

University of Manitoba, Department of Sociology

**SOC 2200: Sociology through Film (A01)**

Summer Session 2015

3 Credit Hours

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Instructor:	Evan Bowness, MA
Class Location:	160 Dafoe Library
Class Schedule:	Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:00 PM – 9:30 PM
Course Website (D2L):	<a href="https://universityofmanitoba.desire2learn.com/">https://universityofmanitoba.desire2learn.com/</a>
Email (preferred):	Through D2L (course website)
Email (urgent messages only):	<a href="mailto:evan.bowness@umanitoba.ca">evan.bowness@umanitoba.ca</a>
Phone:	204-474-9915 (voice mail checked twice a week)
Office:	301-L Isbister Building
Office Hours:	By appointment only
Teaching Assistant:	Justine Narine, <a href="mailto:narinejt@myumanitoba.ca">narinejt@myumanitoba.ca</a>

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**Course Overview and Objectives:**

Welcome to *Sociology through Film*—an invitation to explore themes of social inequality and social justice by using films, documentaries and television shows as a means of illustration and a platform for discussion. We begin with an introduction to the “sociological imagination” (a quality of mind that makes connections between personal troubles and public issues), and throughout the term we’ll look to a projector as a guide to a deeper understanding of how individuals experience social problems. You can expect to engage with a number of critical issues in sociology, and you’ll leave the course with some familiarity of the major classical and contemporary traditions of the discipline. Best of all, we’ll do this while watching movies and eating pizza.

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**Required Reading:**

Kendall et al. (2012). *Social Problems in a Diverse Society*, Third Canadian Edition with MySocKit.

Other readings may be posted to D2L or made available on course reserve in the library.

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## **Assignments and Grading:**

### Sociological Imagination Exercise (15 %)

Develop your 'Sociological Imagination' through a short analytic writing assignment. In two pages or less, describe one or more *personal troubles* experienced by Claireece Jones from the film *Precious* (2009), and then situate it/them within the context of *social problems* discussed in Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4. A detailed assignment description, including deadlines, will be distributed in class and on the course website. **Deadline: May 31, Midnight**

### Analyzing Social Problems Through TV (25 %)

Demonstrate your understanding of the course material by analyzing the content of a popular television show (you will have to watch the show on your own). A detailed assignment description with character options to pick from will be distributed in class and on the course website. **Deadline: June 14, Midnight**

### Tests -- 2 x 20 % (40 %)

Two non-cumulative in-class tests multiple choice and/or true-false questions.

*First Test: May 28, 7:00 pm*  
*Second Test: June 18, 7:00 pm*

### In-Class Discussion Activities -- 5 x 4 % (20%)

Small group discussions to address a list of questions referring to a film watched in class. Each group will record and submit their responses via the course website (due by midnight the day of the Activity). If you miss one, you get a grade of 0% for that Activity. Your lowest In-Class Discussion Activity mark will be dropped.

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## **Final Grades:**

A+: Exceptional (90-100%)	C+: Satisfactory (65-69%)
A: Excellent (80-89%)	C: Adequate (60-64%)
B+: Very Good (75-79%)	D: Marginal (50-59%)
B: Good (70-74%)	F: Failure (Below 50%)

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### **Guidelines for Written Assignments:**

All written assignments (Sociological Imagination Exercise, Social Problems Through Film Paper, and Discussion Activities) are to be submitted through the course website (Desire2Learn). **NO** E-MAIL OR HARDCOPY SUBMISSIONS – I will not accept them.

A handout will be distributed in class and posted on the course website detailing:

- instructions on how to submit your assignments using D2L Dropboxes, and
- the formatting, style and referencing guidelines for the course.

Follow these instructions and guidelines carefully – failure to do so will cost you marks.

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### **Other Considerations:**

Conduct: Come to class having read the assigned readings and be prepared to participate in class discussions. Be respectful – disruption may result in disbarment from the course. Please notify me at the onset of class if you need to leave early or if you have to come late to the next class. If you must miss a class, please notify me by e-mail.

E-mails: The best way to reach me outside of class time is through e-mail. Please use the D2L site for any inquiries that are not urgent (i.e., can wait approx. 24-48 hours for a response). If you have an urgent matter and require a quicker response, use my umanitoba.ca address. NOTE: All e-mails must contain the following:

1. A salutation (e.g., “Hi Evan,”)
2. Mention of course that your e-mail is about (e.g., “I’m in your SOC 2200 class.”)
3. A clear purpose for your e-mail (e.g., “I would like to ask for an extension...”)
4. Your signature (e.g., “Thank you, Tina Weymouth, Student Number 1234567”)

If any of these elements is missing from an e-mail directed to me, you can expect to receive this in response:

*“Please fix this e-mail, then resend.  
I will get back to you as soon as I have a complete e-mail inquiry to work with.”*

If your e-mail was written using text shorthand, terrible grammar and/or spelling, or overly colloquial slang, you’ll get a reply, like this one, from me:

*“Lol. Pls fix dis!!???!! Thaksssss. G2G!”*

**Keep an Open Mind:** Sociology can be a frustrating business. Often, it requires us to face the root of misconceptions that we hold about the social world. Be open to taking on a diversity of perspectives. Challenge your own thinking. Recognize that society shapes consciousness. And importantly, scrutinize and reflect on your actions which might have otherwise gone unquestioned.

**Trigger warning:** some films (especially *Precious*) in this course deal with issues around sexual assault and domestic violence. If you feel uncomfortable with the content of any film or assignment, please let me know and we can find alternatives -- you need not give me any details.

**Late Assignments:** Assignments submitted after the deadline (without my permission) will be penalized 10% per day, including weekends and holidays.

**Extensions:** I am open to granting extensions for assignments where they are warranted. Note that documentation (such as a doctor's notes) will usually be required. Except under exceptional circumstances, I will not entertain requests for extensions after the fact – you have to make your request *in advance of the deadline in question*.

**Unclaimed Term Work Disposal:** Any term work that has not been claimed by students will be held for four (4) months from the end of the final examination period for the term in which the work was assigned. At the conclusion of this time, all unclaimed term work will become property of the Faculty of Arts and be destroyed according to FIPPA guidelines and using confidential measures for disposal.

**Missed Tests:** Any student who misses a test or exam must provide a doctor's note (or appropriate equivalent). This will be strictly enforced. No student will be allowed to write a make-up test without a doctor's note (or some form of written documentation). Any student who does not inform me (by phone/e-mail/voice mail/office hours) prior to test time (that they will be absent for the test) will not be allowed to write a make-up test. This also will be strictly enforced. I will inform you of when and where the make-up test will be written. No alternate date will be given; as such, it is the student's responsibility to show up at the specified date and time, without exception.

**VW Deadlines:** May 8, 2015 is the last day to withdraw and not be assessed a "VW." June 9, 2015 is the last date for Voluntary Withdrawal without academic penalty (see refund schedule, published on the Registrar's Office website, for financial implications)

**Special Needs:** Students with special learning needs (who for legitimate reasons require extra time, aids or other supports) should discreetly identify themselves to me at the beginning of the term in order to arrange suitable accommodation.

**Religious Holidays:** The University recognizes the right of all students to observe recognized holidays of their faith, which fall within the academic year. At my discretion, necessary arrangements can be made to ensure studies are not jeopardized. Again, please notify me via e-mail if you need to miss a class.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Don't do it. Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on plagiarism, cheating, exam personation, ("Personation at Examinations" (Section 5.2.9) and "Plagiarism and Cheating" (Section 8.1)) and duplicate submission (found here: [umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/student/index.html](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/student/index.html)). Ignorance of the regulations and policies regarding academic integrity is not a valid excuse for violating them. In particular, **everyone should read this document on avoiding plagiarism:** [umanitoba.ca/libraries/units/dafoe/media/plagiarism.pdf](http://umanitoba.ca/libraries/units/dafoe/media/plagiarism.pdf). Anyone found to have committed academic dishonesty will be punished.

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## **Support Services**

The Academic Learning Centre is located in 201 Tier Building. The centre provides a number of services to help students fine tune their test-taking, note-taking, essay-writing, and listening skills. You can access the Centre's website here: <http://umanitoba.ca/virtualllearningcommons/>

I would like to draw your attention to two services in particular:

**The Writing Tutor Program:** A great way to improve your writing skills. You can connect with a tutor in a number of ways: book an in-person session, show up for a drop in during peak times, or book an online session.

**Workshops:** Both facilitated group workshops, and brief on-line tutorials. Topics range from test preparation to time management.

Use these services! They can help make you a better student.

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## Course Content and Schedule

### Week One

**May 5 Introduction**

Reading: Ch 1. Taking a New Look at Social Problems

**May 7 Social Class**

Reading: Ch 2: Poverty in the Canadian Context

Film: *The Things I Cannot Change* (1967, 55 minutes) OR

Film: *The Courage to Change* (1986, 55 minutes)

### Week Two

**May 12 Identity and Privilege 1: Race and Gender.**

Reading: Ch 3: Racism and Ethnic Inequality  
Ch 4: Gender Inequality

**May 14 Intersectionality.**

Film: *Precious* (2009, 110 minutes)

Trigger Warning - content in this film graphically illustrates sexual assault and domestic abuse. If you are not comfortable watching this film in class, or would like me to find an alternative film for you, please let me know.

### Week Three

**May 19 Identity and Privilege 2: Sexuality.**

Reading: Ch 6. Inequality Based on Sexual Orientation

**May 21 Resistance.**

Film: *Milk* (2008, 128 minutes)

### Week Four

**May 26 Sociological Theory.**

Reading: TBD

Film: *The Matrix* (1999, 136 minutes)

**May 28 First Test**

*May 31 – Sociological Imagination Exercise Due*

Week Five

**June 2**      **Institutions and Structures 1: Health.**  
Reading:      Ch. 10 Health, Illness, and Health Care as Social Programs  
Film:          *Thank You For Smoking* (2005, 92 mins)

**June 4**      **Institutions and Structures 2: Criminology.**  
Reading:      Ch 9. Crime and Criminal Justice  
Film:          *TBD*

Week Six

**June 9**      **Institutions and Structures 3: Neoliberalism.**  
Reading:      Ch 13: Problems in the Globalized Economy and Politics  
Film:          *The Corporation* (2003, 145 mins).

**June 11**     **Institutions and Structures 4: Ecological Crisis.**  
Reading:      Ch 15: Population, Urbanization, and the Environmental Crisis  
Film:          *TBD*

*June 14 – Social Problems Through TV Paper Due*

Week Seven

**June 16**     **Opportunities**  
Reading:      *TBD*  
Film:          *TBD*

**June 18**     **Second Test**