

SOCIOLOGY 352A-101: ORGANISATION OF WORK

Winter Session 2019 Term 1 (3 credits)

September – December 2019

PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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Class Time: Tuesday/Thursday (2:00 – 3:30pm)

Location: Anthropology 207

First Day of Class: 5 September 2019

Last Day of Class: 29 November 2019

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines work as an ever changing social construction that has been fabricated into a commodity.¹ Much of our lives revolve around work. For many of us, work will account for roughly 50% of our waking lives between the ages 19 and 67 (estimating 8 hours of work per day). This does not include preparatory activities or travel time to and from the workplace. Like many sociology courses, we begin with a question: what, exactly, is work? Is anything that expends human energy such as exercise, making a breakfast, brewing an espresso, riding a bicycle, reading a novel or gardening work? Most students of this course, for example, will be diligently *working* on their university education as part of a journey towards some type of anticipated employment. Is school work actually work? Does work only pertain to paid employment? What about illegal, volunteer or unpaid work, forced labour by prisoners or those activities that take place in the home sphere by one partner while another engages in the paid workforce? Why are some workers or areas of work more socially or economically valued than others? Why are some individuals unable to obtain work or forced into precarious forms of employment? What does work actually mean to us as individuals and our identity in the social world? The discipline of sociology can help us answer these questions.

GOALS

The first aim of this course is to dig a little deeper by challenging some of our pre-conceived, naturalized, notions of work. This objective is fundamental to the discipline of sociology itself:

”The fascination of sociology lies in the fact that its perspective makes us see in a new light the very world in which we have lived all our lives” (p. 20-21).²

Students will discover that work, while typically economic in nature is also tied to our search for meaning, our identity and our self in society. The course’s second overarching goal is to present a

compelling case for the importance of sociology's methods, data and analysis in understanding work.

COURSE THEMES

Despite the fact that an examination of work has been central to enterprise of sociology since its beginnings studying industrial capitalist society, a consistent and unified sociology of work has not emerged.³ The study of work is therefore richly diverse and influenced by the theoretical and methodological position of sociologists in their respective areas. As a result, this course can only offer a very general survey of key topics of interest relative to the sociocultural organisation of work. To this end, the lectures have been developed to supplement rather than summarize the textbook and reading material. Over the past twenty years, the instructor has maintained an applied focus in the development of a range of low, medium and high threshold work opportunities and social enterprises for individuals facing multiple barriers to their psychosocial tenure (e.g. poverty, HIV/AIDS, HCV, illicit drug use, homelessness, survival sex trade involvement, financial exclusion, unemployment, mental illness and conflict with the law). The instructor will draw on these employment initiatives, when possible, as case studies for sociological analysis in order to explore the relationship between work and personhood or membership in the human family.

PREREQUISITE

Sociology 100, or instructor approval.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Watson T. Sociology, Work and Organisation. London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis; 2017.³

COURSE FORMAT

The course takes place on Tuesdays and Thursdays of each week. Each Tuesday will consist of a lecture. Thursdays will be devoted to discussion, student and group presentations.

READINGS

The course is organized around textbook chapters and supplementary articles. Students will need to access the assigned articles on line or through the UBC library. They will need a campus wide login to access these materials.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment:	
Collaborative Commentary	10%
Sociological Reflection	10 %
Midterm Quiz	25%
Research Paper	25%
Final Exam (to be scheduled)	30%

during the final exam period)
 Total 100%

Midterm Quiz (25%): The mid-term test will be on 15 October 2019. The test will be worth 25% of your grade and will require you to answer short, medium length and essay questions. The material will be drawn from the textbook, readings and lectures.

Collaborative Critical Commentary (10%): For the assignment, the class will be divided into groups that will collaborate in reviewing and making a presentation on a chapter or assigned article. The assignment has an oral (5%) and written portion (5%). During the second class of each week, one group of students will present a critical commentary of one of the readings. It will assist students in understanding and applying ideas pertaining to a sociological examination of work. This assignment is intended to encourage discussion and the group will lead that discussion.

After providing an overview of the key themes in their segment of the reading, the group will be expected to identify a series of sociological issues with regard to work and society that arises from the material. The goal of the assignment is not to simply provide a summary of the article but to offer some analytical insights based on careful reflection of the material.

The issues raised by the group should take the form of discussion issues or questions. Questions should be open-ended so that they can offer a wide variety of possibilities for discussion points from the wider class. The quality of the questions, particularly with regard to enhancing discussion, will form a significant part of my assessment. Students may wish to draw on emerging sociological theories, methods or analysis from other readings (both within or outside the class) to interpret their presentation. The group presentation is expected to be approximately 45 minutes in length including wider discussion.

All members of the group must also submit a three-page double spaced (no longer) critical commentary of the article or chapter under review. The paper can be a joint paper (in this case a six to eight-page paper) or individual papers; it is entirely up to the group. Electronic and hard copies of the critical commentaries are due on the **Tuesday before** the presentation so they can be reviewed in advance. **Please note:** the group will also upload an electronic copy of their written commentary to Canvas on the Tuesday morning prior to their Thursday presentation so that it can be reviewed by the wider class. Individuals who do not submit three-page summaries will lose 5% of their grade for the critical commentary assignment (5% of the overall course grade). Three-page summaries submitted late will be deducted 4% per day and will not be accepted after one week. The summaries should be double-spaced and should have a title page (with name and student number), page numbers and reference sheet. There is a sign-up sheet where students can select the group, article and date for collaborative critical commentary.

Sociological Reflection (5%: Due 12 November 2019): For this assignment, students will write a 4-page (double-spaced) reflection about a work area with personal significance. Students will turn the sociological analysis around in order to offer a reflexive examination of their long-term vocational aspirations. If their academic work is connected to their plan for a career, then this will also form part of the analysis. If students do not have a plan for a long-term vocation, then

they will choose a potential career path to explore for the purpose of the assignment. Students will need to offer a solid sociological picture of the employment area that they have chosen:

- how many people are employed in this realm?
- what does the actual job entail?
- how is it remunerated?
- where is it situated within societal structure?
- how is it valued culturally?
- what are the demographics of workers in this area?
- what structural barriers, obstacles or constraints exist in relation to obtaining work area (e.g. education, entrance exams, professional certification)?

There are a number of reflexive questions that should guide the reflection:

- what societal or psychosocial motivations have contributed to your choice for a long-term vocation?
- what will happen if you are unable to reach your career goal? How will you conceptualize this outcome?

The first objective of this assignment is to combine sociological analysis with an element of reflexivity. The assignment will be graded according to the depth of reflection, originality, thoughtfulness and complexity of the sociological overview. Students may use the questions above as a guide but may, and should, add their own. The second objective is to give students a chance to employ sociology within the context of their own life.

Research Paper (25%): Students will write a 1500-word (*maximum*) research paper that provides a sociological examination of an area of precarious employment in Canada. Precarious employment is a significant issue in Canada with ramifications for individuals, communities and the wider economy.⁴ Precarious employment is differentiated by high levels of employment insecurity.⁵ Although it can exist in permanent full time employment, precarious work is typically part-time, temporary and poorly compensated. It is an area that often employs vulnerable or marginalized workers and is characterized by financial insecurity, inadequate regulatory protection, benefits and training. This category of work is also associated with reduced mental and physical health outcomes.⁶

The overall aim of the paper is to call upon the field of sociology to engage in a systematic and objective examination of a key issue relating to work in Canada. In your essay, you will provide a sociological picture of a precarious employment area in Canada along with an ethnographic sketch of the employment experience of workers in this realm. The paper should describe the meaning of the “precarious employment” from a sociological perspective. After providing a short overview of the area of precarious work, students are expected to undertake a sociological analysis the topic. There are a number of sociological questions that students might use to guide their essay. What makes this work precarious? Why does this work exist? What is the sociological context; what are the relationships between work and society in this instance? Is there a specific sociological theory and related evidence that could be employed to shed light on the issues at play?

Sociologically speaking, your essay should attempt to answer a key question: why are the individuals that you have identified precariously employed? Furthermore, you will take on the role of a public sociologist in your essay in order to develop some suggestions for a sociological

action plan that addressing the area of precarious employment. This plan may take many forms (e.g. academic questions, community or action based research, policy, recommendations). This portion of your paper provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate that sociology matters, that it is relevant and that it can be effective for addressing as well as understanding the relationship between work and society.

The paper will be due in class on 29 October 2019 (at 2:00pm). Text beyond the 1500-word maximum (students are required to provide a word count) will not be graded in order to encourage students to organize their thoughts concisely and, hopefully, improve their papers. Papers should be in a 12pt traditional font such as Arial or Times New Roman with one-inch margins. Each paper should be stapled and have a cover page with the title of the paper, name of the student and student number. The pages of your paper should be numbered in the upper right hand corner, and the final word count should appear at either the beginning or the end of your paper.

Please submit hard copies of all assignments in class or, if late, date-stamp and put in the exam drop box outside the entrance of the mailroom in the Department of Sociology. Please note that emailed copies of assignments will not be accepted as inevitably some of them are lost (e.g. junk mail filters) or misdirected (wrong email address). The hard-copy version will be the one used to determine date of submission. Papers cannot may not be faxed or pushed under faculty doors; they will not be accepted for evaluation.

All papers should have a “References” section that includes all the sources that have been have cited in the paper. Please do not include other source materials that have not been directly referenced in the paper. With regard to reference style for the paper, students should use the American Sociological Association (ASA) style. The entire style guide is available for purchase on the ASA website. A quick overview guide is available free of charge: (http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_ASA_Style.pdf). The entire style book is available in the UBC Koerner library as a non-circulating reference book (Call Number: [HM569.A54 2014](#)).

Some referencing systems, such as the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) provide a choice between two different systems: notes (along with bibliography) and the author-date system. The social sciences, as a rule, tend to utilize the latter system: with the author and date in a short form within the text that is subsequently expanded within the reference section at the end of the paper. As a result, students should rely on the *author and date* method as opposed to the notes approach. The author and date method seems to help the flow of the paper and make it a little easier to follow. If students have any trouble locating a resource for the referencing style for the paper, then please don't hesitate to contact the instructor.

Late Assignment Policy

Hard copies of student papers are due on 29 October 2019 at 2:00pm. Papers submitted late will be deducted 4% per day and will not be accepted after 5 November 2019 at 2:00pm. If there is a health condition or family situation that may affect your ability to meet a deadline, please let me know in writing (email is fine), in advance if possible.

Final Exam (30%): There will be a final exam during the final exam period. The final exam will include written answers (short and medium length answers along with essays) that make up 30% of the grade. The essay portion of the final exam will be cumulative.

INCOMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS

All of the assignments and exams in the course must be completed in order to receive a passing grade.

GRADING

Grading will be made in accordance with the UBC grading scale as described in the UBC Academic Calendar.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism sometimes happens when students panic or feel overwhelmed. As your instructor, I am here to support your learning. Please contact me to discuss your situation PRIOR to reaching the point where you feel yourself in a panic situation. Students are encouraged to review the publication *Plagiarism Avoided* on the UBC Faculty of Arts website, which includes helpful examples of, and practical strategies to avoid plagiarism. Students can also examine the Guide to Academic Integrity at UBC that provides tips for avoiding plagiarism:

<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/guide-to-academic-integrity/>. If the links on plagiarism do not work, then please perform an Internet search on tips to avoid plagiarism at UBC. If students have any trouble with locating the material on suggestions for avoiding plagiarism, then please don't hesitate to contact the instructor.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students must abide by the academic integrity rules of the Faculty of Arts. The overarching theme of academic integrity is that your work must be, in fact, your own work. All students assume full responsibility for the content of the academic work that they submit. Plagiarism, using notes during a test, or copying from another student will result in a failed grade for the course. The UBC library maintains an excellent web-based resource on Academic Integrity and students should review the web site: <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/guide-to-academic-integrity/>. If the links to the site do not work, then please perform an Internet search on academic integrity at UBC. If students have any trouble with locating the material, then please don't hesitate to contact the instructor.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Academic accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please provide me with a letter from the Centre for Accessibility department at UBC <https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility> that identifies the academic accommodations for which you are eligible in an academic setting. Students do not have to share information about their disability with the instructor. Disability documentation is to be provided to the department of Access & Diversity. All accommodations must be approved through the Disability Resource Centre (Students can review the access and diversity policy on academic

accommodations for students with disabilities at the Centre for Accessibility department at UBC (<https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility>).

LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

The syllabus and lecture schedule is dynamic and, as such, the lecture themes will be open to alteration depending on the flow of the course as it plays out (e.g. to respond to emerging contemporary sociological of interest that arise with respect to the study of work or the pace of the group presentations and schedule).

Week One (5 September 2019) Lecture: *Introduction to the Sociology of Work, Society and Organization: What is Work?*

Required Readings

Watson T. Chapter 1: Studying work, society and organisation. *Sociology, Work and Organisation*. London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis; 2017: 2-27.

Required Readings

Watson T. Chapter 2: Analysing work and organisation: scientific management, human relations and negotiated orders. *Sociology, Work and Organisation*. London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis; 2017: 28-53.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the introduction, students should have a sense of the key questions that will be raised in the course and an understanding of its direction, evaluation and assignments.

Week Two (10 September 2019) Lecture: *Sociological Theory and Methods for Defining, Measuring and Analysing Work: An Overview of Orientations*

Required Readings

Watson T. Chapter 3: Analysing Work and Organisation: institutionalism, labour process and discourse analysis. *Sociology, Work and Organisation*. London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis; 2017: 54-86.

Watson T. Chapter 4: Industrial Capitalism, Change and Possibility of a Fourth Automati-onn-based Industrial Revolution. *Sociology, Work and Organisation*. Routledge: Taylor and Francis; 2017: 86-121.

Learning Objectives

This week is aimed at providing students with a sense of the wider sociological context within which work exists, the market and the way in which it has been socially manufactured across time and space.

Week Two (12 September 2019) Group Projects: Forming of Groups for Collaborative Assignment. Once students are organized into groups, they will have an opportunity to work with their group to choose a topic area (reading from the syllabus) and develop an action plan for the assignment. Students are responsible for ensuring that they are connected to a group and that

group members have exchanged contact information for working on the project. Students will need to ensure that they do not miss this class or they may lose an opportunity to complete this assignment.

Week Three (17 September 2019) Lecture: *The Social Construction of Work Value and Inequality*

Required Readings

Cech EA. Ideological Wage Inequalities? The Technical/Social Dualism and the Gender Wage Gap in Engineering. *Social Forces* 2010; **91**(4): 1147-82.

Fuller S. Segregation across Workplaces and the Motherhood Wage Gap: Why Do Mothers Work in Low-Wage Establishments? *Social Forces* 2017.

Learning Objectives

The goal of this portion of the course is to introduce students to the sociological context within which work or workers are valued or less valued. By the end of this lecture, students should have a clear understanding of labour as a sociocultural creation that is rooted in cultural values and social arrangements.

Week Three (19 September 2019) Group Projects: **This class is set aside for students to work on their collaborative project.*

Week Four (24 September 2019) Lecture: *Precarious Employment: Employment Insecurity and Inequality*

Required Readings

Zhang S, Zuberi D. Evening the keel: Measuring and responding to precarity in the Canadian labour economy. *Canadian Public Administration* 2017; **60**(1): 28-47.

Fuller S, Stecy-Hildebrandt N. Lasting Disadvantage? Comparing Career Trajectories of Matched Temporary and Permanent Workers in Canada. *Canadian Review of Sociology* 2014; **51**(4): 293-324.

Learning Objectives

The goal of this section is to build on the sociological premise that the value of labour is not a natural and stable phenomenon. By the end of this lecture, students should have insight into the sociocultural and experiential characteristics of precarious employment.

Week Four (26 September 2019) *First Group Presentations

Week Five (1 October 2019) Lecture: *Culture, Ethnography and Meaning Centred Approaches to Work: Sociology and Social Enterprise (Case Study: East Van Roasters Chocolate Shop for Women in Recovery)*

Required Readings

Watson T. Chapter 9: Culture, Work Orientations and the Experience of Working. *Sociology, Work and Organisation*. London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis; 2017: 272-99.

Watson T. Chapter 10: Identity, Narrative and Emotion in and Out of Work. *Sociology, Work and Organisation*. London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis; 2017: 300-34.

Learning Objectives

This segment of the course is aimed at providing students with a window into the social construction of work and its relationship to personhood or membership in the human family.

Week Five (3 October 2019): Group Presentations

Week Six (8 October 2019) Lecture: *Public Sociology and Work*

Required Readings

Burawoy M. 2004 Presidential Address: For Public Sociology. *American Sociological Review* 2005; 7(February): 4-28.

Brook P, Darlington R. Partisan, scholarly and active: arguments for an organic public sociology of work. *Work, Employment and Society* 2013; 27(2): 232-43.

Small D. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread: Playing God with Vancouver's Supervised Injection Facility in the political borderland. *International Journal of Drug Policy* 2007; 18: 18-26.

Suggested Reading

Small D. Cultural Alchemy and Supervised Injection: Anthropological Activism and Application. *Practicing Anthropology* 2016; 39(2): 26-31.

Learning Objectives

This session of the course is intended to facilitate an understanding of public sociology and to give students an opportunity to contemplate its application in the realm of work.

Week Six (10 October 2019): Group Presentations

Week Seven (15 October 2019): Midterm

Week Seven (17 October 2019): Group Presentations

Week Eight (22 October 2019) Lecture: Lecture: *Sociological Examination of the LEAN model and its wide-ranging effects on the workplace*

Required Readings

Johnson PM, Patterson CJ, O'Connell MP. Lean methodology: An evidence-based practice approach for healthcare improvement. *Nurse Practitioner* 2013; **38**(12): 1-7.

Krafcik JF. Triumph of the lean production system. *Sloan Management Review* 1988; **30**(1): 41-52.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section of the course, students should have a critical understanding of a workplace approach that has had remarkable impact in a wide-range of sectors including academia, healthcare, education, banking, hotels, airlines as well as public and e-services. This segment is also intended to illustrate how a sociological approach can look past the readily apparent, question common sense and highlight unanswered questions with respect to accepted work methodologies.

Week Eight (24 October 2019): Group Presentations

Week Nine (29 October 2019) Lecture: *Work in the Sociological Borderland: Involuntary, Incarcerated or Programmatic Labour (Case Study: Patient Work in a Forensic Psychiatric Institution and Community Mental Health Organization): Vocational Rehabilitation Programs: Exploitation, Employment or Rehabilitation?*

Required Readings

Watson T. Chapter 5: Work Organizations. *Sociology, Work and Organisation*. London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis; 2017: 122-70.

Watson T. Chapter 6: Control and Variation in Organizational Shaping and Human Resourcing. *Sociology, Work and Organisation*. London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis; 2013: 171-203.

Suggested Reading

McKay C, Nugent KL, Johnsen M, Eaton WW, Lidz CW. A Systematic Review of Evidence for the Clubhouse Model of Psychosocial Rehabilitation. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research* 2016: 1-20.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this portion of the course, students should have an sociological view of a work within the context of mental health in Canada. They will also be familiar with the case study of institutional program existing in a liminal zone between work and psychiatric rehabilitation.

*Term Papers Due

Week Nine (31 October 2019): Group Presentations

Week Ten (5 November 2019) Lecture: *The Social Invention of Occupations and Professions: (Case Studies: Physician-hood as a Profession and the Transformation of Marginalized Healthcare Recipients into Dignified Healthcare Workers)*

Required Readings

Watson T. Chapter 7: Occupations and the Social Organization of Work. *Sociology, Work and Organisation*. London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis; 2013: 204-39.

Miner H. Body Ritual among the Nacirema. *American Anthropologist*. 1956;58(3):503-7.

Small D. An anthropological examination of an exotic tribe: The Naicisyhp. *BC Medical Journal*. 2010; **53**(1) <http://www.bcmj.org/newsnotes/anthropological-examination-exotic-tribe-naicisyhp>²⁵

Learning Objectives

This section of the course provides a local case study of low threshold employment initiatives aimed at engaging and employing active injection drug users into the doorway of employment. By the end of this portion of the course, students should have a sense of the relationship between meaningfulness and work. They should also be familiar with the sociological process by which a marginalized group underwent a sociological transformation from social outcasts to valued workers in the healthcare industry.

Week Ten (7 November 2019): Group Presentations

Week Eleven (12 November 2019) Lecture: *Resistance, Labour Standards and the Organization of Workers and Unions in Canada*

Required Readings

Watson T. Chapter 11: Conflict, Mobilisation and Regulation at Work. *Sociology, Work and Organisation*. London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis; 2017: 335-63.

Byford I, Wong S. Union formation and worker resistance in a multinational: A personal account of an Asian cabin crew member in UK civil aviation. *Work, Employment and Society*; **30**(6): 1030-8.

Learning Objectives

At the completion of this portion of the course, students should be able to provide an historical and sociological analysis of the union movement in Canada.

*Sociological reflection due (hard copy delivered in class).

Week Eleven (14 November 2019): Group Presentations**Week Twelve (19 November 2019): Group Presentations**

Please note: There is not a lecture for this week as we are putting the class aside to focus on group presentations and discussion. However, there are readings for the week which focus on the global dimensions of work.

Required Readings

Foster J, Taylor A, Khan C. The dynamics of union responses to migrant workers in Canada. *Work, Employment and Society* 2016; **29**(3): 409-26.

Mahutga MC, Roberts A, Kwon R. The Globalization of Production and Income Inequality in Rich Democracies. *Social Forces* 217; **96**(1): 181-214.

Learning Objectives

This purpose of this part of the course is to encourage students to contemplate the notion of globalization, what it means and its consequences with regard to the distribution of production and income for the world, for communities and for individuals.

Week Twelve (21 November 2019): Group Presentations**Week Thirteen (26 November 2019): Group Presentations****Week Thirteen (28 November 2019): Lecture: *Overview of Key Themes*****Required Readings**

Burawoy M. Introduction: Sociology as a combat sport. *Current Sociology Monograph* 2014; **62**(2): 140-55.

Watson T. Chapter 12: Resistance, Mischief, Humour and the Defense of Self. *Sociology, Work and Organisation*. London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis; 2017: 364-89.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lecture, students should be familiar with the key themes of the course and possess a firm understanding of a sociological approach to understanding work. Hopefully, by this point in the course, they will also be convinced of the utility, in fact necessity, of sociology as a discipline for understanding the sociocultural phenomenon we know as work.

* Term Ends: 29 November 2019

**Final Exam: Date to be scheduled during final exam week