SOCIOLOGY 2RR3
Case Studies of Inequality
Summer: May 1- June 16, 2017

Summer 2017  Instructor: Professor Chong
Date and Time: T&R 1-4pm  Office: KTH-609 Ext.: 23607
Location: LRW 1055  Email: chong@mcmaster.ca

Office Hours: Tuesdays 4-5pm
Book at tinyurl.com/profchong

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course explores how inequality is reproduced in the field of art and culture. Students will be introduced to conceptual tools for examining how the everyday production and consumption of cultural goods reflects and reinforces different forms of inequality. Although this course uses the creative field as a case study for examining inequality, a broad range of sociological phenomena are addressed including meaning-making, organizational analysis, political economy, classification systems, and identity.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES
• Students will gain a firm grounding in the basic tools and debates characterizing contemporary work in the sociology of art and culture
• Students will learn how to analyze a single cultural phenomena from multiple theoretical perspectives and critically evaluate the merits and failings of various sociological frameworks
• Students will be able to make connections between micro and meso-levels of organization through critical analysis of their own engagement in contemporary culture

Text

Expectations and Evaluation:

2 x In-Class Tests 60%
(Multiple choice and short essay)

In-Class Assignments/Participation 35%

Peer Evaluation 5%
Course Schedule

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

Session 1 (May 2): Introduction
No reading assigned

Session 2 (May 4): Setting the Agenda – What can we learn about inequality from studying culture?

Session 3 (May 9): Functionalist Perspectives on Culture and Inequality
Chapter 2: Friday Night Lights – A Functionalist Approach to Popular Culture (Grazian)

Session 4 (May 11): Critical Perspectives on Culture and Inequality
Chapter 3: Monsters, Inc. – A Critical Approach to Popular Culture (Grazian)

Session 5 (May 16): Symbolic Interactionist Perspectives on Culture and Inequality
Chapter 4: Something to Talk about – Interaction Approach to Popular Culture (Grazian)

Session 6 (May 18): Reviewing our Conceptual Toolkit
No assigned Reading

SESSION 7 (MAY 23): TEST #1

Session 8 (May 25): Art as a Social Activity
Chapter 5: Bright Lights, Big City – Creating Popular Culture (Grazian)

Session 9 (May 30): Understanding The Business of Culture
Chapter 6: Risky Business – How the Media and Culture Industries Work (Grazian)

Session 10 (June 1): What’s good/bad? What’s highbrow/lowlbrow? On Cultural Hierarchy.
Chapter 7: The Rules of the Game – Cultural Consumption and Social Class in America: pgs 134-137 and 145-149. (Grazian)

Session 11 (June 6): How Taste Stratifies in Action

Chapter 7: The Rules of the Game – Cultural Consumption and Social Class in America: pgs 140-145 (Grazian)


Session 12 (June 8): You are what you consume

Chapter 8: The Searchers – Audiences and the Quest for Meaning in Popular Culture (Grazian)

Session 13 (June 13): Culture and Inequality Review
No Assigned Readings

Session 14 (June 16): TEST #2

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 (e.g. 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.