**SOCIOLOGY 2RR3**  
**Case Studies of Inequality: The Sociology of Worth**  
**Fall 2019**

Professor Chong  
Monday 2:30 – 4:20pm  
LR Wilson Building, Room 1055  

Office: KTH-609 Ext.: 23607  
Email: chong@mcmaster.ca  

Office Hours: Fridays 9am – 11am (by appointment only)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**  
This course investigates social inequality through the lens of the sociology of worth. In broad terms, the sociology of worth is concerned with how social entities are defined or assessed as valuable or worthy. How we define and assess worth is crucial for the study of inequality because important social resources such as power, authority, and money are often distributed to those we label as most ‘deserving or ‘worthy’ of these profits. Hence, evaluation processes and social definitions of worth are a fundamental prerequisite for stratification. Each week, students will be introduced to new theoretical concerns that intersect the sociology of worth and inequality through lecture materials. During tutorials, students will then work with their peers and tutorial leaders to critically examine how such theoretical concepts apply to specific empirical case studies specifically tailored to each week’s overarching theme. It is thus crucial for anyone student taking this course to attend both the lecture and tutorial components as well as to complete all reading assignments.

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**  
- critically reflect upon and explain how conceptions and measure of worth are constructed and mediated to aid in the understanding of how inequality gets reproduced;  
- apply theories and concepts from the sociology of worth to empirical case studies of inequality drawn from multiple arenas of social life; and  
- practice skills required for compiling a literature review according to conventional academic standards (e.g., accessing sources, assessing their scholarly value, and identifying analytical thematics).

**Texts**  
Available through McMaster libraries and Avenue to Learn.

**Expectations and Evaluation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 x In-Class Tests</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Multiple choice and short essay)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inequality Briefs</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Schedule

Every attempt will be made to follow this schedule, but it is subject to change at Professor's discretion.

Session 1 (09/04): General Introduction to Soc Worth
Session 2 (09/09): What can the sociology of worth tell us about inequality?
Session 3 (09/16): The Power of Thinking Categorically
Session 4 (09/23): The Many Dimensions of Worth and Inequality
Session 5 (09/30): Measuring Merit
Session 6 (10/07): Test #1 (no tutorials)
Session 7 (10/14): Mid Term Recess
Session 8 (10/21): Inequality as a Response to Grappling with Uncertainty
Session 9 (10/28): Changing Worth and Values in the New Economy
Session 10 (11/04): What am I worth?
Session 11 (11/11): Review
Session 12 (11/18): In-Class Test #2
Session 13 (11/25): Culminating Activity Case Studies of Inequality I
Session 14 (12/2): Culminating Activity Case Studies of Inequality II

POLICIES ABOUT ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:
1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

In this course we will be using turnitin.com to reveal plagiarism. Students will be required to submit their work electronically and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

DEPARTMENTAL/UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Do NOT fax assignments. Please see your instructor for the most appropriate way to submit assignments.

The Sociology staff do NOT date-stamp assignments, nor do they monitor the submission or return of papers.

The McMaster Student Absence Form (http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/) is a self reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences that last up to 3 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work. Please note, this tool cannot be used during any final examination period.

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”. Please note these regulations have changed beginning Fall 2015. If you have any questions about the MSAF, please contact your Associate Dean’s office.

You may submit a maximum of 1 Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation.

If you are absent more than 3 days, exceed 1 request per term, or are absent for a reason other than medical, you MUST visit your Associate Dean’s Office (Faculty Office). You may be required to provide supporting documentation.

This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.

Students should check the web, the white board and the Undergraduate Bulletin board outside the Sociology office (KTH-627) for notices pertaining to Sociology classes or departmental business (eg. class scheduling information, location of mailboxes and offices, tutorial information, class cancellations, TA job postings, etc.).

Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites Sessionly during the term and to note any changes.
It is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

**Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)**
The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student’s religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict. In such cases, the University will provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code. Please review the RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences about how to request accommodation.

**FAQs**

**When are your office hours?**

Dr. Chong’s office hours are by appointment Friday from 9am – 11am.

The TA’s office hours are TBD

**How do I book office hours?**

Dr. Chong’s office hours can be booked by email at chong@mcmaster.ca

The TA’s office hours can be booked via email at TBD

**What is your email policy?**

Dr. Chong will reply to emails within 24 hours (not including weekends). If you ask a question that is answered on the syllabus, you may not receive a reply at all.

Please ensure to put the course code 2RR3 into the subject line otherwise your email may end up in spam.

**I’m unhappy with my mark, is there a make up assignment?**

No. While it is your right as a student to have access to make up tests when illness or other extenuating circumstances, there is no such provision for assignments.

**I believe there has been an error in my mark, what can I do?**

The TA handles the marking for the course. If you feel there has been an error in the marks you have received, you should prepare a 1-2 page written document that explains (1) the mark you received, (2) any perceived error, (3) what you think is the correct mark and (4) a clear justification for why this is the case. If Dr. Chong judges your claim to have merit, then the piece in question will be re-evaluated by the Professor as a second reader. However, this second evaluation will be recognized as the final mark including if the second reader deems that the original mark should be decreased based on the appropriate academic standards.