

# The Chinese University of Hong Kong

## SOCI1102/UGEC1823 Sociology and Modern Society (Summer term, 2019/20)

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Time: Tuesday & Thursday 10:30-1:15pm zoom class

### Course Description

This course explores into the significance of sociological perspectives in understanding modern society. Attention will be given to the application of sociological concepts in the observation and analysis of social phenomena in modern society. The course is designed particularly to develop intellectual skills, as part of a student's general education, for a better understanding of the nature of modern society.

### Course Schedule

- 1 20200526 What is a sociological problem?
- 2 20200528 The Sociological Perspectives
- 3 20200602 Culture and norms: Becoming a Member of Society
- 4 20200604 Social Networks
- 5 20200609 Social Structure: Positions and Resources
- 6 20200611 Globalization and Social Media
- 7 20200616 [Film appreciation and discussion](#)
- 8 20200618 Work under Post-industrialism
- 9 20200623 Education under Globalization
- 10 20200625 **Public Holiday**
- 11 20200630 Marriage and Family under Individualization
- 12 20200702 Self-perpetuating Organizations
- 13 20200707 Does the Individual Make a Difference?
- 14 20200709 [Test](#)

### Assessment Methods (100%)

- I. Film appreciation and class discussion (10%)
- II. Individual report (35%):  
Due date of the individual report: 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020, at 5:00pm  
Words limit: 1,500 to 2,500 in English, 2,000 to 3,000 in Chinese.
- III. Test (55%)

## Learning Objectives

This course introduces students to the basic principles and concepts of sociology. Students are expected:

1. to learn how to ask a sociological question;
2. to be able to apply basic sociological concepts to their social investigation; and
3. to learn how to examine a social phenomenon from a sociological perspective.

## Grade Descriptors:

- A Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
- A- Outstanding performance on most learning outcomes.
- B Substantial performance on most learning outcomes.
- C Acceptable performance on most learning outcomes, with a few weaknesses.
- D Barely acceptable performance on most learning outcomes.
- F Failure to meet specified assessment requirement.

## Textbook

OpenStax College. 2017. *Introduction to sociology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Rice University.  
(<https://openstax.org/details/books/introduction-sociology-2e>)

## Lecture Outline

### Lecture 1 Introduction

- What is a sociological problem? What is the Social? – What makes the society possible?  
Biography and history / personal trouble or social issue / the debunking tendency / the unrespectability motif / the relativizing motif / the cosmopolitan motif / beyond common sense

OpenStax (2017). Chapter 1, pp6–10, 19–20

Berger, Peter (1966). *Invitation to Sociology*. Harmondsworth: Pelican Books. Pp.49-51.

Gladwell, Malcolm (2008). *Outliers: The Story of Success*. London: Penguin Books. Chapter 1.

### *Part I: What is Sociology?*

#### Lecture 2 The Sociological Perspective

- Historical background / birth of sociology / contemporary theories

OpenStax (2017). Chapter 1, pp14-18

Berger, Peter (1966). *Invitation to Sociology*. Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, chapter 2.

Mills, C. Wright (1970). *The Sociological Imagination*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books. Pp. 9-25.

Bauman, Zygmunt, and Tim May (2001). *Thinking Sociologically* 2nd Ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. Introduction.

### *Part II: What is the Social?*

#### Lecture 3 & 4

## **Culture and Norms: Becoming a Member of Society**

- Social order / culture / norms / values / internalization / status and role

## **Socialization**

- Looking glass self / primary & secondary socialization / reference group

## **Social Networks**

- The idea of a small world / the notion of embeddedness / ties / the strength of weak ties

OpenStax (2017). Chapter 3, pp.51-67 & chapter 5, pp.93-107

Berger, Peter L., and Brigitte Berger (1976) *Sociology: A Biographical Approach* Rev Ed. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books. Pp.62-9.

Schwalbe, Michael (2001). *The Sociologically Examined Life* 2nd Ed. Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Co. Chapter 5.

Watts, Duncan J. (2004). *Six Degrees*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Pp.37-42 and 47-50.

Stark, Rodney (2001) *Sociology* 8th Ed. Pp.38-41.

## **Lecture 5 Social Structure: Positions and Resources**

- Social stratification / class, gender, and race and ethnicity / position, resources and power / inequalities

OpenStax (2017). Chapter 9, pp.183-195

Berger, Peter L., and Brigitte Berger (1976). *Sociology: A Biographical Approach* Rev Ed. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books. Pp.166-77.

Alexander, Jeffrey C., and Kenneth THOMPSON (2008). *A Contemporary Introduction to Sociology*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers. Pp.240-53, 270-74, 278-86, and 300-08.

## **Part III: Social Processes under Macro Social Change**

### **Lecture 6 Globalization and Social Media**

- Meanings, theories and impacts of globalization
- Social media / information society

OpenStax (2017). Chapter 4, pp.75-79, chapter 8, pp.157-167 & chapter 10, pp.205-210

Guillén, M.F. 2001. "Is globalization civilizing, destructive or feeble? A critique of five key debates in the social science literature." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27:235–260.

### **Lecture 7 Film appreciation and discussion**

**"Billy Elliot" VS "Born Famous: Gordon Ramsay and his son" from viu TV (free)**

20200612 6:30pm

### **Lecture 8 Education under Globalization**

- Education as human capital / education expansion / a globalized labour market / education as positional goods

OpenStax (2017). Chapter 16, pp.353-363 & chapter 8, pp.165-168

Brown, Phillip, Hugh Lauder, and David Ashton (2011). *The Global Auction: The Broken Promises of Education, Jobs, and Incomes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp.4-13.

Hirsh, Fred (1977). *Social Limits to Growth*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. Pp.27-8.

## **Lecture 9 Work under Post-industrialism**

- Work and employment / industrialization and the separation of work and family / the factory system / scientific management / mass production / the assembly line / Fordism and post-Fordism / service work in a post-industrial economy / from assembling to interactive service work

OpenStax (2017). Chapter 18, pp.395-408

Leidner, Robin (1996). 'Over the counter: MacDonald's,' in Susan J. FERGUSON (ed.) *Mapping the Social Landscape*. Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Co.

Slattery, Martin (1991) *Key Ideas in Sociology*. Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. Chapter 45.

## **Lecture 10 Marriage and Family under Individualization**

- the universality and decline of the family / family functions / family under social change / individualization

OpenStax (2017). Chapter 14:307–323

Amato, Paul, et. al. (2007) *Alone Together*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapter 7.

Yodanis, C. & Lauer, S. 2014. "Is marriage individualized? What couples actually do." *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 6(2): 184–197.

## **Part IV: Continuity and Change**

### **Lecture 11 Self-perpetuating Organizations**

- Organization as above the individuals / bureaucratization as an outcome of rationalization / organizations becoming alike / legitimacy as an organizational concern / taken-for-grantedness / ambiguities / isomorphism / goal displacement / the 'iron law of oligarchy'

OpenStax (2017). Chapter 6:115–128

Slattery, Martin (1991) *Key Ideas in Sociology*. Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd. Chapter 31.

Dimaggio, Paul, and Walter Powell (1983). 'The iron cage revisited.' *American Sociological Review*, Vol.48, No.2.

### **Lecture 12 Does the Individual Make a Difference?**

- Making a difference at different levels / the micro social setting / defining the situation / impression management / role playing as performance / role distance / the macro setting / organizing a social movement / collective action

OpenStax (2017). Chapter 4:86-87

Charon, Joel (2004). *Ten Questions: A Sociological Perspective*. Belmont: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. Chapter 8.

Thomas, W.I. (1982) 'The definition of the situation,' in Lewis Coswer and Bernard Rosenberg (eds) *Sociological Theory* 5th Ed. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.

### **Lecture 13 Test**

## Guidelines for Individual Report and Final Paper

- You should write down the course code, course name, student name, student ID and the topic of the paper on the top of the paper.
- Please submit your individual paper in MS WORD.
- Your individual paper should be written in either Chinese/English, in single line or 1.5 spacing, in WORD format, double-sided printing and with a full list of references/bibliography of any sources you may have cited. You may refer to the guideline on academic citations provided by the Department of Sociology: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/soc/citation.pdf>.
- Any unapproved late submission of the written work will receive a 10% reduction in marks (cumulative) for each day past the due date; written work over 5 days late will not be marked. If you need more time to finish the paper, please *email* the instructor for permission.
- Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. With each assignment, you are required to submit a statement that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.
- Plagiarism of every kind is prohibited. Examples of dishonest practice include plagiarism, copying the work of other students, deliberately allowing other students to copy from you, and submitting the same piece of work for more than one course (whether from this or another institution). All academic dishonesty cases will be reported to the university, and a student considered to have cheated in course work or test would be given a zero mark for that particular piece of work or exam paper. Reported academic dishonesty cases would be used to build up a database for future reference.