Course Description:

This course explores current issues connected to the sociology of inequality in Canada and abroad. The course approaches issues from a critical theory perspective, where students are asked to develop an understanding of social issues through questioning normative ideas about power, inequality, class, race, ethnicity, and gender. Theoretical concepts will be provided followed with case studies of inequality. We will attempt to address the following questions: What is power? What is inequality? How is inequality measured? What are contemporary issues of inequality in Canada and abroad?

Learning Outcomes:

This course addresses three University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (see http://cll.mcmaster.ca/COU/degree/undergraduate.html). First, sociological theories are diverse in their claims and in their focus. Gaining knowledge of these diverse theories, will expand the student’s depth and breadth of knowledge. Second, there is no single sociological theory accepted as the final or best approach. As such, this course requires that students consider and critically evaluate competing theoretical approaches. In so doing, students will gain an awareness of limits of knowledge. Finally, this course will encourage students to discuss theoretical issues in class and grading is based on essay exams. In each case, the student’s communication skills will be challenged and enhanced.”

Accordingly, the goals of this course are three dimensional; the first goal is to stimulate intellectual curiosity of students about sociology and for this course, on questions related to inequality. In this course, students will learn how binary of inclusion/exclusion are tied to macro forces. Students will acquire a better understanding of various strategies of social control that deflect attention away from contradictions in prevailing order. The second goal is to ground students' understanding in contemporary examples of inequality in Canada. The third goal is to facilitate student identification of various perspectives on inequality, this includes: identity, class, gender and race. To summarize, after taking this course, students will
develop "critical analysis" of how inequality manifests in Canada. This course postulates the following questions:

1) What are the sociological conditions in Canada that produce inequality?
2) Who is impacted by inequality?
3) Can inequality be challenged?
4) How is inequality justified?

After completing this course, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of inequality in Canada and abroad. Students will be able to highlight controversies surrounding multiculturalism and will be able to provide a conceptual and methodological assessment of various explanations of inequality.

**Required course materials:**

**One course reading kit,** consisting of selected text chapters, essays and articles from various sources. The course pack is available at the McMaster bookstore.

**Avenue to Learn:**

All lecture notes and corresponding course material will be posted on avenue to learn.

**Grading and Evaluation:**

2 **Tests** in-class, which taken in isolation are worth 20% each, but combined amount to 40% of your grade. The test is comprised of both multiple choice and written-answer type questions. Multiple choice and short answer will be weighed equally. All questions are based on course material. All tests are held during class time slots - There is no final exam in this course.

2 **Summaries (40%) due in class**

Each summary is worth 20%, but students are required to write two for a total of 40% of your overall grade. Summaries of the readings are meant to be a small assignment consisting of 3 pages max. Students may select a reading and write a summary on it.

Students can only submit a summary for the day that the reading is due. Students cannot write a summary for a reading that has already been addressed in class or that will be covered. Writing a summary consists of extracting salient ideas from the text. In the summary students are encouraged to engage with the text which means that students should account for the basis of the arguments presented in the reading. A critical evaluation of the overall claims made is encouraged.
Tutorial

20% is allotted to tutorial engagement. Students are required to find news clips about contemporary issues linked with inequality and to bring them to tutorial. In tutorial, such topics will be discussed. The aim of this approach is to deepen the perspectives being taught in the course with the social condition. Other details regarding the tutorial requirements shall be taken up in class the first day.

Schedule of lectures and required readings

Jan 10, 2019 Introduction to course and explanation of course outline

Jan 14, 2019 TBA Tutorial


Jan 21, 2019, Discuss perspectives on class power


Jan 28, 2019, Discuss the content and relevance of the “sociological imagination”


Feb 4, 2019, discuss inequality and poverty

Feb 7, 2019 Documentary on “Mainstream Media”

Feb 11, 2019, discuss salient issues in the documentary

Feb 14, 2019, Test 1 will be administered in class

Feb 18, 2019, No class, academic recess

Feb 21, 2019, No class, academic recess

Feb 25, 2019, recap of course content hitherto


March 4, discuss issues linked to gender inequality

March 11, 2019, discuss race and inequality


March 18, 2019 Discuss issues in health care

March 21, 2019 Documentary on mental health

March 25, 2019 discuss issues related to mental health

March 28, 2019 Test 2 will be administered

April 1, 2019 TBA


April 8, 2019 TBA

Aug 2, 2016 Test Review

Aug, 4. 2016 Test 2

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.
DEPARTMENTAL/UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Do NOT email 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.

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 weekly 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.