

## Sociology 5111 FA: Problems and Issues in Sociology

Instructor: Dr. Antony Puddephatt  
 Class Location: RB 3027  
 Class Time: Thursday 11:30am-2:30pm

Office: RB 2034  
 Office Hours: Monday 8:30am-10:30am  
 email: [apuddeph@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:apuddeph@lakeheadu.ca)  
 Office phone: 343-8091

### Introduction to the Course:

Broadly, this course explores ontological, epistemological, cultural, and practical considerations to do with the production of knowledge, and how this relates to our own field of Sociology. Part (1) is a sociological reflection of graduate student culture, representing an accessible first week of readings, and perhaps helping us establish our own norms and expectations for the term. Part (2) explores some of the foundational readings in the philosophy and sociology of science. We will read the competing visions of science from Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn, followed by Robert Merton and his constructionist critics. We then consider more critical accounts of science, including Pierre Bourdieu's field theory and Sandra Harding's arguments for a feminist and postcolonial history of science. Part (3) considers the logic and organization of disciplines and the rise of interdisciplinarity, as well as Sociology's place in these dynamics. Part (4) takes the field of sociology itself as its research object, and considers various debates and analyses of its past, present, and future. My hope is you can make use of these analyses to situate your own research projects, begin to think about your orientation to wider ontological, epistemological, and cultural-political issues, and by doing so, better understand your relation to the field.

### Required Texts:

1. Andrew Abbott. 2001. *The Chaos of Disciplines*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
2. Pierre Bourdieu. 2004. *Science of Science and Reflexivity*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
3. Sandra Harding. 1998. *Is Science Multicultural?* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
4. Jerry Jacobs. 2013. *In Defense of Disciplines*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
5. Other readings will either be made available to you via D2L, or will be accessible through the 'sociological abstracts' database of LU library.

### Mark Breakdown:

1. Leading Seminars (x2)	20%
2. Seminar Participation	10%
3. Weekly Commentaries (x6)	30%
4. Book Review	15%
5. Final Essay Assignment	<u>25%</u>
Total = 100%	

## **Explanation of Assignments**

### **1. Leading Seminars (x2 @ 10% each for 20%)**

For two weeks 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 most important ideas, and your ability to “make the class work” in encouraging active discussion.

### **2. Participation (10%)**

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”).

### **3. Weekly Commentaries (x6 @ 5% each for 30%)**

Writing and analytical thinking go hand-in-hand, and tend to develop and improve together. Writing allows us to slow down and better organize our thoughts, presenting them in a more systematic and deliberate way. It also serves as a useful check for us when our thoughts are not as organized, logical, or sensible as we originally thought, and gives us a chance to revise not just our writing but also our thinking. As such, I would like you to practice your writing consistently by handing in weekly commentaries prior to class (late commentaries not accepted). This will also ensure you are well prepared to participate as you will have had a more thoughtful engagement with the readings ahead of time.

The commentaries should cover the key theses and arguments presented, but also critically assess the readings (either positively or negatively). Many of the weeks contain readings that disagree with one another, sometimes quite fundamentally. It is your job to lay out the competing positions and develop your own thoughts on the matter, which may be in line with, or be a departure from, those sketched out in the readings themselves.

The commentaries should be no more than 2 pages, single spaced, with an additional page for references. I will open a section on D2L where you can submit them. They will be graded on your knowledge of the material, the structure and writing, and the thoughtfulness you bring to the discussion yourself. You are expected to follow ASA citation rules.

### **4. Book Review Assignment (15%)**

One of the best ways to dip your toes into publishing is to write a professional book review. Your goal is to find a sociology book published after 2019 and write a review for it. The goal should be to publish this review (more on that later), but obviously that is not required, nor will

this affect your grade. This review should be no more than 5 double spaced pages in length, with an additional page of references. You should use ASA citation method, or the citation method for the specific journal you are aiming for. The point of this exercise is to develop strong professional writing skills while learning about a newly published book, perhaps one that might be helpful in your research area, to boot. **DUE DATE: Feb 25**

### **5. Final Reflexive Essay Assignment (25%)**

Finally, you are expected to develop a short reflexive essay that situates your own research paper or thesis project within some of the various themes encountered in the course. You need not be exhaustive and try to cover everything (indeed, that would probably be a bad idea). Instead, you should draw on selected themes that are especially relevant to situating you as a researcher, and the aims of your research project. While you should not try to cover too many themes, you should also not be overly narrow, limiting your consideration to just one week's readings, for example. The idea is to try and be reflexive about how your project fits into some of the various discussions encountered in class. The structure of the paper might briefly introduce your topic, research questions, and methods of inquiry. Once you have introduced your research project in this way, you can then begin to reflect on it, using some of the themes of the course as a guide. We can discuss this in more detail as the course progresses. However, you might find it useful to think about how your project relates to the weekly readings as we encounter them, so you can start planning some of your ideas for this reflexive exercise early on. The essay should be double-spaced, with times new roman 12 pt font, using ASA format. There is no minimum or maximum page limit for this exercise, but the essays should be organized and presented as efficiently as possible to make a meaningful statement. **DUE DATE: April 20**

### **Course Schedule:**

#### **January 14: Welcome and introduction to the Course!**

#### *PART 1: The Sociology of Graduate Student Culture*

#### **January 21: Graduate Culture, Norms, and Practices**

1. Fine, Gary Alan and Gabrielle Ferrales. 2005. "Sociology as Vocation: Reputations and Group Culture in Graduate School," *The American Sociologist*, 36(2): 57-75.
2. 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.
3. Wohl, Hannah, and Gary Alan Fine. 2017. "Reading Rites: Teaching Textwork in Graduate Education," *The American Sociologist*, 48(2): 215-232.

*PART 2: Contemplating Knowledge Production and Growth:  
Philosophies and Sociologies of Scientific Knowledge*

**January 28: Searching for the Soul of Science: Kuhn vs Popper**

1. Popper, Karl. 1999. "Selections from the Logic of Scientific Discovery," pp 99-119 in Boyd, Gasper and Trout (eds.) *The Philosophy of Science*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
2. Kuhn, Thomas. 1999. "Scientific Revolutions," pp 139-157 in Boyd, Gasper and Trout (eds.) *The Philosophy of Science*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

**February 4: Norms, Counter-norms, and Boundaries of Science**

1. Merton, Robert. 1973. *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. "The Normative Structure of Science," pp 267-280 (D2L)
2. Mitroff, Ian. 1974. "Norms and Counter-Norms in a Select Group of the Apollo Moon Scientists: A Case Study of the Ambivalence of Scientists," *American Sociological Review*, 39: 579-595.
3. Thomas Gieryn. 1983. "Boundary Work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-science," *American Sociological Review*, 48(6): 781-795.

**February 11: A Critical and Reflexive Account of Science**

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

**February 18: Reading Week**

**February 25: A Feminist and Postcolonial Account of Science**

1. Harding, Sandra. 1998. *Is Science Multicultural?* (selected chapters TBA)  
\*\*\*\*\* **BOOK REVIEWS DUE!!** \*\*\*\*\*

*Part 3: The Nature and Dynamics of Disciplines*

**March 4: The Logic of Knowledge Production in Disciplines**

1. Abbott, Andrew. 2001. *The Chaos of Disciplines*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

**March 11: Disciplinarity vs. Interdisciplinarity**

1. Jacobs, Jerry. 2013. *In Defense of Disciplines: Interdisciplinarity and Specialization in the Research University*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.  
(read chapters 2-7 & 10).

*Part 4: The Sociology of Sociology*

**March 18: The Meaning and Politics of Theory**

1. Abend, Gabriel. 2008. "The Meaning of Theory," *Sociological Theory*, 26(2): 173-200.
2. Selg, Peeter. 2013. "The Politics of Theory and the Constitution of Meaning," *Sociological Theory*, 31(1): 1-23.
3. 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.

**March 25: Public or Professional 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. Van den Berg, Axel. 2014. "Public Sociology, Professional Sociology, and Democracy," pp 53-73 in A. Hanemaayer and C.J. Schneider (eds.) *The Public Sociology Debate: Ethics and Engagement*. UBC Press. (D2L)

**April 1: Reflections on 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.

Thanks for participating!

# Academic Dishonesty Regulations

**Effective May 1, 2019** the Student Code of Conduct - Academic Integrity, Student Code of Conduct - Non-Academic, and Student Code of Conduct - Appeal Policy, has replaced the Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures.

## 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.

Students disciplined under the [Student Code of Conduct - Academic Integrity](#) may appeal their case through the Judicial Panel.

*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 end noting.
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 end noting 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 end noting is given.

For more information, see the [University Calendar](#)