

Sociology 401.29
Sociology of Lifelong Learning

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Instructor

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Calendar description

Sociological perspectives are used to guide an inquiry-based examination of the discourse and practice of “lifelong learning” – a concept increasingly central to contemporary public policy, culture, political-economy, and educational institutions.

Time and location

Class sessions are from 2:00 to 4:50 on Tuesday afternoons, in ST 126.

Methods and Objectives

The course will be organized into three basic parts, each contributing to the overall goal of developing an understanding of “lifelong learning” and its relationship to public policy, culture, political-economy, and educational institutions.

In addition to short presentations from the professor and/or students, each class session will involve small group discussion and team-based activities. In the first session, students in the class will be grouped into teams, and these teams will remain in place for the semester. Teams will discuss the substantive issues presented at each class, and will make four presentations to the class.

Through working together with a small group of peers over the semester, students in this course will develop skills in teamwork, gathering and analyzing information, communicating, and making presentations. As described more fully below, final grades for the course will be calculated with 50% of the weight assigned to individual performance on examinations, and 50% of the weight assigned to participation and performance in group activities.

Part I (3 weeks)

Introduction to lifelong learning: Concepts, policies, and institutions

Objectives:

- Develop working definitions of key terms, so that we may share a vocabulary with which to discuss lifelong learning.
- Understand the four pillars of education, as defined by the Delors Commission of UNESCO (1996).
- Compare and contrast public policy statements and claims made about lifelong learning by international organizations, national governments, and provincial governments.
- Describe major domains of lifelong education in Canada – early childhood education; K-12 schooling; post-secondary education; adult basic education; and workplace learning and continuing education.
- Recognize the major institutions engaged in education across the lifespan in the Calgary area.

Methods:

The course will begin with an overview of the course outline, and short lectures from the instructor.

In the first session of the course, students will form learning teams in which they will work for the remainder of the semester. These teams will have weekly discussions, and complete assigned work. Class presentations by the teams will begin in the second week of class, and continue as a significant feature of the course throughout the semester.

Assignments:

- Each team presents one international, national, or provincial policy statement to the class (5% of final grade).
- Each team makes one presentation regarding domains and institutions of lifelong education (5% of final grade).

Note that resources and guidelines for the completion of these, and all subsequent assignments, are provided elsewhere in the course materials.

Part II (3 weeks)

Sociological research and theory: Alternative lenses for exploring lifelong learning

Objectives:

- Understand the similarities and differences between positivism, interpretive humanism, and radical structuralism as social scientific traditions through which to examine lifelong learning.
- Become better able to interpret and assess scholarly literature related to lifelong learning.

Methods:

The professor will give a lecture on the relationship between social scientific traditions and the study of lifelong learning. Each learning team will select one article published by the professor, and present a review of that article according to guidelines provided.

Assignments:

- Review and presentation of one article on lifelong learning (5% of final grade)
- Mid-term examination (20% of final grade).

Part III (6 weeks)

Key sociological issues related to lifelong learning

Objectives:

- Understand key sociological issues related to lifelong learning.
- Explore in depth one sociological issue related to lifelong learning.
- Explain why lifelong learning seems to have such importance in contemporary societies.

Methods:

The focus of the second half of the course will be determined by the inquiry-based activities of the teams. Each team will select one issue as the subject for its investigation. Potential sociological issues include those associated with the following concepts:

- Social class and inequalities
- Gender
- Race and ethnicity
- Sexual identities
- Postmodernism and postmodern culture
- Globalization
- Social control and governance
- Others as approved

Assignments:

- Each team to make a major presentation on one key sociological issue related to lifelong learning (15% of final grade).
- Final take-home examination / project (30% of final grade).

Assignments and grading

Points (/100)	Letter Grade
96-100	A+
90-95	A
86-89	A-
81-85	B+
76-80	B
71-75	B-
67-70	C+
62-66	C
59-61	C-
54-58	D+
50-53	D
49 or less	F

Please note that grades for any course component may be scaled so that results conform to departmental norms.

Grades in this class will be based on the completion of the following core requirements:

- Participation in the work of a learning team (20%)
- Four group assignments (30%)
- Mid-term examination (20%)
- Final take-home examination / project (30%)

Performance will be assessed, and grades will be assigned, based on the University of Calgary standards as described in the Calendar.

Readings

There will be no assigned textbook for this course, nor any materials for purchase at the bookstore. All assigned readings will be accessible online through the University of

Calgary Library, Blackboard, or the internet. Readings associated with presentations from the teams will be introduced by those teams.

Exam Policies: You must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take an exam. All requests for deferral of an examination due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferred exams may be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. If you have missed an exam for a legitimate reason, you will be able to write a “make up” exam as close to the original exam as possible. The date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferred exam. Deferred exams will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

Ethics Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Academic Misconduct: cheating is regarded as a serious academic offense. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar, which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor’s office or the Department main office. Term assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor’s office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

Safewalk: The University of Calgary provides a “safe walk” service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the “Help” phones located around Campus.

Academic Accommodation

Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is a student’s responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**

Handing in Papers Outside of Class, Return of Final Papers, and Release of Final Grades

1. When students are unable to submit papers at class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant rather than at the Sociology Department main office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the Sociology Department main office. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, (i.e., outside an instructor's office, the department office, etc.). Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will only be available for pick-up during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology department. They are only available online.