

Sociol 4MM3 / PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY/PUBLIC SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Fall 2023

Instructor: Neil McLaughlin

Email: nmclaugh@mcmaster.ca

Lecture: See [Avenue to Learn](#)

Room: See [Avenue to Learn](#)

Office: See [Avenue to Learn](#)

Office Hours: See [Avenue to Learn](#)

TA email: No TA email

Course Description

There is a lively debate underway among academics, journalists, students, and the public about the public responsibility of professors and universities. Should academics engage with the public to inform and/or change society or is the primary responsibility of professors to be scientific and scholarly, engaging with other experts inside academic disciplines to produce reliable knowledge? The most recent discussion of this set of broader issues has been called the public intellectual debate which came to Canada in the 1990s. In Sociology, it was the public sociology debate which started around 2004 in the United States but has spread around the world and debated in Canada. We will start with an overview of the general issues at stake in this debate in both sociology and social psychology. And then we will examine a set of case studies including C. Wright Mills, Robert Merton, Erving Goffman, Arlie Hochschild, Jonathan Haidt, Erich Fromm, Malcolm Gladwell, bell hooks, Tressie McMillan Cottom, the psychologists Erik Erikson, Carole Gilligan and BF Skinner, WEB Du Bois, Franz Fanon, and contemporary theorizing and research on Indigenous issues as well as the Jordan Peterson debate, the replication in social psychology and fads in psychology.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

Students will learn a theoretical framework to think about public sociology, public social psychology, and public intellectuals.

Learn to distinguish the professional world of the academia, the market for ideas entered into by of well-known writers and the tensions between activist social psychological scholars and the world of modern professions by looking at in some detail a number of case studies.

Write an analytic book review using the material from the class.

Gain basic knowledge about some influential books and theoretical traditions in social psychology and sociology.

Be able to thoughtfully discuss the trade-offs involved in public engagement for scholars and intellectuals interested in social psychological issues and articulate positions on these questions based on historical and sociological knowledge. And learn to evaluate the kinds of knowledge claims made by public intellectuals and scholars partly based on who the audience for the ideas is and the ways in which the knowledge is produced for different “genres” of books and articles.

Class Format

I will lecture on the readings and topics related to public sociology and public social psychology outlined below along with PowerPoint and/or PDF slides for students to follow along with. I prefer to engage students and begin a conversation with all of you, therefore I am not putting the slides up on a screen. If you learn better with visual cues be sure to either print out of the slides to follow along, or put them up on your lap-top as I lecture. YouTube videos of some of the thinkers we will be talking about will also be posted on Avenue to Learn, along with PDF files of the writing of or about the selected thinkers and on the selected topics. There is no need to buy texts although you will have to gain access to a book to review from the list outlined in this course description.

It will not be possible to complete the class without doing in person participation and tests so plan accordingly. Each class will start with questions from the last lecture. I will lecture. Two tests will be given

Course Evaluation – Overview

Exam 1: 25%

Exam 2: 25%

Book Review activities: 5 out of 6= 10%

Book Review: 20%

Final essay: 20%

The two exams will be given in class. Dates are on Avenue to Learn. The make-up is the next week after the exam, from 3:30pm to 6:30pm. There will be 20 multiple choice questions and 3 short answer questions, on the readings and lecture. The length of the exam is one hour and a half. 2 times 25%.

We will do discussions of the book reviews in class; 6 sessions and students need to do 5. $5 \times 2\% = 10\%$

The book review is 10 double spaced pages and is due Dec 1, 11:59pm. 20%

The final essay is 5 double spaced pages and is due Dec 11, 11:59pm. 20%

The page goals are highly recommended for reasons we will discuss in class, but the essays and book review essay will be graded by the posted rubric based on 30% writing quality, 30% engagement with the class material and 40% strength and originality of the analytic argument. Focus on content and get as close to the page guidelines as possible.

The due dates are also clearly marked on Avenue and we will discuss what I want from them in the first class so make sure to be in class.

Late Policy

I will grant a 72-hour grace period after these deadlines for the last two assignments where there is no late penalty until after these 4 days. After that, there is NO way to get out of a relatively small 1% a late penalty unless you have a formal letter from an official office in the university (SAS or the Dean's Office). You have a 72-hour grace period, and can use the one MSAF form, and have access to sympathetic professionals in the Dean's office and SAS, all trained to deal with these issues. And even after all that, a 1% penalty is very small, if none of the above works.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

"This course addresses three University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (see <http://csl.mcmaster.ca/COU/degree/undergraduate.html>). First, sociological theories and social psychological theories are diverse in their claims and in their focus. Gaining knowledge of these diverse theories, will expand the student's depth and breadth of knowledge. Second, there is no single best way to do sociology or social psychology.

As such, this course requires that students consider and critically evaluate competing approaches to doing intellectual work and think about this with evidence. That involves knowing the difference between peer reviewed scholarship and public intellectual work with the tradeoffs involved. Finally, this course will encourage students to write essays. Writing quality, style and care will count, an important professional skill and we will use required class time to develop writing and analytic skills.

Required Materials and Texts

McLaughlin and Townsley "Contexts of Cultural Diffusion: A Case Study of the Public Intellectual Debate in Canada," *CRS* 2011

Michael Burawoy, "For Public Sociology" *ASR* 2004

Arlie Hochschild, "Emotion work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 1979.

Sterne, J., 2005. C. Wright Mills, the Bureau for Applied Social Research, and the meaning of critical *Cultural Studies*

Erving Goffman "The Interaction Order," *American Sociological Review*, 1983.

Jess Graham, Jonathan Haidt and Brian Nosek, "Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations,"

Malcolm Gladwell, "Most Likely to Succeed", and "The Talent Myth," *The New Yorker*.

And You-Tube "Gladwell's Story"

Neil McLaughlin "How to Become a Forgotten Intellectual," *Sociological Forum* 1998

Robert Holsworth, "The politics of Development: The Social Psychology of Erik Erikson," *The Georgia Review*, 36:2:1982: 385-403.

Robert Friedrichs, "The Potential Impact of BF Skinner upon American Sociology," *American Sociologist* 1978.

Judith Butler, "We need to rethink the category of woman," *The Guardian*, 2021.

Kathleen Stock, "on Social Media," *The Guardian* 2021.

Rachel Cooke, "Feminism for Women," review of Julie Bindel, *The Guardian* 2021.

Carol Gilligan, "In a Different Voice" HER 1977

Morris and Hesslink, "The Potential Impact of BF Skinner upon American Sociology," *The American Sociologist*, 9:3: 1974: 149-153.

George Homan "Bringing Men Back in," *American Sociological Review* 1964,

Richard Keller, "Clinician and Revolutionary: Frantz Fanon. ,Biography and the History of Colonial Medicine," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 2007:81: 4: 823-841.

Cedric Robinson, "The appropriation of Frantz Fanon," *Race and Class*. 35: 1: 1993: 79-91.

Angharad Valdivia, "Bell books: Ethics from the Margins." QI 2002.

Bell hooks, "Choosing the Margins as a Space of Radical Openness," 1989.

Ilene Philipson, "The Last Public Psychoanalyst," *Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, 2017.

Aldon Morris, "WEB Du Bois at the Center," *British Journal of Sociology* 2017.

Frances Cherry, "The Nature of the Nature of Prejudice," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 2000.

Jeff Denis, "Contact Theory in a Small-Town Settler-Colonial Context," *American Sociological Review*, 2015.

Abraham Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation,"

Hochschild UBC video

Haidt, UBC video

Ehrenreich bright sided video

Fad Psychology video

Book Review Essay:

Students need to choose one of these books to do a review of:

Scott Barry Kaufman, *Transcend: The New Science of Self-Actualization* (2021)

Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt, *The Coddling of the American Mind* (2018)

Arlie Hochschild, *Strangers in their Own Land* (2018)

Lawrence Friedman, *Identity's Architect: A biography of Erik Erikson* (1999)

Malcolm Gladwell *Talking to Strangers* (2019)

bell hooks *Communion: The Female Search for Love* (2002)

Jesse Singal, "The Quick Fix: Why Fad Psychology Can't Cure Our Souls," New York: 2021

Alexander Rutherford, *Beyond the Box: BF Skinner's Technology of Behaviour from Laboratory to Life* (2009).

Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (2014)

Jeff Denis *Canada at the Crossroads* (2020) Aldon Morris, *The Scholar Denied* (2017)

Make sure you decide early and either get your book from the library or order it online or get it at a bookstore. Not having access to the book is NOT a legitimate reason for a late submission. Start early. And I will talk about the books in required in person classes that you will receive credit for participating in (up to 10%) and give detailed advice on doing the review, but only in class and office hours but not on email.

OUTLINE

Monday, Sept 11: Intro to class

Required readings: Michael Burawoy, "For Public Sociology" *ASR* 2005

McLaughlin and Townsley "Contexts of Cultural Diffusion: A Case Study of the Public Intellectual Debate in Canada," *CRS* 2011

Monday, Sept 18: Hochschild and Mills

Arlie Hochschild, "Emotion work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 1979.

Sterne, J., 2005. C. Wright Mills, the Bureau for Applied Social Research, and the meaning of critical, *Cultural Studies*

Books review activity 1

Monday, Sept 25: Haidt and Goffman

Jess Graham, Jonathan Haidt and Brian Nosek, "Liberals and Conservatives Rely on Different Sets of Moral Foundations

Erving Goffman "The Interaction Order," *American Sociological Review*, 1983.

Required Haidt video

Book review activity 2

Monday, Oct 2: Test 1

Test 1

Monday, Oct 16: hook's Black Feminism and Gladwell

Angharad Valdivia, "Bell hooks: Ethics from the Margins." QI 2002

Bell hooks, "Choosing the Margins as a Space of Radical Openness," 1989.

Malcolm Gladwell, You-Tube video, two New Yorker essays

Monday, Oct 23: Erikson and Gilligan

Robert Holsworth, "The politics of development, *The Georgia Review* 1982.

Carol Gilligan, "In a Different Voice" HER 1977

3 Guardian essays, Butler, Stock and Bendel.

Book activity 3

Monday, Oct 30: Skinner and Exchange Theories

George Homan "Bringing Men Back in," *American Sociological Review* 1964,

Robert Friedrichs, "The Potential Impact of B.F. Skinner," *The American Sociologist* 1974.

Book review activity 4

Monday, Nov 6: Fanon and Du Bois

Aldon Morris, "WEB Du Bois at the Center," *British Journal of Sociology* 2017

Keller, "Clinician Revolutionary: Frantz Fanon," 2007.

Cedric Robinson, "The appropriation of Frantz Fanon," 1993.

Book review activity 5

Monday, Nov 13: Allport and Denis

Frances Cherry, "The Nature of the Nature of Prejudice," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*," 2000.

Jeff Denis, "Contact Theory in a Small-Town Settler-Colonial Context," *American Sociological Review*, 2015.

Monday, Nov 20: Test 2

Test 2, make-up at 9:00pm

Monday, Nov 27: Fromm and Maslow

Neil McLaughlin, "How to Become a Forgotten Intellectual," *Sociological Forum* 1998

Jose Brunner, "Looking into the Hearts of Workers: or, how Erich Fromm turned critical theory into empirical research," *Political Psychology* 1994.

Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation,

Book Review Activity 6

Monday, Dec 4: Fromm again

Fad Psychology Podcast.

Ehrenreich bright sided video

Ilene Philipson, "The Last Public Psychoanalyst," *Psychoanalytic Perspectives*, 2017.

Neil McLaughlin, "The Jordan Peterson Phenomena". Why Fromm's ideas and public intellectual vision is essential for responding to reactionary populism," *From Forum*, 2020.

Neil McLaughlin, Review of Jordan Peterson *Beyond Order: Twelve Rules for Life, Society* 2021.

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Submit assignments in word or PDF, in the appropriate slots in Avenue to Learn.

Be sure to submit late assignments ONLY in the late assignment slot, or I cannot promise it will be graded.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

More specific policies for this class are outlined above.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for

the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a [RISO](#) accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that

interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-89	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+

MARK	GRADE
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F