

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

SOC 4450 Honours Thesis Seminar (A01)

2007/2008 (6 credit hours)

Professor: Dr. Elizabeth Comack
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Meeting Times: Thursdays, 2:30 to 5:30, Room 216 Tier Building
Office Hours: before class or by appointment

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this course is to assist students in the completion of their Honours thesis, a major requirement for their degree. A Sociology Honours thesis is an original piece of work that explores and develops an analysis of a social problem, issue, or theoretical debate. More complex and in-depth than a term paper, the Honours thesis is a multi-stage examination of a subject that is typically comprised of a series of chapters, each of which forms a necessary part of the larger project. Another important objective of the course is to assist students in improving their research, writing, analytical, and oral presentation skills.

COURSE FORMAT

The course has been organized according to the various stages involved in constructing and completing a research and writing project such as an Honours thesis. Readings have been chosen and assignments have been constructed that will assist you in making progress with your work. As a seminar course, students are expected to actively participate in each class, not only in terms of discussing the assigned readings and presenting your own work, but also in terms of offering constructive feedback to other students on their work. This means that you must come to class with the assignments and readings for that week completed, and be prepared to engage in discussion of the material being considered.

REQUIRED READING

The following book is available for purchase in the UM Bookstore:

Sears, Alan. 2005. *A Good Book, In Theory: A Guide to Theoretical Thinking*. Peterborough: Broadview Press.

All other assigned readings will be left on a shelf marked 'Soc 4450' in the Sociology mail/photocopy room (320 Isbister Building).

EVALUATION

The following comprises the breakdown of the grade for the course. More information, including due dates for various pieces of work, can be found in the *Course Outline, Reading List, and Timetable* (attached).

Assignments: 30%

There are six assignments due throughout the course. Each is worth 5 percent of your grade.

Class Participation: 30%

The success of the seminar will be largely determined by the participation of all members of the class. As such, part of your grade for the course will be based on your own presentations and contributions to seminar discussions as well as the feedback provided to other students on their work.

Honours Thesis Proposal: 10%

Honours Thesis (final version): 30%

Twenty percent of the grade for the final version of the Honours thesis will be determined by the Honours thesis advisor and 10 percent will be determined by the Instructor.

In assigning letter grades for the course, the following scale will be used:

A+	90% and over
A	80 - 89%
B+	75 - 79%
B	70 - 74%
C+	65 - 69%
C	60 - 64%
D	50 - 59%
F	less than 50%

All writing assignments are due on the dates indicated in the *Course Outline, Reading List, and Timetable*. Students who submit late assignments without a legitimate reason will be penalized **one mark** for each overdue day.

Students should acquaint themselves with the University policy on “Personation: Examinations” (section 4.2.8) and “Plagiarism and Cheating” (section 7.1) found in the *University of Manitoba Undergraduate Calendar*. The Faculty of Arts also reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism.

KEEPING IN CONTACT OUTSIDE OF CLASS TIME

I will be happy to meet with students outside of class time to discuss their progress through the course material and especially with their Honours thesis project. In addition, I encourage students to make use of email as a way to contact me. However, some cautions are in order:

- While I typically check my emails on a regular basis (including weekends), students should expect to receive a response within a *reasonable* amount of time;
- Keep in mind that we are working within an academic context. In this respect, email correspondence with your professors is different than communicating with your buddies on MSN; it is more akin to letter writing. As such, students should strive to utilize proper grammar and sentence structure when compiling an email;
- Students who are unable to attend class due to illness or a family emergency can inform me by email, but it is wiser to leave a phone message (474-9673) if you are making contact on the day our class meets.
- Assignments and thesis work are due during class time and will not normally be accepted by email attachment. This policy reduces the likelihood of computer virus transmission as well as the cost and time it would take me to print off students' work.

PROFESSOR AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

As the course instructor, my responsibilities are governed by the University's ROASS Policy (see the *2007-2008 Undergraduate Calendar*, pp. 19-21). In fulfilling these responsibilities, I have selected readings and organized classroom time to meet the objectives of this course. I will also endeavour to provide students with sufficient feedback on their work. Finally, my responsibilities include the effort to create a safe, cooperative, and stimulating learning environment for students.

Students have responsibilities, too. First and foremost, students are responsible for their own learning. You are expected to complete all assigned readings in advance of class and are required to come prepared to discuss the material. If you are unclear about course material or have academic concerns or questions, it is your responsibility to ask for help. I will be pleased to schedule extra time with you outside of class to help you succeed in this course. As well, you are responsible for meeting all deadlines and complying with policies on grades and academic honesty. University policy also indicates that students have an obligation to act in a manner that is fair and reasonable towards their professors and other students. This includes acting in a respectful manner and working together to create a climate in the classroom where meaningful learning can take place.