

Sociology 5111 FA: Problems and Issues in Sociology

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

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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. To accomplish this, we spend the first half of the term exploring 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, look at the pioneering work of Robert Merton, and then consider the rise of the social constructionist approach to scientific knowledge as a response to these ideas. We then consider critical responses to social constructionist accounts from Bruno Latour's non-modernism, feminist/postcolonial standpoint theories, and Pierre Bourdieu's field theory. We then turn our attention to a reflexive examination of Sociology, its culture and hierarchy, and the ways in which it represents a form of expertise (Harry Collins and Robert Evans), or a set of craft practices (C Wright Mills and Bob Alford). We conclude the course by reading contemporary debates in the discipline, including the role of disciplines in the organization of knowledge (Jerry Jacobs), calls for a more public sociology (Burawoy et al), and the institutional place and vision for Canadian sociology in the wider global context (various authors).

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. 1998. *Is Science Multicultural?* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
4. Harry Collins and Robert Evans. 2007. *Re-thinking Expertise*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
5. Jerry Jacobs. 2013. *In Defense of Disciplines*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Mark Breakdown:

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|---------------------|-----|
| 1. Short Essays (2) | 60% |
| 2. Leading Seminar | 20% |
| 3. Participation | 20% |

Explanation of Assignments

1. Short Essay Papers

I will ask you to write two short (maximum 10 pages, double-spaced, 12 point times new roman + references) papers to respond to a question or set of questions I raise about the readings over a

series of weeks. These papers should be well written, well structured, and demonstrate your knowledge of the readings as well as your ability to evaluate the ideas and compare and contrast them in critical ways. Deadlines will be November 2nd (more later on this) and then December 15, respectively. The questions I ask you to respond to will be provided as the term progresses.

2. Seminar Presentations

For one week, you are responsible for leading discussion on the course readings. *September 16, November 4, and November 18 are off limits.* 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. Key to this is having a strong command of the key ideas yourself, in preparing.

3. 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 9: Welcome and introduction to the Course

PART 1: The Sociology of Science/Scientific Knowledge

September 16: Searching for the Soul of Science: Kuhn and 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.

September 23: Robert Merton: Pioneer in the Sociology of Science

1. Merton, Robert. 1973. *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
“The Puritan Spur to Science,” pp 228-253 (D2L)
“The Normative Structure of Science,” pp 267-280 (D2L)
“The Mathew Effect in Science” pp 439-459 (D2L)

September 30: The Constructionist Sociology of Science

1. 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.
2. David Bloor. 1991. "The Strong Programme in the Sociology of Science," pp 7-23 in D. Bloor's *Knowledge and Social Imagery, 2nd Edition*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. (D2L)
3. Thomas Gieryn. 1983. "Boundary Work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-science," *American Sociological Review*, 48(6): 781-795.

October 7: 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 14: Reading Week!**October 21: Critical and Reflexive Accounts of Science**

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

October 28: Feminist and Postcolonial Accounts

1. Sandra Harding. 1998. *Is Science Multicultural?* (selected chapters TBA)

*PART 1.5: Interlude/Space for Reflection***November 4: Writing Workshop + First Draft Paper Review**

1. Bring your first term papers along, as developed as they are
2. We will discuss how to improve structure and writing, and then rotate papers for editorial purposes.
3. Your final draft will be due the following week (November 11)

*PART 2: The Sociology of Sociology***November 11: What is Expertise?**

1. Harry Collins and Robert Evans. 2007. *Re-thinking Expertise*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
2. First term paper due!

November 18: Sociology as Craft

1. Mills, C Wright. 1959. "Appendix: On Intellectual Craftsmanship," pp 195-226 in C.W. Mills' *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford University Press. (D2L)
2. Alford, Robert. 1998. Selection (p 11-53) from *The Craft of Inquiry: Theories, Methods, Evidence*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. (D2L) 3
3. Reflections on our own MA projects in light of research design ideas from above

November 25: Do we still need Disciplines?

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).

December 2: New 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. Carroll, William. 2013. "Discipline, Field, Nexus: Revisioning Sociology," *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 50(1): 1-26.
3. 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.

December 15: Final papers due!

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.