

**SOCIOLOGY 2GG3**  
**Sociology of Education**

Fall 2019	
<b>Day and Time of Classes:</b>	Instructor: Dr. Karen Robson
Mondays 12:30pm-2:20pm	klrobson@mcmaster.ca
Thursdays 1:30pm-2:20pm	<b>Office hours:</b>
	Mondays after class (2.30 to 3.30pm) in KTH 633
Class Location: T13 127	

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The sociology of education examines the social construction of formal institutions of learning. Indeed, we are learning about this topic within a formal institution of learning.

We begin by examining how different aspects of the sociology of education are interspersed in our everyday lived experiences. Education-related issues are often the stuff of media stories and we will take the opportunity to unpack these stories into the various components of this sub-discipline. For example, we will ask how certain situations came into being through historical processes, the underlying sets of assumptions held by key players, how this topic can be understood through different theoretical lenses, and how the processes under consideration may further contribute to social structures around us.

In this course, we examine many elements related to the sociology of education. Sociological theories that are pertinent to the sociology of education are considered early in the course to give us grounding from which to understand various educational processes and outcomes. We cannot ignore the history of the education system in Canada (and how it was shaped through traditions from England and beyond), and thus we also consider how historical processes have given us a strong discourse around what education is “meant to be.” Similarly, we consider how curriculum has been socially constructed over time and what the idea product of education is understood to be by various stakeholders.

We also consider how school is a major force of socialization and the ramifications of such processes. We also explore how race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, dis/ability, citizenship, place of birth and other markers influence students’ educational trajectories and overall life chances. From these socialization experiences emerge structural and social inequalities in school settings and beyond, of which we are asked to think of the wider implications of such processes.

Schooling is often regarded as a training process that leads to employment, and we will also explore the stages of emerging to adulthood, of which gainful employment is but one major step. We consider the various pathways that youth take and the social value applied to each. Given that our education process exists within the larger context of the societies (and world) in which we live, current challenges (i.e. economic, political, and social) to current educational practice in Canada and beyond will also be questioned.

### **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

This course addresses three University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (see, [University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations](#)).

1. This course encourages students to critically examine how the process of education is socially constructed and the larger social ramifications of such processes and by doing so, expands the student's *depth and breadth of knowledge*;
2. This course requires students to critically examine how various characteristics held by individuals impact upon their educational opportunities and outcomes, requiring that students *consider and critically evaluate competing theoretical approaches* and sources of evidence;
3. The linkage to current events requires the *application of knowledge* from the textbook and journal articles to real life social processes around schooling, educational systems, and pedagogical issues.

### **Course Text / Readings**

#### **Required textbook**

Robson, Karen (2013) *Sociology of Education in Canada. First Edition*. Pearson Education.  
\*\*\*THIS BOOK IS DISTRIBUTED BY THE PROFESSOR AS AN ELECTRONIC VERSION  
FREE OF CHARGE\*\*\*

#### **Additional required readings:**

All other readings are accessible through McMaster e-resources. You will receive Avenue to Learn messages on the citation information for additional required readings.

Additional readings, relevant news items, reports, etc. will be regularly posted on the course Avenue to Learn site.

## OUTLINE

Date	Notes	Required Reading
September 10 (M)	Introduction (Quiz 1 – syllabus and course content – worth 5%)	Chapter 1
September 17 (M)	Theory (Quiz 2 )	Chapter 2
September 24 (M)	Historical Overview of Education in Canada (Quiz 3)	Chapter 3
October 7 (M)	Test 1 (Chapters 1 to 3)	(exam open over 48 hr period)
October 14	READING WEEK	
October 21 (M)	Structure of Education (Quiz 4)	Chapter 4
October 28 (M)	Role of Curriculum (Quiz 5)	Chapter 5
November 4 (M)	Socialization and the Schooling Process (Quiz 6)	Chapter 6
November 11 (M)	Test 2 (Chapters 4 to 6)	(exam open over 48 hr period)
November 18 (M)	Structural and Social Inequalities in Schooling (Quiz 7)	Chapter 7
November 25 (M)	School-to-Work Transitions (Quiz 8)	Chapter 8
December 2 (M)	Challenges to Educational Practice (Quiz 9)	Chapter 9
December 6	Final Exam (Chapters 7 to 9)	(exam open over 48 hr period)

## METHOD OF EVALUATION

Test 1	--25%
Test 2	--25%
Test 3	--27.5%
Weekly Reading Quizzes (9 x 2.5%)	--22.5%
-all quizzes close at 12pm on Monday before lecture	
-there are no make-up quizzes	
-there is an extra credit assignment in late-October where you can make-up 2.5%	

Tests: All tests are noncumulative and focus on content from the readings and lecture. All tests focus on application of course concepts to real life examples from current events. As such, lecture attendance is crucial to success in the course.

Each exam consists of three short answers (approximately 250 to 300 words each) that incorporate the application of key concepts from the chapters to current events in education.

Quizzes: Are posted on Avenue and must be completed before Monday lecture,

#### 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. **YOU ARE NOT PERMITTED TO WORK TOGETHER ON ONLINE QUIZZES OR EXAMS.**
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations. Exam answers are checked for plagiarism on Turnitin.

#### **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This course addresses three University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (see <http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/COU/degree/undergraduate.html>).

First, sociological research methods are diverse in their claims and in their focus. Gaining knowledge of these diverse approaches will expand the student's depth and breadth of knowledge. Second, there is no single sociological research method that is accepted as the final or best approach. As such, this course requires that students consider and critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. In so doing, students will gain an awareness of how different forms of knowledge and evidence are created. Finally, this course requires students to apply the different social research methods to real life examples, with the application of these different approaches being emphasized throughout the course.

#### **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.

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.