

**223.12 • Sociology II: Social Institutions and Change** (3 hrs.)  
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Providence College  
Winter Session, 2009  
Tuesdays 9:50 & Fridays 2:00

## SYLLABUS

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### A. Calendar Description of the Course

An introduction to the scientific study of the structure of society, primarily from the perspectives of macrosociology. The foci of this course include an examination of the status of social institutions, the character of social organization, and the process of social change. Special attention will be given to Canadian society.

Note: The combination of this course and 223.11 Sociology I: Social Structure and Differentiation is designed to be equivalent to 6 credit hour Introduction to Sociology courses at major Canadian universities (e.g. University of Manitoba, SOC 1200).

### B. Purpose of the Course

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. summarize and characterize the general nature and focus of sociology in contrast to the humanities and other social sciences;
2. compare the various theoretical perspectives and methods employed by sociologists to locate and explain various social phenomena;
3. demonstrate knowledge of differing Christian approaches to the integration of theology and sociology, as well as the relevance of biblical teachings to sociological issues;
4. outline the formation, forms, and functioning of diverse institutions and organizations of society, and how they change;
5. interpret his or her own experience of and contribution to society, and thereby enhance self-understanding;
6. express encouragement toward her or his own potential for more enlightened and satisfactory social relationships;
7. display an appreciation of and commitment to the collective good and well-being of human life.

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**Note re. Syllabus:**

It is the student's responsibility to retain their course syllabi for use as support for possible future applications to other educational institutions for transfer of credit.

## C. Textbooks

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

Macionis, J. J., and L. M. Gerber. 2008. *Sociology: Sixth Canadian edition*. Toronto: Pearson Prentice-Hall Canada.

McLaren, Brian D. 2007. *Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crises, and a Revolution of Hope*. Thomas Nelson Publishers.

### OPTIONAL READERS:

Macionis, John J., Nijole V. Benokraitis, and Bruce Ravelli, eds. 2007. *Seeing Ourselves: Classic, Contemporary, and Cross-Cultural Readings in Sociology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Ed. Toronto: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Leming, M. R., R. G. DeVries, and B. F. J. Furnish, eds. 1989. *The Sociological Perspective: A Value-Committed Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

### Notes:

- The Macionis & Gerber text will guide you to its own website, which you can access with a code supplied in your copy of the textbook. This site contains many supplementary student resources such as review material, learning exercises, and practice tests for each chapter. You would do well to make use of this internet resource to enhance your learning throughout the duration of this course.
- All of these texts, except McLaren, were also used in 223.11 Sociology I: Social Structure and Differentiation, taught in the fall semester.
- For a reference tool that pairs sociological concepts with biblical texts as one form of the academic conversation between sociology and biblical studies, see the ACTS Concepts Project at <http://www.actsoc.org/concepts.htm>.

## D. Course Requirements

### 1. Reading Checks (15%)

On the days which have class readings assigned to them, as outlined in the class schedule below, there will be a reading check. At the beginning of class, multiple-choice questions about each of the readings assigned for that class will appear on the PowerPoint screen, to be answered on a slip of paper and submitted immediately. There will be 3 questions for every M & G chapter reading, and 1 question for every collateral reading. These questions will be designed to enable you to demonstrate that you have completed the assigned reading on time with rudimentary comprehension. The questions can only be answered at the time they are given to the whole class; late-comers or absentees will give up the opportunity.

These Reading Checks are replacing the questions based on readings that were part of the exams in Introduction to Sociology I last fall. Therefore, exams will now be worth only 45% of the total course grade instead of 60%, with these reading checks replacing the other 15% of the course grade. Your grade for this component of the course will accumulate throughout the semester.

### 2. Critical Thinking Questions (3 x 5%)

Answer each of the following questions in 1 page, for a total of 3 pages per set (**do not retype the question as part of your response**). These exercises are designed to help you see the world sociologically, that is, to stimulate your “sociological imagination.” Your answers should demonstrate thoughtful interaction with the perspectives and concepts of course lectures and readings.

Set #1

**Due Date: February 10**

- a) If God would choose an economic system for a society, what would it look like? How would it compare to our economic system? Are there some clues in the Bible (think of the formation of the nation of Israel)?  
Alternative: You may answer in terms of a political system instead of an economic system, if you prefer.
  
- b) Contrast the pluralist, power-elite, and Marxist political-economy models of societal power. Which do you think is the best explanation for what is happening in our society?

- c) Many have observed that while our society seems to be growing less accepting of traditional institutionalized religion, there is, at the same time, a growing interest in spirituality. How would sociology explain this?

Set #2

**Due Date: March 17**

- a) In light of the functions of schooling, the social inequality of schooling, and the problems in schooling, are you inclined to think more or less favourably about private Christian schools? Why?
- b) Do you think mass media function more to reflect society or shape society? Why?
- c) Explain why health is as much a social and spiritual issue as a biological issue.

Set #3

**Due Date: April 14**

- a) Evaluate urbanism as a way of life. Is it good for individuals? For society?
- b) In what respects do some recent social movements (e.g. environment, animal rights, gun control) differ from older movements (e.g. civil rights, gender equality)?
- c) Is Christianity part of the problem of global stratification, or part of the solution? In what sense?

3. Documentary Film Analysis (10%)

**Due Date: February 27**

View one of the documentary films listed below, and write a 3-page response to it, connecting it to one or more topics/chapters covered in this course. Many of the documentaries are available in the Learning Resource Centre, and others are available from <http://www.freedocumentaries.org/>. You may select an alternative documentary of a social issue relevant to this course that you have not viewed prior to this semester, but only with **prior** approval from the instructor. What did you find most interesting or provocative in the documentary? Why? How do specific sociological perspectives and/or concepts help to understand the issue? What is your personal, sociologically-informed reaction to the issue(s)?

Your response should demonstrate your ability to interact critically with the material, identifying its strengths and weaknesses, while bringing fresh observations or applications to it.

*The Corporation* (2004)  
*Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price* (2005)  
*Who Killed the Electric Car?* (2006)  
*An Inconvenient Truth* (2006)  
*Control Room* (2003)  
*Why We Fight* (2005)  
*Refugees of the Blue Planet* (2006)  
*The Fog of War* (2004)

4. Book Review (15%)

**Due Date: April 3**

Write a formal book review (i.e. 3rd person, etc. – 4-5 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font) of McLaren's *Everything Must Change*. Note that your writing is now required to be more "scholarly" than the informal, personal book reaction assigned in Sociology I. Your review should **not** focus on outlining the contents of the book, but rather should demonstrate that you have interacted critically with the material, identifying its strengths and weaknesses while bringing fresh observations or applications to it. Though McLaren is not writing as a sociologist, what sociological topics, themes or concepts are evident in the text? How might sociology and Christianity inform each other?

Your paper will be graded on the quality of its content (15%) and composition (5%), with special attention given to your ability to adhere to the expectations of "academic" writing. Help in all aspects of essay writing can be found in the *Providence College Academic Formation Guide* available in the Providence Bookstore.

5. Exams (3 x 15%)

You will write three exams, each worth 15% of the final letter grade, and each consisting of approximately 30 multiple choice questions plus 7 written definitions and examples of concepts. Each exam will hold you responsible for only but all the material in the lectures covered since the previous exam; there is no comprehensive exam. The dates of the exams are as follows:

<b>Exam #1</b>	<b>February</b>
<b>Exam #2</b>	<b>March 10</b>
<b>Exam #3</b>	<b>April 14, 8:30 a.m.</b>

## E. Grading Summary

### 1. Grade Components

Reading Checks	15%
Film Analysis	10%
Critical Thinking	15% (3 x 5%)
Book Review	15%
Exams	45% (3 x 15%)

### 2. Grading Scale

Final course letter grades and their Grade Point equivalents will be calculated using the following scale:

<i>Percent</i>	<i>G.P.</i>	<i>Quality</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>G.P.</i>	<i>Quality</i>
91 – 99 = A+	4.0	Exceptional	67 – 69 = C+	2.5	Satisfactory
85 – 90 = A		Excellent	63 – 66 = C	2.0	Adequate
80 – 84 = A-			60 – 62 = C-		
77 – 79 = B+	3.5	Superior	57 – 59 = D+	1.0	Marginal
73 – 76 = B	3.0	Good	53 – 56 = D		Poor
70 – 72 = B-			50 – 52 = D-		
			< 50 = F	0.0	Failure

## F. Course Policies

In addition to the policies outlined in the *Student Handbook*, the complete academic policies, procedures, and regulations of Providence College can be found online ([http://prov.ca/college/ac\\_pol-proc-reg.aspx](http://prov.ca/college/ac_pol-proc-reg.aspx)), or in the Library, Admissions Office, or Dean's Office.

### 1. Class Attendance

Full attendance at all classes is expected, because active listening, thinking and discussing are primary learning experiences in this course. Questions on exams will be designed to reward class attendance and alertness. While the instructor is committed to making the classes as interesting and informative as possible, it is neither his role nor his gift to be an entertainer. Students who find themselves struggling with course material are welcome to seek additional individual assistance from the instructor outside the classes, but only if they have demonstrated the self-discipline to attend all the classes they possibly can.

## 2. ICTs in Class

Student use of information and communication technologies for purposes other than class note-taking is not allowed in the classroom, as students are expected to give their total attention to class activities. Use of cell-phones or ipods is never appropriate in the classroom, and use of laptop computers to play games, write blogs, chat with others, browse the internet, or engage material not related to the class is always distracting to classmates and disrespectful to the instructor. Unlike some other post-secondary institutions, Providence has not yet found it necessary to ban laptops from the classroom, or prevent wireless internet access in classrooms. Only judicious use of them will keep it that way.

## 3. Academic Integrity

Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all its various forms, and will be held accountable for doing so by the policy on Academic Conduct in the Student Handbook (<http://prov.ca/studentLife/handbook.aspx>). One particularly problematic breach of academic integrity is plagiarism, which is stealing from the ideas and writings of another person and passing them off as one's own. For an elaboration of the nature, types, and prevention of plagiarism, see the Providence College document entitled "Academic Dishonesty: The Problem of Plagiarism in Academic Writing," in the Providence College Academic Formation Guide available in the Providence Bookstore, or in the Providence College "Academic Policies, Procedures, and Regulations" ([http://prov.ca/college/ac\\_pol-proc-reg.aspx](http://prov.ca/college/ac_pol-proc-reg.aspx)).

## 4. Late Assignments

Late assignments will not be accepted after their due date, and will receive a grade of zero for that component of the course. The instructor will *not* receive requests for extensions. If you feel an extension is warranted, attach a cover letter to your assignment when you hand it in, explaining why it is late, and a decision will be made by the instructor when your paper is graded. A waiving of the zero grade will be granted only in the cases of personal or medical emergencies as detailed in the cover letter. Computer problems, conflicts with co-curricular activities, competition for library resources, and/or long weekends before or after due dates do not constitute such emergencies. Failure to plan ahead, or to maintain a margin of time for unforeseen events prior to the due date, does not warrant an extension either.

## 5. Missed Exams

Students who miss an exam are responsible to contact the instructor within one week of the exam date if they still wish to write the exam. Permission to do so will be given to only those students who present evidence, acceptable to the instructor, of medical reasons for having missed the exam. The format of the exam will be at the discretion of the instructor, with essay questions likely. Students who do not write an exam by at most 2 weeks after the exam date will receive a grade of zero for that component of the course.

## G. Collateral Readings

Bouma-Prediger, Steven. 2001. *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker. Chapter 3: "Is Christianity to Blame? The Ecological Complaint against Christianity."

Fraser, David A., and Tony Campolo. 1992. *Sociology Through the Eyes of Faith*. San Francisco: HarperCollins.

Chapter 13: Theological Paradigms.

Chapter 16: The Kingdoms of this World and the Kingdom of God.

Chapter 17: Blending Sociology and Faith.

Knight, G., and J. Greenberg. 2008. "The Mass Media." In *New Society* 5<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by R. J. Brym. Toronto: Thomson Nelson.

Leonard, Annie. 2008. "The Story of Stuff." <http://www.storyofstuff.com/>

Leming, M. R. 1989. "Is Faith a Social Construction?" In *The Sociological Perspective: A Value-Committed Introduction*. edited by M. R. Leming, R. G. DeVries, and B. F. J. Furnish. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Postman, N. 1995. "Virtual Students' Digital Classroom." *The Nation*. October 9.  
Posted under "Shared Documents" for this course on your Providence Student Portal.

Schultze, Q. J. 2002. *Habits of the High-Tech Heart: Living Virtuously in the Information Age*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. Chapter 1: "Discerning Our Informationism."

## H. Mega Websites

All of the following provide links to hundreds of other sociology sites.

Sociology and Anthropology Sources

<http://www.socsciresearch.com/r7.html>

The SocioWeb

<http://www.socioweb.com/~markbl/socioweb/>

Sociology Resources on the Web

<http://www.uic.edu/depts/soci/Soclinks.html>

Sociology Internet Resources

<http://vax.wcsu.edu/socialsci/socres.html>

A Sociological tour through cyberspace

<http://www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/index.html>

Sociosite

<http://www2.fmg.uva.nl/sociosite/>

Christian Sociological Society

<http://www.christiansociology.com/>

## I. Class Schedule

The readings appearing beside each class topic are to be read in conjunction with that class. All assigned readings from other than the Macionis & Gerber text (M & G) are on reserve in the Learning Resource Centre. Ask for them by title at the front desk. Full bibliographic references are given in the collateral readings listed above. The instructor reserves the right to assign additional readings during the course of the term or to alter the schedule of topics as he sees fit.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading Checks</u>
Jan. 6	Orientation to the Course	
<b>Unit I: Social Institutions</b>		
Jan. 9	Political Economy	
Jan. 13	Political Economy	
Jan. 16	State and Polity	1. M & G ch.16 2. Leonard "The story of Stuff"
Jan. 20	State and Polity	
Jan. 23	Religion	1. M & G ch.17 2. Fraser & Campolo ch.13 "Theological Paradigms"
Jan. 27	<b>Day of Prayer (classes cancelled)</b>	
Jan. 30	Religion	
Feb. 3	<b>Exam #1</b>	
Feb. 6	Marriage and Family	1. M & G ch.19 2. Leming "Is faith a social..."

Feb. 10	Education	M & G ch.18 <b>Crit. Thinking Set #1 Due</b>
Feb. 13	Education	
Feb. 17	Mass Media	1. M & G ch.20 2. Postman “Virtual Students...”
Feb. 20	Mass Media	
Feb. 24	Health and Medicine	1. Knight “The mass media” 2. Schultze “Discerning our ...”
Feb. 27	Health and Medicine	<b>Film Analysis Due</b>
<b>Mar. 2-6</b>	<b>Reading Week (classes cancelled)</b>	
Mar. 10	<b>Exam #2</b>	
<b>Unit II: Macro Social Dynamics</b>		
Mar. 13	Population	M & G ch.21
Mar. 17	The Environment	<b>Crit. Thinking Set #2 Due</b>
Mar. 20	Collective Behaviour	1. M & G ch.22 2. Bouma-Prediger “Is Christianity to blame...”
Mar. 24	Social Movements	
Mar. 27	Social Change	1. M & G ch.23 2. Fraser & Campolo ch.16 “The Kingdoms of this...”
Mar. 31	Video: <i>No Logo; brands, globalization, and resistance</i>	<b>Book Review Due</b>
Apr. 3	Globalization	M & G ch.24

Apr. 7	Christianity and Sociology	1. M & G ch.12 2. Fraser & Campolo ch.17 “Blending sociology...”
Apr. 10	<b>Good Friday (classes cancelled)</b>	
Apr. 14	<b>Exam #3, 8:30 am</b>	<b>Crit. Thinking Set #3 Due</b>