

Sociology 3370 A02
Sociology of Work

University of Manitoba
Department of Sociology
Winter 2015 (3 credit hours)
Tier 302
Tuesday and Thursday, 4PM-5:15PM

Instructor: David Camfield
Office: Isbister 116
Phone: 204-474-9117
E-mail: david.camfield@umanitoba.ca¹
Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30AM-11:30AM, Thursday 2:30PM-3:30PM, and at other times by prior appointment.

Many students today are worried that it will be difficult to find a good job after graduating from university. Most think about this as a personal or private problem, not a public issue created by how our society is organized. This is an example of what the sociologist C Wright Mills argued: “people do not usually define the troubles they endure in terms of historical change and institutional contradiction.” People are “seldom aware of the intricate connection between the patterns of their own lives and the course of world history.” As a result, most people try to deal with their “personal troubles” without addressing “the structural transformations that usually lie behind them.”

This course is centred on the question “Why are good jobs difficult to find in Canada today?” To answer this question, we need to explore the nature of work today. The course offers you an opportunity to analyse work using some key sociological concepts, to understand distinctive features of work today and to explain the forces that have produced them. It also offers an opportunity to strengthen your abilities to think critically, to discuss ideas in a collaborative way and to communicate effectively in writing. These abilities will help you succeed in the world of paid work and in further academic study. What we will examine in this course is relevant to everyone who works for pay. The knowledge you have an opportunity to learn is also valuable for anyone who cares about how human well-being could be improved by changing the nature of work.

I have chosen the readings and designed assignments to provide you with the opportunities described above. I will strive to make our classes a stimulating learning environment in which all students participate. I am available to meet outside of class to assist you.

If you want to learn as much as you can from this course, you will need to do the readings before class, attend and participate in all classes in a manner that is respectful of others and complete

¹ Please note that I do not check e-mail in the evening or on weekends.

the assignments. The format of our classes will vary depending on the number of students and the questions we are dealing with, but your class participation will always be important.

In order to get the most out of time in class, I recommend that you: a) carefully read the required reading(s) *before* class, b) think about how what you have read helps to answer the key question(s) for each topic (see the schedule of topics), c) make note of any questions you have and d) participate in class discussions, raising whatever questions you have.

Required course texts (available from the university bookstore):

1. *Required Readings for Sociology of Work*
2. Simon Head, *Mindless: Why Smarter Machines are Making Dumber Humans*

Grading scheme:

Assignment #1 10% (due Jan. 13)
 Assignment #2 15% (due Jan. 22)
 Assignment #3 30% (due Mar. 5)
 Take-home examination 30% (due Apr. 16)
 Class participation and in-class work 15%

Grades:	A+	85-100%	C+	65-69%
	A	80-84	C	60-64%
	B+	75-79%	D	50-59%
	B	70-74%	F	0-49%

- Please note:**
1. Evaluative feedback will be provided prior to the voluntary withdrawal date, which is March 19, 2015.
 2. Students will not be permitted to write make-up tests or make-up missed assignments without documented medical or compassionate reasons.
 3. 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 by reading documentation provided at the Arts Student Resources web site at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/student/index.html> Ignorance of the regulations and policies regarding academic integrity is not a valid excuse for violating them. If you have any questions about this, please speak to me.
 4. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 2% per day. The penalty will be waived in the case of documented serious illness or personal emergency (such as the death or serious illness of a close family member). To request the extension of a due date, contact me.
 5. Students appealing any term work whether it be an informal or formal appeal must do so within 10 working days of receiving their mark.
 6. All final grades are subject to departmental review.
 7. Assignments submitted by e-mail or fax will not be accepted.
 8. Students are responsible for all material covered in class.

9. Any term work that has not been claimed by students will be held for 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 be destroyed according to FIPPA guidelines and using confidential measures for disposal.

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty:

The minimum penalty for plagiarism on a written assignment is F on the paper and may result in an F-DISC (discipline) in the course. This notation appears on the student's transcript. For repeat violations, this penalty can also include suspension from the Faculty of Arts for a period of up to 1 year.

The minimum penalty for academic dishonesty in a test or final examination is F for the test/examination, and an F-DISC (discipline) in the course plus a suspension from the Faculty of Arts for a period of one year. The F grade and disciplinary notation appears on the student's transcript. For repeat violations, the penalty may include suspension from the Faculty of Arts for a period of up to 5 years.

The Faculty also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism.

Schedule of Class Topics and Readings:

The required readings are a) articles and extracts from books compiled in the custom courseware package and b) most of Simon Head's book *Mindless*. There is also a radio documentary on the internet to which you will need to listen.

I will occasionally send the class an e-mail with a link to an extra required or optional short reading, video or other material on the internet. Please check your University of Manitoba e-mail address regularly.

Jan. 6 Introduction

I Theory

Jan. 8 Capitalism and Work

How do the distinctive relations of class, gender and race that shape contemporary society affect how work is organized?

Rinehart, J. (2006). *The tyranny of work: Alienation and the labour process*. 5th ed. Toronto: Thomson Nelson. 11-20.

Heron, C. & Storey, R. (1986). On the job in Canada. In C. Heron & R. Storey (Eds.), *On the job: Confronting the labour process in Canada* (pp. 3-46). Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press. 3-46. **Read 26-33 for today's class.**

II The Ways We Used to Work: Historical Sociology of Work in Canada

Jan. 13 Work in Canada Before 1940

What was work like in indigenous societies before colonialism? How did the nature of work in Canada change between the middle of the 1800s and c. 1939?

Carter, S. (1999). *Aboriginal people and colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 24-30.

Heron, C. & Storey, R. (1986). On the job in Canada. In C. Heron & R. Storey (Eds.), *On the job: Confronting the labour process in Canada* (pp. 3-46). Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press. 3-46. **Read 4-18 for today's class.**

Jan. 15 Work in Canada from 1940 to the End of the Post-War Boom

How did work in Canada change during the post-war boom?

Heron, C. & Storey, R. (1986). On the job in Canada. In C. Heron & R. Storey (Eds.), *On the job: Confronting the labour process in Canada* (pp. 3-46). Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press. 3-46. **Read 19-26 for today's class.**

Sangster, J. (2010). *Transforming labour: Women and work in post-war Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 18-26.

Jan. 20 From the End of the Post-War Boom to Today

How has work been affected by the neoliberal restructuring of capitalism?

McNally, D. (2011). *Global slump: The economics and politics of crisis and resistance*. Halifax: Fernwood. 25-60.

III Work Today

Jan. 22 Overview of Labour Markets Today

What are the most important basic features of how work is organized in Canada today? What is a "good job"?

Jackson, A. (2010). *Work and labour in Canada: Critical issues*. 2nd ed. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press. 29-52.

Jan. 27 Unpaid Domestic Labour

How is unpaid domestic labour organized and what is its significance in contemporary society?

Corman, J. & Luxton, M. (2007). Social reproduction and the changing dynamics of unpaid household and caregiving work. In V. Shalla & W. Clement (Eds.), *Work in tumultuous times: Critical perspectives* (pp. 262-288). Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Jan. 29 Supplying Labour Power: Citizen Labour, Migrant Labour

How is the world of work in Canada today shaped by the way citizenship and immigration are organized?

Thomas, M. (2010). Labour migration and temporary work: Canada's foreign-worker programs in the "New Economy." In N. Pupo & M. Thomas (Eds.), *Interrogating the "New Economy"* (pp. 149-172). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

video in class: Chute Molina, T. (Producer), Valencia-Svensson, L. (Producer) & Lee, M.S. (Director & Producer). (2007). *Borderless* [Documentary]. Canada: Kairos Canada.

Feb. 3 Work Time

How is the social organization of time changing in the world of work today?

Negrey, C.L. (2012). *Work time: Conflict, control and change*. Cambridge: Polity. 65-95.

Feb. 5 Schooling and the Job Market

In what ways do educational institutions (from grade school to post-secondary) contribute to preparing people for paid work?

Noonan, J. & Coral, M. (2014). The tyranny of work: Employability and the neo-liberal assault on education. Unpublished paper.

Feb. 10 Work in Extractive Industries

What is distinctive about work in extractive industries such as the Alberta tar sands?

TBA

Feb. 12 Work in Manufacturing and Logistics

How is work organized in the manufacturing and logistics industries today?

Lewchuk, W. & Wells, D. (2006). When corporations substitute for adversarial unions: Labour markets and human resource management at Magna. *Relations industrielles/Industrial Relations*, 61 (4), 639-662.

Feb. 24 Private Sector Service Work

In what ways is work in service-producing companies today changing, and in what ways is it not changing?

Head, S. (2014). *Mindless: Why Smarter Machines are Making Dumber Humans*. New York: Basic Books. 1-46.

Feb. 26 Public Sector Service Work

In what ways is work in the public sector changing?

Pupo, N. & Noack, A. (2010). Dialling for service: Transforming the public sector workplace in Canada. In N. Pupo & M. Thomas (Eds.), *Interrogating the "New Economy"* (pp. 111-128). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Mar. 3 Professional Workers

What is changing for workers with the highest levels of formal education?

Head (2014). 63-77.

Before class, listen to this 36 minute program:

Basen, Ira (Producer). (2014, September 7). *Class struggle*. [Radio documentary].

<http://www.cbc.ca/thesundayedition/documentaries/2014/09/07/class-struggle>

Mar. 5 How Jobs Shape Us As People

In what ways is how we think, feel and desire affected by the social organization of work today?

Sennett, R. (1998). *The corrosion of character: The personal consequences of work in the new capitalism*. New York: WN Norton & Company. 15-31.

Southwood, I. (2011). *Non-stop inertia*. Winchester: Zero Books. 23-30.

Mar. 10 Worker Responses to Work

How are non-unionized workers responding to the changing nature of work?

Silva, J.M. (2013). *Coming up short: Working-class adulthood in an age of uncertainty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 81-111.

Mar. 12 Worker Responses to Work (continued)

How are unionized workers responding to the changing nature of work?

Camfield, D. (2011). *Canadian labour in crisis: Reinventing the workers' movement*. Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing. 10-30, 54-56.

IV Digging Deeper: Explaining the Social Organization of Work Today**Mar. 17 Dominant Interpretations**

How are changes in the nature of work most often depicted today? How accurate is this interpretation?

Florida, R. (2004). *The rise of the creative class: And how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*. New York: Basic Books. 116-143.

Mar. 19 The Shape of Capitalism Today

How is capitalism operating today?

Albo, G. (2010). The "new economy" and capitalism today. In N. Pupo & M. Thomas (Eds.), *Interrogating the "New Economy"* (pp. 3-20). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Mar. 24 Employers' Projects

What do employers want workplaces to be like? To what extent are they succeeding in realizing their visions?

Review Albo.

Head, S. (2014). 103-115.

Mar. 26 Technology

How are employers using new forms of information technology in the workplace?

Head (2014). 1-77, 103-127, 165-184 (47-62, 116-127, 165-184 are new for today)

Mar. 31 State Power and Work

How do the actions of the state affect work today?

Workman, T. (2009). *If you're in my way, I'm walking: The assault on working people since 1970*. Halifax: Fernwood. 42-54.

Apr. 2 The Decline of Workplace Solidarity

What is happening to bonds between workers on the job?

Richardson, C. (2008). Working alone: The erosion of solidarity in today's workplace. *New Labor Forum*, 17 (3), 69-78.

V Alternatives

Apr. 7 **Workers' Collective Action**

Can workers improve the quality of work through collective action?

Keith, M. (2013, October-November). Brewing dissent: Halifax baristas organize. *Our Times*, 32 (5), 19-25.

Keith, M. (2013-2014, December-January). Raising a little hell in Halifax: Troublemakers' conference, *Our Times*, 32 (6), 17-19, 21-22.

Uetrict, M & Perez, J. (2012, November 30). Democratic to the CORE. *In These Times*. Retrieved from inthesetimes.com

Eidelson, J. (2013, January 29). Alt-labor. *American Prospect*. Retrieved from <http://prospect.org>

Apr. 9 **How Different Could Work Be?**

Could work in an advanced society ever be dramatically better for workers?

Rinehart, J. (2006). 176-220.

Course Assignments

All assignments must be typed and double-spaced. If possible, print them as double-sided print jobs. Submit them in class. It is your responsibility to keep a copy of each assignment. If you are unable to bring an assignment to class, you may hand it to me during my office hours. As a last resort, you may submit it to the Sociology General Office.

Assignment #1: How is work organized in capitalist societies?

This assignment is designed to help you understand an important concept used in the study of work in capitalist societies, think critically about it and communicate effectively in writing.

Think of the paid and unpaid work you have done. Very briefly summarize this work experience. Then answer these questions: Was this work alienated in the sense that Rinehart uses the concept? (Be sure to explain why or why not!) How is this important?²

Length: 500-600 words

Due: Jan. 13

This assignment is worth 10% of the final grade.

The paper must be in essay format.

I will be evaluating the paper by considering how well it demonstrates comprehension of the concept of alienation, uses it to analyze your experience and reflects on the significance of your analysis. I will consider both your ideas and how you communicate them in writing.

² If you have never worked for pay, speak to me before starting work on this assignment.

For this assignment and all other written assignments in this course, you must cite a source for everything that is not your own original idea or common knowledge. This applies to quotations from course readings, ideas from course readings that you present in your own words and to other sources. You must provide a reference list in APA style containing all the sources you used. For helpful material on how to avoid plagiarism and how to cite sources, check out the Write and Cite section on this webpage: http://umanitoba.ca/libraries/how_do.shtml

Assignment #2: How has work in Canada changed over time?

This assignment is designed to help you understand continuity and change in work in Canada in the capitalist era and to communicate effectively in writing.

Answer these questions in a brief essay: What are the most important ways in which paid work in Canada today is different than it was a century ago? What are the most important ways in which it is the same?

In developing your answers, use the readings assigned from Jan. 13-22 and class notes as sources. You may also use any other reliable sources you wish (the use of outside sources is optional).

Length: 500-600 words

Due: Jan. 22

This assignment is worth 15% of the final grade.

The paper must be in essay format.

I will be evaluating the paper by considering how well it uses sources and sociological thinking to answer the questions. I will consider both your ideas and how you communicate them in writing.

Assignment #3: How is work organized in Canada today?

This assignment is designed to help you understand the distinctive features of work in Canada today, synthesize information from different sources, communicate effectively in writing and use sociological analysis to illuminate a common concern.

Write a paper on the world of work in Canada into which people graduating from university this year will be headed. The paper must

- provide an overview of how work in Canada is organized today (this means identifying and describing key features of how work is structured in this society; note which features have changed significantly in recent decades and which remain unchanged)
- answer the question “Is there a shortage of good jobs in Canada today?” and provide convincing support for your answer

- If you think there is a shortage of good jobs, the paper must answer this question: What is the relationship between how work in Canada is organized today and the shortage of good jobs? (explain the connection as clearly as you can, in order to explain why the shortage exists)

In developing your answers, use the readings assigned up to Mar. 3 and class notes, plus any other reliable sources you wish (the use of outside sources is optional). Be as comprehensive and specific as possible.

Length: 1500-2000 words

Due: Mar. 5

This assignment is worth 30% of the final grade.

The paper must be in essay format.

I will be evaluating the paper by considering how well it uses sources and sociological thinking to depict work in Canada and address the questions posed. I will consider both your ideas and how you communicate them in writing.

Take-home examination

This assignment is designed to help you understand the forces that have given the world of work in Canada its present shape, synthesize ideas from different sources, communicate effectively in writing and use sociological analysis to illuminate a common concern.

The exam will be distributed in class on April 9 and will be due on April 16.
It is worth 30% of the final grade.

STUDENT RESOURCES

The Academic Learning Centre is located in 201 Tier Building. Advisors provide a wide range of services focused on improvement of academic learning skills. In addition to individual consultations, the Centre offers workshops on test-taking, note-taking, essay and term paper writing, and listening skills.

Writing Tutors operate from both the Elizabeth Dafoe Library and the Academic Learning Centre and can be accessed either by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Check scheduled hours of availability on-line through the Academic Learning Centre site.