students in "Sociology of the University"
Sociology 3113 SB – 2017 Spring Session
(May 23 – June 12)

DATE: May 2017

FROM: R.W. Nelsen, Professor
Department of Sociology

**SUBJECT: COURSE TEXTS, COURSE DESCRIPTION, A NOTE ON COURSE CONTENT,
COURSE OBJECTIVES, AND EVALUATION (GRADING)**

Textbooks (Available at Lakehead University Bookstore)

Required Textbook

1. Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Laura T. Hamilton. Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015.

Suggested Textbook

2. Steven Johnson. Everything Bad Is Good For You. New York: Penguin, 2006.

OR

3. Clay Chirky. Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations. New York: Penguin, 2008.

Course Description:

Sociology of the University: Academic Gangs, Wealthy Gangs, Techno-Gangs, and Street Gangs. This course will bring together material on four gangs to examine the way in which their activities impact the university. Similarities and differences among the gangs will be highlighted as we look at the behaviour and interaction patterns of each in order to discover more about today's universities and their operations. Attention will be paid to how economic relations structure and connect these groups -- academic gangs as they relate to scholarly disciplines (sociology is one example), wealthy gangs of philanthropists as they fund and direct specific curricula, techno-gangs whose programming and hacker skills have become commonplace in higher education, and street gangs whose certification and work activities most often revolve around the illegal drug trade. Come join us and hopefully you will become more enlightened about the place where you spend many of your certification hours and the edubusiness-edutainment institution whose homework demands take up so much of your "free" time.

Some Suggested Topics for our Learning Agenda

- Education/School as an Institution and a System
- Education as Training and vice-versa
- Connections Between University Schooling and Work as Paid Labour
- Scholarship: What Is It and How Is It Fostered?
- Professors as Role Models
- Professors as “Experts”
- Is There a Connection Between Research and Teaching?
- The Political Orientation of Professors
- Academic Freedom and “Political Correctness”
- The Community (?) of Scholars
- Racialization and Ethnicity at the University
- Indigenous Learning at the University
- Gender and Higher Education
- Sessional Lecturers and Their Concerns
- University Support Staff and Their Concerns
- Student and Parent Concerns and Considerations
- Plagiarism/Cheating: Gaming the System
- “Helicopter” Parents
- The Commuter University, Public Transportation, Parking and the Role of the Automobile in University Life
- Organization of Knowledge at the University: The Academic Disciplines and Beyond
- Professionalism and the University
- History of Development of the University in Canada and the United States
- University as an Agent of Social Change
- Growth of the Corporate University Alongside Fun (Entertainment) Culture: Edubusiness Meets Edutainment
- Branding and Marketing the University
- The Role of Intercollegiate Sports in University Life
- Technological Development, the Mass Media and the University
- Distance Education or Education at a Distance, Distributed Learning: The High-Tech Classroom and the New Mediated Learning
- Some Student-Friendly Suggestions for Professors as Classroom Teachers
- Student-Centered Versus Teacher-Centered Classrooms and Programs
- Consideration of “Town” and “Gown”: The Community and the University
- Alternatives to the Present University System

General Statement Regarding Course Topics and Organization

Most of the topics listed above will be discussed, some in greater detail than others. Also, together we can modify this list with deletions and additions. We shall begin the course with me sharing my particular views and biases and some discussion of your interests. After we agree on our shared interests regarding topics then together we shall work out a flexible organization that brings order to the subject matter under discussion. This course is an ongoing and collaborative process.

Course Objective:

The sole purpose and objective of this course is to make students more aware of how sociological perspectives can help them become critical social analysts of the university as an institution.

Evaluation (Grading):

Students will be evaluated according to how well they achieve the above course objective. Specifics regarding course requirements, student-initiated assignments, evaluation procedures, and any other relevant information we shall discuss as a group on the first day of class, Tuesday, May 23, 2017.

On Plagiarism:

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to the University regulations (see Lakehead University Calendar).