

	<p><b>SOCIOLOGY 4W03: SOCIAL PROBLEMS</b></p> <p><b>DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY</b></p> <p><b>MCMASTER UNIVERSITY</b></p> <p><b>FALL 2016</b></p>
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<p>Instructor: Dr. James (Jamie) Baker  E-mail: bakerj12@mcmaster.ca (use <b>SOC4W03</b> in subject line)  Office Location: 623</p>	<p>Class Times: Thursday 8:30-11:20 AM  Office Hours: Th 2:30-3:30; By appointment  Classroom: UH101</p>
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**TEXTBOOK:**

Tepperman, Lorne & Josh Curtis. 2016. *Social Problems: A Canadian Perspective*. Fourth Edition. Toronto: Oxford University Press. \$116.95 - in the McMaster Bookstore. One copy of the text will be available on **2 hour** reserve at the Mills Library (Reserve area, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor).

Course information, grades, etc. can be found on **Avenue2Learn** - <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>. Please login and check the course regularly as it provides important information regarding the course.

<u>EVALUATION</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>	<u>DUE DATE</u>
POSITION PAPERS	35%	THROUGHOUT SEMESTER Best 5/7 (7% each)
FINAL PAPER	45%	Wednesday, December 7
PARTICIPATION	20%	Throughout semester

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Poverty, racism, drug addiction, and unemployment are a few of the many social problems facing Canada in the twenty-first century. In this course, emphasis will be on analyzing, discussing, and debating some of the various social challenges that exist within contemporary Canadian society. The course is organized around lectures, videos, assigned readings, and discussions. Class discussion is encouraged and expected. **Attendance will be taken.**

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

This course is designed to meet three key University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations. First, by engaging in different concepts and theoretical approaches, students will expand the breadth and depth of their knowledge as it relates to social problems. Second, by critically engaging topic areas through the position papers and final paper, students will have the opportunity to apply knowledge based on sound judgements in accordance with a chosen theory; and, third, by engaging in the practice of writing and participating in the in-class discussions, students will have the opportunity to enhance their written and oral communication skills.

**COURSE OVERVIEW:\*\***

WEEK 1: September 8	COURSE OVERVIEW Chapter 1: What are social problems?
WEEK 2: September 15	Chapter 2: Class, Poverty, and Economic Inequality Song Choices: Another Day in Paradise - Phil Collins Fast Car - Tracy Chapman The Message - Grand Master Flash The Boxer - Simon and Garfunkel In the Ghetto - Elvis Presley
WEEK 3: September 22	Chapter 3: Race and Ethnic Relations Song Choices: Cop Killer - Body Count Birmingham Sunday - Joan Baez Changes - 2PAC Fuck the Police - NWA Beds are Burning - Midnight Oil
WEEK 4: September 29	Chapter 4: Gender Relations Song Choices: The Pill - Loretta Lynn Harper Valley PTA - Jeannie Riley A Boy Named Sue - Johnny Cash The Cure - Boys Don't Cry I am Woman - Helen Reddy
WEEK 5: October 6 <b>NO CLASS: Position paper must be submitted to A2L no later than 11 am, Thursday October 6, 2016</b>	Chapter 11: Families (Independent Study Week) Song Choices: No Son of Mine - Genesis Runaway Train - Soul Asylum Cats in the Cradle - Harry Chapin Luka - Suzanne Vega Sonny's Dream - Ron Hynes
WEEK 6: October 13	<b>MIDTERM BREAK</b>
WEEK 7: October 20	Chapter 5: Sexualities Song Choices: Small Town Boy - Bronski Beat Football Song - Matt Fishel Take Me To Church - Hoozer Same Love - Macklemore I Want To Break Free - Queen

WEEK 8: October 27	Chapter 7: Crime and Violence Song Choices: Pumped Up Kicks - Foster the People Gangsta's Paradise - Coolio Jeremy - Pearl Jam Paper Planes - MIA Kids With Guns - Lupe Fiasco
WEEK 9: November 3	Chapter 13: Schools Song Choices: Another Brick in the Wall Part 2 - Pink Floyd School's Out - Alice Cooper Don't Stand So Close to Me - The Police High School Confidential - Rough Trade Snow White - Streetheart
WEEK 10: November 10	Chapter 10: War and Terrorism Song Choices: Fortunate Son - CCR Eve of Destruction - Barry McGuire War Pigs - Black Sabbath Zombie - Cranberries Imagine - John Lennon
WEEK 11: November 17	Chapter 8: Addictions Song Choices: Joey - Concrete Blonde Toy Soldiers - Martika Rehab - Amy Winehouse Can't Feel My Face - The Weeknd Heroin - The Velvet Underground
WEEK 12: November 24	Chapter 12: Workplaces Song Choices: 9 to 5 - Dolly Parton Born in the USA - Bruce Springsteen Take This Job and Shove It - Jonny Paycheck Working Man - Rita McNeil She Works Hard for the Money - Donna Summer
WEEK 13: December 1	<b>No class</b>

\*\*If material cannot be covered due to cancelled classes, students will still be responsible for the material.

## POSITION PAPERS

You will note that position papers account for 35 percent of your grade in this course. As each assignment is only worth 7 percent, they are not meant to be overly onerous or difficult. You will be expected to choose 2 songs from the list above and assess them in terms of the following:

1. Explain how the songs you have chosen relate to the particular social problem being discussed. Whose voice is found/missing in the song – what are the songwriter(s) saying about the particular social problem under study?
2. Which sociological paradigm(s) best explains the content of the songs? Why do you think this is the case?
3. What do the songs say about issues related to class, gender, race, and/or sexuality? Explain your rationale. What alternatives could you imagine to address this particular social problem?

You are also free to comment on the official music video (if one is available) in relation to the questions above. Please note that some songs may contain explicit language or uncomfortable situations. If there are particular songs that may be of concern to you, please let me know. We may be able to find an alternate selection.

At the beginning of each class, you will submit your response to the question of the week. It must be typewritten (**double-spaced, stapled left hand corner, Times New Roman 12 point**) with your name, course number, position paper title, word count, and student number on a separate cover page. If you include references, please follow the Canadian Review of Sociology guidelines found below:

<http://www.csa-scs.ca/files/webapps/csapress/canadian-review/files/2014/10/crs-authorguidelines1.pdf>

References must follow the in-text citation format and any works cited must be on an attached separate bibliography page following the standard noted above.

I will take the best 5 out of 7 submissions to determine your position paper grade. As there are 10 options to choose from, you may only submit 7 (one of which **must** be on the same topic as your presentation). The responses **must be** at least 500 words but no more than 750 words. **If a submission is less than 500 words or more than 750, you will receive a grade of zero.** The assignments are open book and you can draw on any knowledge you have to help inform your response. You are, however, expected to have read the chapter and to reference it in some scholarly capacity in your response. Your academic opinion is important but it must be grounded in evidence, taken from either the weekly reading, lecture notes, newspapers, books, or magazines you have read, or your personal experience (if you so desire). **BE CAREFUL:** As your personal experience is anecdotal, do not use it to make broad assumptions or generalizations about the topic being discussed.

## PARTICIPATION

Following the weekly lecture, we will conclude the class with three students delivering an 8-10 minute presentation on their work followed by a 30-40 minute discussion with the class facilitated by myself. The discussion will give you the opportunity to debate the weekly question and to engage with your peers in an academic setting. Fifty percent of your participation grade will result from your presentation and the other fifty percent will result from the quality of your contribution. **If you choose not to participate in the discussion, you will lose participation points.** If you are not in class, you will receive a

zero for participation for that week. Your grade will be based on presenting coherently and the quality of your responses during the discussion. **If you are below or above the presentation time limit, you will lose marks.** Through the weekly assignments, it is your job to convince me of your position but I - or other students - may disagree with you during the discussion. This, however, does not mean that your position is wrong!

## ESSAY

A comprehensive understanding of Canadian social problems is not possible without understanding Canada’s position within the international context. Despite its similarities with the United States of America, as well as its European origins, Canada remains distinctive and has carved itself a unique place within the global community. For this reason, it is important to understand not only Canadian society but also how it is similar and/or different in comparison to other countries. As such, you will write an essay comparing OR contrasting Canada with ONE of the following countries:

- United States of America
- Australia
- Great Britain
- France
- Germany

using age, class, race, gender, OR sexuality as a frame on ONE of the following topics:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addictions (e.g., drug abuse, gambling, alcoholism, etc.)</li> <li>• Assisted Suicide</li> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Child Abuse</li> <li>• Criminality</li> <li>• Domestic Violence</li> <li>• Eating Disorders</li> <li>• Gentrification</li> <li>• Ghettoization</li> <li>• Gun Control</li> <li>• Hate Crimes</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Trafficking</li> <li>• Incarceration</li> <li>• Illegal Immigration</li> <li>• Pornography</li> <li>• Poverty</li> <li>• Prostitution</li> <li>• Rape Culture</li> <li>• Racial Profiling</li> <li>• School Violence</li> <li>• Sexting</li> <li>• Suicide</li> <li>• Unemployment</li> <li>• Urbanization</li> <li>• Video Game Violence</li> </ul>
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**If you wish to write on a different topic/country, you must advise me via email no later than Thursday, October 20, 2016. Your email must include the proposed topic. Please do not begin working on your paper unless I have advised you via email that I have accepted your proposal.**

You will write a 10-12 page (double spaced, 12 font, Times New Roman) essay based on a contemporary social issue/problem in sociology. **REMEMBER:** Your essay should be one that makes a clear argument.

Strong arguments are based on *claims*, supported by *evidence* and responds to *counter-claims*. The page count **DOES NOT** include the cover page or works cited/bibliography page.

Your essay should be based on a thoughtful review of materials from journals, newspapers, reports of government, interest group statements, etc., in addition to papers that constitute the research evidence bearing on the issue. At a minimum, you should have 15 references (10 **must** come from peer reviewed journals) and those references should be referred to directly and substantively in your essay. Dictionary definitions, class lecture notes, textbooks, and encyclopedia references **DO NOT** count towards the minimum number of research sources. **Never use Wikipedia as a source.** You should always retain an electronic or hard copy of your assignment. References are in-text citations with an appropriate works cited page. All references **MUST** follow the Canadian Review of Sociology guidelines found below:

<http://www.csa-scs.ca/files/webapps/csapress/canadian-review/files/2014/10/crs-authorguidelines1.pdf>

While the cover and works cited pages are not part of the word limit, in-text citations, however, are considered in the overall word count.

**Final papers are due in my office and must also be submitted via Avenue2Learn by 2 pm on the last day of classes.**

### **EVALUATING YOUR ESSAY**

Your paper will be evaluated based on its:

1. Quality of writing: Is there a clear thesis? Is the paper persuasive? Are there few/minor grammatical/spelling errors?
2. Quality of research: Are there at least 10 peer reviewed sources used in the paper? Are they well-utilized in the paper?
3. Quality of argumentation: Are the central claims clearly made? Are they well supported by evidence by reputable sources? Is there a strong link between your claim and the evidence?

### **SOME HELPFUL HINTS**

- Clear thesis: In this paper, I will argue that... \*state what position you will argue\*.
- Grammar/Spelling: Have someone read your paper or visit the writing centre prior to the due date.
- Persuasiveness: Briefly describe each argument, explaining why your choice is correct.
- Research: Go to the library and seek help from the staff.
- Argumentation: Use research either to support your claim or to refute the counter-claim.

### **KEY POINTS**

All papers must be word processed or typed, be double spaced, page numbered, contain minimal (less than 5 per paper) typographical and spelling errors, and follow basic grammatical rules as well as format and length limitations.

Include a complete **title page** (i.e., name, student number, date, title of assignment, instructor's name, and course/section number) with the assignment.

**If you fail to observe any of the above noted points, I reserve the right not to accept your paper. As a result, you may be given a zero in the essay.**

It is strongly recommended that you make at least one appointment with me to discuss your paper. Ideally, you should come speak to me **once** you have a draft completed. If you bring me a draft at least two weeks before the due date, I commit to providing feedback but I will not comment on the entire document.

## GENERAL/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 three (3) days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work. Please note that this tool cannot be used during any final examination period. You may submit a maximum of one (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 three (3) days, exceed one (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 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.

### **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.

### **Attendance**

As the course is primarily seminar-based, class attendance is expected though not mandatory; however, your participation grade will suffer if you are not in class to engage in the discussion.

### **Grades**

While all attempts will be made to have your weekly assignments back to you within a week, this may not always be possible. Grades will be available for viewing on A2L (except your final grade which is released by the Registrar's Office).

### **Email and Office Hours**

I check email daily during the week, and will almost always respond within 24 hours (weekends may be delayed). E-mail works best for procedural questions (e.g., setting up appointments, etc.) while detailed questions about the course or clarification on course material are usually easier to respond to in class or during office hours.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students who require physical or academic accommodations are encouraged to speak to me privately so that appropriate accommodations can be made to help ensure your full participation in the course. All conversations will remain confidential. Assistance may be available through the Student Accessibility Services (<http://sas.mcmaster.ca/>) which serves students whose disabilities involve conditions affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning disabilities, chronic illness, or mental health. Support is also provided to students with documented temporary illnesses and injuries. If you require assistance during class or require additional supports, you need to register with Student Accessibility Services.

**Respectful Discussions**

Discussion and debate are an important part of any intellectual undertaking. Over the course of the semester, we will likely discuss topics about which you have strong feelings or opinions. You should always feel free to respectfully express your opinion on an issue, whether or not they are shared by other people in the class (including me). I only ask that you speak with good intentions, and assume that others are doing the same. If you are ever made angry or uncomfortable by anything said during a discussion, please feel free to speak up (politely), or to raise your concerns with me privately by email or during office hours. If anyone starts shouting, or make any personal attacks, I will ask them to leave the room. As a note, I have a **zero tolerance policy** for any racist, sexist, ageist, or homo/transphobic remarks. Students making such comments will be asked to immediately leave the room.

**Use of Laptops or Accommodating Devices**

Students may use laptops to take notes provided their use does not interfere with the learning of other students. If anyone communicates to me that a student's laptop use is distracting, I may request that it not be used. Students with a documented ailment, and who require the use of a laptop to facilitate their participation should speak to me privately. If I am required to wear a microphone or other accommodating device, please let me know so I can provide you with a positive learning environment.

**Talking at Inappropriate Times or Using Inappropriate Devices**

You are enrolled in this class to learn so it is counterproductive to talk or text at inappropriate times, use the Internet and/or use your cell phone. Students distracted by any such behavior should bring this to my attention privately.

**Course Evaluations**

At some point during the term (usually the second last week of classes), you will be asked to complete a course evaluation form **on-line**. These forms are anonymous and **I will only receive the results well after grades have been submitted**. As an undergraduate and graduate student at Memorial University of Newfoundland, I had been involved with the Course Evaluations Committee since its inception and I consider the course evaluation process to be a key part of my growth as an instructor as well as an indicator of my success in teaching sociology. I encourage everyone to provide me with constructive feedback on my teaching style, the course syllabus, the papers, or anything you feel appropriate that will improve the course.

**Perfume and Cologne**

Given the class size, it is highly likely that there are students who may be sensitive to perfume or cologne. As such, I would request that the classroom remain scent-free.

**I HOPE YOU ENJOY THE COURSE!**