## Course Information

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Course Title** | **Course Code Number** | **Credit Value** |
| Inequality and Social Change | SOCI 102 -103 | 3 |
| **Class Location** | **Days** | **Time** |
| Virtual | Tuesdays and Thursdays | 12:30-13:50 |

### course calendar description

SOCI 102 (3) **Inequality and Social Change**

Inequality, institutions, social structure and social change.

Pre-reqs: NA.

## Contacts

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Course Instructor** | **Contact Details** | **Office** | **Office Hours** |
| Dr. Craig Meadows (he/him) | craig.meadows@ubc.ca | NA | Fridays 11:00-12:00, or by appointment |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Teaching Assistant** | **Tutorial Sections, Dates, and Times** | **Contact Information** | **Office Hours** |
| Anupriya Dasgupta (she/her) | H13: Fridays 11:00-11:50  I13: Fridays, 14:00-14:50 | [anupriya.dasgupta@ubc.ca](mailto:anupriya.dasgupta@ubc.ca) | Fridays, 12:00-13:00, or by appointment |
| Elizabeth Cleary (she/her) | A13: Wednesdays, 9:00-9:50  B13: Wednesdays, 10:00-10:50 | [ecleary@mail.ubc.ca](mailto:ecleary@mail.ubc.ca) | Mondays, 15:00-16:00, or by appointment |
| Mary Roujouleh (she/her) | D13: Wednesdays, 17:00-17:50  E13: Wednesdays, 18:00-18:50 | [alroujul@student.ubc.ca](mailto:alroujul@student.ubc.ca) | Tuesdays, 17:00-18:00, or by appointment |
| Parker Muzzerall (he/him) | F13: Fridays, 9:00-9:50  G13: Fridays, 10:00-10:50 | [parker.](mailto:pmuzzera@student.ubc.ca)muzzerall@ubc.ca | Tuesdays, 11:00-12:00, or by appointment |
| Craig | C13: Wednesdays, 11:00-11:50 |  |  |

Note: We will have time in tutorials and in lectures to field questions. This is when you should be asking questions, or during office hours. Use of email has exploded since classes went virtual and it can become extremely time consuming and draining. As such, all emails should be brief (no more than 5 sentences) and they should require no more than a couple sentences in reply. Any other issue should be dealt with in class or during office hours. TAs have been instructed to reject emails that are outside these limitations.

## Course overview

In modern society, our lives are constantly impacted by crises that bring about sudden change, while other changes occur at a slower pace. While slower changes often pass unnoticed or are registered at a much later date, the shocks resulting from crises can result in fundamental changes to social organization.

Our experiences of the world around us and our abilities to understand it are shaped by often imperceptible forms of social change: we experience and make sense of the world around us through technologies, social structures, political economy, and common sense values and beliefs. In turn, our goals and ambitions, frustrations and suffering, are all fostered through interactions with social institutions, other individuals and groups, and through the internalization of cultural ideals within the context of these changes in technology, social structures, political economy and so on.

Yet the dominant perspective in society continues to be that we are subjects of choice: we negotiate or choose the paths and options that most appeal to us and we shape our own lives. Success and suffering are typically interpreted through the lens of the individual.

This course begins with an examination of C.Wright Mills’s classic study *The Sociological Imagination*, who shows the importance of thinking about patterns in society, the forces that produce them, and the effects these have on both individuals and society as a whole, and Raewyn Connell’s “In Praise of Sociology,” which outlines the methods by which sociology makes produces rigorous and valid forms of understanding of society.

This course then sets out to examine patterns of social inequality with a focus on their relation to the current social and economic order known as neoliberalism. Neoliberalism took hold in the 1970s and transformed how we think of ourselves and re-arranged basic forms of political, economic, and social relations. In examining neoliberalism, we can begin to question how neoliberal ideas and practices work and how they produce forms of inequality. Thus, neoliberalism will be the primary modality of change that we use to examine forms of inequality.

Classes are structured around lectures, question and answer discussions between students and the instructor, and films. Tutorials will focus on three objectives: understanding the readings, assignment preparation, and discussions of course content.

Lectures will focus on the films and readings assigned for that week. Tutorials will look backward: they will deal with the materials of the previous week.

## Course Structure

Classes are a combination of synchronous lectures (some with slides), a few videos, and small group discussions. Discussion questions will be used in group work to orient you to key sections of the readings.

The overall purpose of the lectures is to produce understandings of the texts, and to understand the foundation of sociology as a discipline.

Students will have the option of engaging the course asynchronously. If you are unable to attend virtual classes and discussion groups, then you can watch the recorded Collaborate Ultra lectures and then you can do two additional assignments, in place of regular group discussions.

## Learning Outcomes

1. Students will develop a working knowledge of key terms and methods in sociology and will survey a selection of its sub-fields (e.g. the sociology of culture, social theory, urban sociology, law & society, health and society, the sociology of education, and the sociology of race, class, gender and sexuality).
2. Students will learn to distinguish between the expression of opinion and the examination of social issues and processes through *sociological methods* to produce valid, coherent, and logical arguments.
3. To develop communication skills through written work and small group discussions.

## COURSE AXIOMS

The basic principles of the *sociological imagination* that we will explore and use to understand social phenomena:

1. We are *conditioned* by social relations, and not pure or self-made individuals. These relations include social groups, media technology, and social institutions (including media, education, the family, law, government, and economics).
2. The relations between individuals, groups, and institutions become apparent through *social patterns*. These patterns are produced through descriptive and statistical methods.
3. Social relations are *power relations* that shape and reproduce *inequality* through the distribution of resources and life chances. The primary vectors for the production of inequality that will concern us here are race, class, gender, sex, and sexuality.

The sociological imagination includes the *ethical and political*, and is not a neutral, descriptive science. In learning sociology, the social world puts a claim on us to respond to inequality through such methods as designing social policies and programs, social movements and advocacy groups, and critical self-reflection.

While you may hold strongly to certain beliefs around individualism and “personal responsibility” (a phrase that is often very ironic when used in everyday life), this course will adhere to these axioms that define sociology as a field. It is your responsibility to learn to think through these methods. Thanks to the misinformation of the internet and social media, and particularly the deeply problematic “manosphere” and white supremacist and hyper-nationalist discourses of the present, which often see white hetero men as the primary victims of an irrational world, these opinions are not supported by evidence. Students looking to advance a any agenda that disrupts the course or worse will not be tolerated. You get one chance and after that your contributions and questions will no longer be facilitated.

Please also remember that this is a very large class. Students are welcome to ask questions during lecture and to respond to questions, but please be mindful of how often you speak. Sometimes it’s even best to allow a little silence following a question to allow others the opportunity to contribute. Active listening is as important as verbal contributions when it comes to your participation grade.

## Required Materials

1. All readings and videos will be posted to Canvas.

## Assessments of Learning

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Weight** | **Due Date** |
| 2 reading responses of 500 words minimum, 750 maximum @ 10 marks each | 20 | 24 September, 3 November |
| Neoliberalism Essay | 30 | 13 October |
| Contemporary Social Issues Essay | 30 | 6 December |
| Participation | 20 |  |
|  | 100 |  |

**Last Days to Drop:**

Without a “W”: September 21

With a “W”: October 30

**Late Submissions:**

Late papers will be docked at a rate of 5% per day. Accommodations are made for students registered with the Centre for Accessibility and those who have university recognized absences with supporting documentation. **Students are encouraged to contact their TA as soon as they realize they are falling behind. It is much easier to make accommodations when we know ahead of time.**

* Please do not just “disappear”
* Please do not think that you have to tell us your personal issues. We are not counselors. We are here to facilitate your successful completion of the course.

**Grade Revisions and Petitions:**

There are no re-writes in this course. All submissions are final. Students are welcome to seek additional explanation for their grades from their grader two days after they are returned. If you are unsatisfied with the explanation, a grade petition can be submitted to the course instructor. Your petition is an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of your work with the grade you think it should have received. Your petition can outline any of the following: how you met the requirements of the assignment; how the critique of your work was in error; or, what you think was missed in the initial assessment. There are three potential outcomes of a grade revision:

1. The grade remains the same
2. The grade is adjusted to your assessment
3. The grade is adjusted to somewhere in between the two assessments

***Participation*:** Active engagement with course materials, peers, and the course director are essential to a successful seminar. To this end, the following factors will be taken into consideration when calculating your grade:

* *Attendance*: It is not possible to participate if not in attendance. Please contact your TA in advance if you are unable to attend more than one class due to health or family issues.
* *Verbal/Text Contributions in Lecture & Groups*: Direct contributions that are related to course materials that engage peers and/or the course director.
* *Active Listening*: Allowing space for the contributions of other students and paying attention to/engaging with their comments. Domination of the class, refusal to allow others to speak, active disrespect shown to peers or the course director, or a pattern of refusal to stick to course materials will all negatively impact your grade.
* *Group participation:* Much of your participation will come from small group discussions and will be calculated from peer and self-evaluations. Groups will discuss readings and films, and submit summaries of their discussions. A copy of the form and expectations for group discussions is attached to the end of the syllabus.

At the end of the course, *STANDING DEFERRED* standing will be granted where necessary (such as serious illness or bereavement) – at which time documentation will be required.

**Grading System:**

This course will be graded as follows:

**Percentage Grade Letter Grade Grade Point Score Descriptive Term**

A+ 90 and above 4.33 Excellent

A 85-89 3.95-4.30 Excellent

A- 80-84 3.70-3.90 Very Good

B+ 76-79 3.30-3.60 Very Good

B 72-75 2.95-3.20 Good

B- 68-71 2.65-2.90 Good

C+ 64-67 2.40-2.60 Satisfactory

C 60-63 2.00-2.30 Satisfactory

C- 55-59 1.50-1.90 Satisfactory

D 50-54 1.00-1.40 Marginal

F(Fail) 49 and below Unsatisfactory

## Schedule of Topics

Note: The course director reserves the right to change the weekly schedule. Students will be advised in advance, and a new outline will be issued.

Note: You may find that some of the readings can be on the difficult side. I encourage you to access the readings in the manner you find most suitable. Some students gain the most by reading before class, others do better once the lecture has been given. The only cardinal sin would be not reading anything through the course. Regular reading practices aid in comprehension and in your own writing skills.

**Week 1: Introduction/Sociological Methods of Inquiry**

10 September

* Introduction & Course Outline

**Week 2:**

15 & 17 September

* C. Wright Mills. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pgs. 3-24.
* Raewyn Connell. 2017. “In Praise of Sociology.” *Canadian Review of Sociology*. Vol. 53(3). Pgs. 280-96.

Recommended Reading:

* C. Wright Mills. “The Uses of History.” *The Sociological Imagination*. Pgs. 143-164.

**Week 3: “Something Happened in the Late 1970s”: Social Change and the Rise of Neoliberal Inequality**

22 & 24 September

* *Inequality for All*. 2013. Jacob Kornbluth, dir. 89 mins.
* Zygmunt Bauman. 2013. “Introduction,” “Just How Unequal are We Today?” & “Why do we put up with Inequality?” *Does the Richness of the Few Benefit Us All?* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. Pgs. 1-26.

**Week 4: Max Weber and Finance Capital**

29 September & 1 October

* Arjun Appadurai. 2016. “The Entrepreneurial Ethic and the Spirit of Financialism.” *Banking on Words: The Failure of Language in the Age of Derivative Finance*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Pgs. 15-35.
* *The Love of Money: Part 2 The Age of Risk*. BBC. 59 mins.

Recommended Reading:

* Arjun Appadurai. 2016. “The Global Ambitions of Finance.” In *Banking on Words*. Pgs. 125-48.

**Week 5: “A Liberal-Communist Village”: Billionaires for a Better World**

6 & 8 October

* Slavoj Žižek. 2008. “SOS Violence.” *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*. New York: Picador. Pgs. 9-29.
* Jo Littler. 2018. “Introduction: Ladders and Snakes.” *Against Meritocracy: Culture, Power and Myths of Mobility*. London: Routledge. Pgs. 1-12.
* “Should Billionaires Exist?” *The Agenda with Steve Paikin*. TVOntario. 9 December 2019. 34 mins.

**Week 6: Branding, Consumerism – and Neoliberal Global Accumulation**

13 & 15 October

* Imre Szeman & Susie O’Brien. 2017. “The Consuming Life.” *Popular Culture: A User’s Guide*. International Edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell. Pgs. 123-48.
* *Fashion’s Dirty Secret*s. 2018. BBC. 45 mins.

Recommended Reading:

* Reece Jones. 2017. “Bounding Wages, Goods, and Workers.” *Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move*. London: Verso. Pgs. 89-118.

**Week 7: Gender, Culture Wars, and Restoring “Responsibility” to the Subject**

20 & 22 October

* Sarah Banet-Weiser. 2018. “Shame: Love Yourself and Be Humiliated.” *Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Pgs. 65-91.

**Week 8: The Commodification of Housing: Neoliberal Dispossession of the Right to Housing**

27 & 29 October

* David Madden & Peter Marcuse. 2016. “Against the Commodification of Housing.” *In Defense of Housing*. London: Verso. Pgs. 15-35.
* *Push*. 2019. Frederick Gertten, dir. 92 mins.

**Week 9: The State Monopoly of Violence, Police Culture, and Black & Indigenous Life**

3 & 5 November: Read what interests you, select from themes, or start from the top (the two best are the first two).

* El Jones. “Police union says cops can’t do their job without beating up black people.” *Halifax Examiner*. 4 March 2020.
* Dionne Brand. “On Narrative, Reckoning, and the Calculus of Living and Dying.” *The Star*. 4 July 2020.
* Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. “Don’t Understand the Protests? What you’re seeing is people pushed to the edge.” *The Los Angeles Times*. 30 May 2020.
* Cedric Johnson. “Don’t let blackwashing save the investor class.” *Jacobin*. 24 June 2020.
* Daniel Leblanc & Kristy Kirkup. “RCMP commissioner struggles with definition of systemic racism, but denies its presence in organization.” *The Globe and Mail*. 11 June 2020.
* Manisha Krishnan. “How police unions protect racist cops.” *Vice*. 23 July 2020.
* Kelly Geraldine Malone. “Experts say not enough proof expensive body cameras will reduce police violence.” *CBC*. 9 June 2020.
* Leyland Cecco. “‘National Travesty’ report shows that one third of Canada’s prisoners are Indigenous.” *The Guardian*. 22 January 2020.
* Nancy MacDonald. “Canada’s prisons are the ‘new residential schools’.” *Maclean’s*. 18 February 2016.
* Colin Freeze. “More than one third of people shot to death over a decade by RCMP officers were Indigenous.” *The Globe and Mail*. 17 November 2019.
* Devyn Springer. “Killer Mike, T.I. and Atlanta’s misleadership class.” *The Independent*. 2 June 2020.
* Yannick Giovanni Marshall. “Black liberal, your time is up.” *Al Jazeera*. 1 June 2020.

Recommended Reading:

* Robyn Maynard. 2017. “Misogynoir in Canada: Punitive State Practices and the Devaluation of Black Women and Gender-Oppressed People.” *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present.* Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing. Pgs. 128-57.
* Andrew Crosby & Jeffrey Monaghan. 2018. “The Raid at Elsipogtog: Integrated Policing and “Violent Aboriginal Extremists.” *Policing Indigenous Movements: Dissent and the Security State*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing. 136-77.

**Week 10: Policing Migrant Bodies: Borders, Inequality, Labor**

10 & 12 November

* Lalaie Ameeriar. 2017. “Bodies and Bureaucracies.” *Downwardly Global: Women, Work, and Citizenship in the Pakistani Diaspora*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Pgs. 25-52.
* *Migrant Dreams.* 2016. Min Sook Lee, dir. 88 mins.

Recommended Reading:

* Chris Ramsaroop. 2016. “The Case for Unemployment Insurance Benefits for Migrant Agricultural Workers in Canada.” In Aziz Chaudry & Adrian A. Smith. *Unfree Labour: Struggles of Migrant and Immigrant Labour in Canada*. Oakland, CA: PM Press. Pgs. 105-22.
* Hilary Beaumont. “Coronavirus sheds light on Canada’s poor treatment of migrant workers.” *The Guardian*. 20 July 2020.
* Sara Mojtehedzadeh. “Migrant farm workers from Jamaica are being forced to sign COVID-19 waivers.” *The Star*. 13 April 2020.
* Mashal Butt. “Migrant Workers Demand Permanent Residency Status to Break Free of Exploitation.” *The Tyee*. 9 June 2020.

**Week 11: Fascism, the Ineptitude of the “Marketplace of Ideas,” and Deplatforming COVID-19**

17 & 19 November

* Devin Zane Shaw. 2020. “*The Ethics of Ambiguity* and the Antinomies of Emancipatory Violence.” *Philosophy of Antifascism: Punching Nazis and Fighting White Supremacy*. London: Rowman & Littlefield International. Pgs. 23-28, 40-48, & 65-70.

Recommended Reading:

* Billy Bragg. “‘Cancel culture’ doesn’t stifle debate, but it does challenge the old order.” *The Guardian*. 10 July 2020.
* Mari Uyehara. “How Free Speech Warriors Masintreamed White Supremacists.” *GQ*. 8 May 2018.
* Leigh Philips. “The Threat to Civil Liberties goes way beyond ‘Cancel Culture’.” *Jacobin*. 12 July 2020.
* Steve Salaita. “Should we cancel cancel culture?” *Stevesalaita.com*. 24 June 2020.

**Week 12: Diasporic Identity and the Afterlives of Slavery**

24 & 26 November

* John Clarke. 2020. “The Pandemic and the War on the Poor.” *Sick of the System: Why the COVID-19 Recovery Must be Revolutionary*. Toronto, ON: Between the Lines Press.

Recommended Readings:

* Lisa Song. “Tear gas is way more dangerous than police let on, especially during the coronavirus pandemic.” *Propublica*. 4 June 2020.
* Trevor Morey & Naheed Dosani. “Access to housing is not just a political issue. COVID-19 has made it a matter of life and death.” *CBC*. 1 September 2020.
* Melissa Gira Grant. “The Pandemic is the Right Time to Defund the Police.” *The New Republic*. 28 May 2020.
* Ben Collins. “How QAnon rode the pandemic to new heights – and fueled the viral anti-mask phenomenon.” *NBC News*. 14 August 2020.

**Week 13: Indigenous Peoples Contra Hobbes: Dual Systems of Sovereignty**

1 December

* Chelsea Vowell. 2016. “The Myth of Progress” & “The Myth of Free Housing.” *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, & Inuit Issues in Canada*. Winnipeg, MB: Highwater Press. Pgs. 117-122 & 143-149.
* Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. 2017. “Nishnaabeg Anticapitalism.” *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. Pgs. 71-82.

3 December

* Course Summary

## University Policies

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are availableon[**the UBC Senate website**](https://senate.ubc.ca/policies-resources-support-student-success)**.**

### Learning Analytics

Will not be used. Online materials are provided to help you succeed in the course. I will not use analytics to surveil students. You are thus free to learn or not learn.

### Copyright

All materials included in the course pack and any links or readings on Canvas are coprighted materials and must be cited when used.

You are welcome to record lectures, but these are for personal use only. Under no circumstances can you share lectures with others or post them to the internet.

All lecture slide materials and lectures/discussions are public domain and do not need to be cited.

*Version: March 11, 2019*

**Group Participation Evaluation Form Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Contributions** | **Active Listening** | **Total** | **Attendance** | **Comments (use back for more space)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Average Score:** |  |  | **(Sum of each score divided by number of students)** |

Note: You must evaluate yourself and your peers. Comments should be more detailed than “great listener.” Explain how each group member contributed to the discussions, or why their presence was detrimental to group success.

**Evaluation Rubric**

**Attendance (Note: Attendance establishes the starting point of your participation grade).**

Missed 0-1 discussions 10

Missed 2 discussions 8

Missed 3 discussions 6

Missed 4 discussions 4

Missed 5 or more discussions 0

**Contributions**

Excellent: Always contributes with references to text and course materials, stays on topic 9

Very Good: Regular contributions with readings done most of the time, stays on topic 8

Good: Contributes sometimes, makes occasional reference to readings, might stray 7

Satisfactory: Occasional contributions, some reference to readings, might stray from topic 6

Poor: Rarely contributes, never references readings, strays from topic 0-5

**Active Listening**

Excellent: Listens and responds to peers, integrates ideas, does not dominate group 8-9

Good: Might get distracted on occasion, might dominate at times, but generally good 7

Fair: Disregards ideas from others, might be distracted or uninterested, might dominate 5-6

Poor: Does not allow space for others to talk or very uninterested, too cool for school 0-5