

The University of British Columbia
Sociology 310A 921: Canadian Society – Course Syllabus

Term 2: Summer 2016, July 4 th to August 11 th	Credits: 3
Time: Monday/Wednesday: 3:00-6:00 pm Room: TBA	Prerequisites: Sociology 100
Instructor: Dr. Donna Lester-Smith Contact: E: donnals.ubc@gmail.com TA:	Texts: 1) Academic articles listed in this syllabus 2) Lebaron, M. and Venashri, P. (2006). <i>Conflict across Cultures: A Unique Experience of Bridging Differences</i> .

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores the social organization of contemporary Canadian society and its relationships between its social institutions and practices with attention to historical, cultural, economical, media, family, and other political contexts. We will examine many of the central social processes shaping Canadian society today, including colonialism, Indigeneity, multiculturalism, and globalization restructuring. Throughout the course we will link contemporary trends with multiple contexts to expose the dynamics of social chasms, competing citizenship claims, social movements, inequities, and other pressures continuing to reshape Canada. Drawing on sociological theories and practices we will also consider how power, privilege, and interculture all intersect along difference axes, particularly ethnicity, racialization, class, and gender.

LEARNING GOALS:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the main social processes organizing Canadian society and develop an ability to see Canadian society from a critical perspective
- Identify important sociological factors in processes affecting societal communities and environments from their ideological, institutional, and interpersonal stances
- Apply critical thinking and self-reflective skills to the analysis of historical, present-day, and future societal communities of practice (i.e. urban, rural, sub-communities within communities)
- Recognize and appraise the various ways that perceptions, experiences, meanings, and culture impact one's understandings and expectations of the societal communities in which we live and may seek to transform
- Develop a critical perspective that links course material with everyday current affairs
- Strengthen the ability to communicate through sociologically-based analysis in writing

COURSE FORMAT:

Students learn in a variety of ways such as through the exchange of ideas and critical thinking. It is said that students retain 10% of what they read; 20% of what they hear; 30% of what they see; 50% of what they see and hear; 70% of what they say; and, 90% of that they say as they do something. Therefore, interaction between students, along with the instructor, is directed at promoting strong learning and critical thinking skills. Critical thinking is the process of independent thinking, not just memorizing or reiterating what someone else has written or said about a topic. It involves more than just "reporting." Critical thinking means evaluating and critiquing information and pondering how different ideas fit together. Students are expected to share ideas and opinions in class and via assignments posted on Blackboard. The format of this course is based on the premise that students learn from each other. Lectures do not promote active learning, and will be used sparingly, and as guidance. Thus, the success of class depends on students as much as the instructor. Students are encouraged to make the most of their learning experience!

COURSE EVALUATIONS and ASSIGNMENT DETAILS:

See [Connect](http://connect.ubc.ca) (<http://connect.ubc.ca>) for all necessary assignment details.

All assignment marks in this class are based on adding up to 100 percentage points, and are divided as follows:

1. Class and Online Engagement (15%)
2. Critical Reading Analysis (5%)
2. Critical Reflections (3 x 15% = 45%)
3. Research Paper (35%)

1. Class and Online Engagement (15%): Class sessions and online discussions through Connect will provide students ample opportunity to actively participate through asking questions and making thoughtful contributions. Attentiveness is critical to student learning; effective preparation for class includes completing a thorough reading of the assigned texts, taking note of questions you have about the readings, and offering examples that could illustrate the concepts being articulated. You are encouraged to engage in classroom learning activities at all times. (i.e. group/class discussions, thoughtful discourse, critiquing research, sharing resources, and responding to online discussions). Engagement can also include sharing your ideas about course material with the instructor or TAs, which you can do by forwarding different news and popular culture texts that exemplify and illustrate the themes of the course. Those who do not prepare, attend, and participate will receive a lower engagement mark for this course.

2. Critical Reading Analysis (5%): Student will each sign-up for one specific class reading and then be responsible for sending to the Instructor, within two days before class, 5 thoughtful and discussion-provoking questions (i.e. perhaps who, what, where, when, why, how, and macro or macro sociological considerations) about their chosen article or chapter—that may then be discussed among all students during class.

3. Critical Reflections (40%): Each student will submit a total of 4 online critical reflections (worth 10% each) on Connect. These assignments (each 300-500 words and one or more paragraphs in length) will be your individual, critically reflective responses at various points throughout the course. This assignment is not intended to be a summary of the readings. It is intended as a series of short ‘thought pieces’ that convey how you are thinking about the material, thoughts about specific points or issues raised in one or more class readings. The reflective question for each of the 4 entries is: “What information from the previous few classes (chapter/article readings, class discussions, visiting guests, and/or film clips) has influenced you the most; in what ways; and, for what reasons?” Submission will be evaluated on your ability to use critical, sociological thinking and reflective skills as you examine a topic that interests you and is relevant to course content. This assessment includes your ability to recognize and appraise the various ways that sociological perceptions, experiences, and meanings impact your understanding of Canadian Society.

4. Newspaper Article-based Research Paper (35%): This assignment has 2 parts to it. **Part A (15%)** is intended to help you plan for your final paper assignment tied to a current newspaper article by organizing your thoughts, topical themes, and helpful resources. **Part B (20%)** will be your complete academic Research paper.

All assignments are graded on: (1) Demonstration of critical thinking; (2) Content and course linkage/relevancy; (3) Organization; (4) Style; and, (5) Creativity. Assignments may be submitted before their due dates; however, late submissions will be penalized .5 of 1 mark per day late up to 4 days. Assignments handed in 5 days or more late, with no prior communication with the Instructor, will receive a mark of 0.

Some Fundamentals for Active Reading to Consider:

- What is the author’s main argument?
- How does the author go about making and defending this argument?
- Develop a critical perspective that links course material with everyday current affairs
- What tone and style does the author use
- What literature or theoretical traditions do they draw from, build upon, and criticize?
- What are the readings’ strengths and shortcomings?
- How might this topic, study, or argument be approached differently?
- How does it compare with previous readings and discussions in the class?