



SOC 325

Understanding Contemporary Societies

S2 External 2017

Dept of Sociology

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Lecturer and course convenor

Norbert Ebert

norbert.ebert@mq.edu.au

Contact via Email

by appointment

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

39cp at 100 level or above including (12cp in SOC units and 3cp in SOC units at 300 level)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit provides essential sociological skills that enable you to understand contemporary societies and the lives we live in them. The goal is to guide students from sociology and other disciplines through the complexities of sociological thinking by exploring diverse areas such as work, identity, relationships, politics, racism and multiculturalism, crime, health, the environment, and the media. The unit has a strong focus on practical applications of social theory and prepares graduates to deal with and make sense of major social developments, which shape our lives and the world we live in.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

1. A familiarity with key sociological concepts as they are applied to the study of contemporary societies.
4. Practicing how to think sociologically.
3. Reading, summarising and applying basic concepts of Sociology in order to understand contemporary societies.
2. An understanding of a range of sociological perspectives on social life from the 19th

century to the present.

General Assessment Information

How to get the most out of SOC(X)325

SOC325 has a simple and easy to follow structure. It is based on the idea of learning in three ways: reading about, listening to and discussing/writing about key ideas, topics and concepts. Every week follows this pattern with a clear focus on a key question.

1. **READING:** The **reading(s)** provide you with essential information around the key question. If possible, do the readings before you come to the lectures. Take notes, underline important sentences or write a summary in your own words. Work with the text.
2. **LISTENING:** Every **lecture** identifies and addresses a key question in relation to work and employment.
3. **WRITING / DISCUSSION:** Once you have done the reading(s) and listened to the lecture, it is time to discuss with other students (online or in the on campus **tutorials**) how to write an answer to the key question. Finally, in the writing tasks you articulate in your own words how the key question can be answered using the course material.

The assessments in SOC(X)325 build on linking these three components of the course. Following those three steps will enable you to do well in SOC(X)325 and not much extra work is needed.

How to submit the assignments

The small sociological analysis has to be submitted via the turnitin link on iLearn by 11.59pm on the due date. **You can submit your assignment only ONCE!** Please do not panic if you (for whatever reason) submit your assignment a few minutes late. We will not deduct marks for that. Your grades will be made available on gradebook on iLearn too, but remain subject to change until the end of the course and depend on your overall performance in the course.

How to deal with difficulties

The first rule is let your tutor know asap. The sooner we know, the sooner we can help. In particular there is little we can do to help you once the due date of assignments has passed.

The second rule is, please bring your questions to the tutorials /discussion boards and ask your tutor before you individually emailing us. Often others have the same questions about referencing or contents related questions. Generally, the advice is to ask as early as possible and not avoid asking.

For issue affecting your performance, but which are unrelated to the course contents and prevent your from participating in tutorials or from submitting assignments or from completing the unit, please let us know and visit www.ask.mq.edu.au where you can submit the appropriate application including the required documentation. This is essential to grant you extensions in particular beyond the end of semester if required.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Participation</u>	30%	No	ongoing
<u>Quiz</u>	30%	No	ever week (week 2 -11)
<u>Small sociological analysis</u>	40%	No	12/11/2017

Participation

Due: **ongoing**

Weighting: **30%**

The preparation for your final assignment begins with your weekly participation. SOC(X)325 is structured around approaches that define what it means to think sociologically. And thinking sociologically is key to understanding societies. Hence, every week the course material (readings, lecture) provide you with information on what is involved in a particular approach or key area of society and what we can take from it to understand societies. You apply this in your final assignment, the small sociological analysis.

Participation for internal as well as external students means to think and discuss with others what thinking sociologically means in reference to a given week in preparation for your final assignment. Your contribution will be assessed on the basis of your familiarity and understanding of the weekly course contents from the lecture and the reading(s). Discussion means further that you are required to engage with others. The focus is not so much the quantity, but the quality of your contributions.

Participation in SOC(X)325 has a clear goal: To prepare you as best as possible for your final assignment, the small sociological analysis. How?

Based on the lecture material and the reading(s), the tutorial is the space where you learn how to think sociologically, clarify your understanding of the readings or questions that come up from the lecture. You are welcome to bring in your own interpretations and examples. However - and this is crucial for your final assignment - they need to be focused on a topic, example and maybe a concept.

For **external students** participation requires discussions on **iLearn** on the **weekly discussion boards**. Internal students are, however, welcome to contribute if you feel like doing so. We encourage you to share and discuss with others what you think about readings, approaches and topics. You can share your thoughts about concepts, ideas, examples and discuss them with others in preparation for your final assignment.

We expect you to post within a week after the lecture (Wednesday). There are no extensions possible. Should you have problems or serious reasons for not being able to post within a week, please let me know by email (norbert.ebert@mq.edu.au).

For **internal students** participation means engaging in on campus tutorial activities. Here too,

we encourage you to share and discuss with others how you would answer the key question of the week by bringing a draft to the on campus tutorial.

Over the weeks, the tutorials and discussion boards will provide you with guidance to work towards your final assignment.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. A familiarity with key sociological concepts as they are applied to the study of contemporary societies.
- 4. Practicing how to think sociologically.
- 3. Reading, summarising and applying basic concepts of Sociology in order to understand contemporary societies.
- 2. An understanding of a range of sociological perspectives on social life from the 19th century to the present.

Quiz

Due: **ever week (week 2 -11)**

Weighting: **30%**

Together with your participation, the online quiz is the next step in preparing you for the final assignment. Internal as well as an external / OUA students are required to complete a basic online quiz each week on iLearn. The purpose of the quiz is to make sure you identify and know the key points from each week so you can apply one or several of them in your final assignment, the small sociological analysis..

The quiz questions focus on the contents from the lecture and the reading(s) and they will help you identify the main points from a week.

The essentials about the quizzes are as follows:

- The quizzes are based on the content of the lecture and the reading(s).
- There is a total of 10 quizzes. Each quiz comprises six (6) questions and is worth a total of 3 marks (0.5 per question).
- The first quiz will open in week 2, the last one in week 11.
- **Each week you have 8 DAYS to complete the quiz.** Quizzes open on Wednesdays 6pm and close on the following Wednesday before the next lecture 1pm.

HINT: Start early on the quiz, do not leave it to the last minute :-)

IMPORTANT: There are no extensions possible including for last-minute technical problems or forgetting to 'save and submit'. If you miss a quiz you will need to provide documentation for the entire time the quiz was open in order to successfully apply for a disruption of studies. The convenor will not respond to emails requesting to reopen quizzes, to extend deadlines or open quizzes early. Remember, before you submit you can save and retry as many times as you like,

but once you save and submit, you cannot change your answers.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 1. A familiarity with key sociological concepts as they are applied to the study of contemporary societies.
- 4. Practicing how to think sociologically.
- 3. Reading, summarising and applying basic concepts of Sociology in order to understand contemporary societies.
- 2. An understanding of a range of sociological perspectives on social life from the 19th century to the present.

Small sociological analysis

Due: **12/11/2017**

Weighting: **40%**

The goal of this assignment is that you demonstrate that you can apply your sociological tools or one of them. To do so, you are required to do the following:

- a) pick a sociological concept or approach from one of the weeks and define it clearly
- b) pick an example that you would like to interpret and analyse sociologically. Describe your example with enough, but not too much detail!
- c) interpret and analyse a) with the aid of b)

Your example can be sourced from a reading, a clip, a movie scene, a newspaper article. The most important point is RELEVANCE. What ever choice you make it needs to be clearly focused and linked to your approach so that a meaningful sociological analysis is possible.

A FEW HINTS to start with:

Make sure your assignment is not just a description. Describing a phenomenon well is important, but it is not the same as an analysis / interpretation.

Sometimes we choose topics, because they are close to our own interests. That is generally fine and good. However, the risk is that we start to advocate rather than analyse or interpret. Try and stay on the analytical level of your writing.

Balance between sociological concepts, the example and the analytical part of your assignment is important too. Make sure you do not use up, for example, 1500 words describing your example with only 500 words left for concepts and interpretation.

It is good to have a clear structure with, for example, 2-300 words introduction, 5-700 words main parts (concepts, example) and a 3-500 words conclusion.

An introduction is like a promise. You promise what you will do and the point is to then do it in what follows.

A conclusion is not a summary, but this is the point where you CONCLUDE what the results of

your analysis are.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 4. Practicing how to think sociologically.
- 3. Reading, summarising and applying basic concepts of Sociology in order to understand contemporary societies.
- 2. An understanding of a range of sociological perspectives on social life from the 19th century to the present.

Delivery and Resources

All course material will be provided through iLearn including discussion tools.

Unit Schedule

1	02/ 08/ 2017	Introduction to SOC325: Thinking Sociologically! (no tutorials)
2	09/ 08/ 2017	Sociology as a Science Elias N. (1970) What is Sociology? Columbia University Press pp. 33-49.
3	16/ 08/ 2017	The Rise of Modernity and Capitalism Marx K. and Engels F. (1859) 'A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy' in Wrong D. H. and Gracey H. L. (eds) Readings in Introductory Sociology, Macmillan: London, pp. 196-205. Fromm E. (1961) 'Marx's Concept of Man' in Wrong D. H. and Gracey H. L. (eds) Readings in Introductory Sociology, Macmillan: London, pp. 219-227
4	23/ 08/ 2017	The Characteristics of Modern Life Weber M. (1967) The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, in Wrong D. H. and Gracey H. L. (eds) Readings in Introductory Sociology, Macmillan: London, pp. 205-218. Weber M. (1946) Essays in Sociology in Wrong D. H. and Gracey H. L. (eds) Readings in Introductory Sociology, Macmillan: London, pp. 246-252.
5	30/ 08/ 2017	Differentiation and Integration Durkheim E. (1951) Suicide in Wrong D H and Gracey H L (eds) Readings in Introductory Sociology, Macmillan: London, pp. 238-246. Coser L (1984) Introduction to The Division of Labour in Society, Macmillan London, pp. ix-xxiv
6	06/ 09/ 2017	Individual and Society Elias N. (1991) The Society of Individuals Continuum, New York / London, pp. vii-20.

7	13/ 09/ 2017	The Social Self Mead G. H. (1934) <i>Mind, Self and Society</i> in Mizuchi E H <i>The Substance of Sociology</i> , Meredith Publishing Company: New York, pp. 182-189.
	20/ 09/ 2017	mid-session break
	27/ 09/ 2017	mid-session break
8	04/ 10/ 2017	Study Week (start reading the long reading for week 9)
9	11/ 10/ 2017	Social Reality: Systems and Institutions Berger P. and Luckmann T. (1975) <i>The Social Construction of Reality</i> , Penguin University Books, Whitstable, pp 64-109.
10	18/ 10/ 2017	Identity, Self and Society Baumeister, R. F. (1997), 'The self and society. Changes, problems, and opportunities', in Ashmore, R. D. & Jussim, L. (Eds.), <i>Self and Identity: Fundamental Issues</i> , New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 191-217.
11	25/ 10/ 2017	Gender Bohnet I. (2016) <i>What Works. Gender Equality by Design</i> , pp. 21-43, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge.
12	01/ 11/ 2017	Critical Theory Honneth, A. (2009) A Social Pathology of reason: On the Intellectual Legacy of Critical Theory, in <i>Pathologies of Reason</i> , Columbia University Press, p.19-42.
13	08/ 11/ 2017	Conclusion (no tutorials this week)
	12/ 11/ 2017	Final assignment is due!

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- 2. An understanding of a range of sociological perspectives on social life from the 19th century to the present.

Assessment task

- Small sociological analysis

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- 4. Practicing how to think sociologically.
- 3. Reading, summarising and applying basic concepts of Sociology in order to understand contemporary societies.
- 2. An understanding of a range of sociological perspectives on social life from the 19th century to the present.

Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Quiz
- Small sociological analysis

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- 1. A familiarity with key sociological concepts as they are applied to the study of contemporary societies.
- 4. Practicing how to think sociologically.
- 3. Reading, summarising and applying basic concepts of Sociology in order to understand contemporary societies.
- 2. An understanding of a range of sociological perspectives on social life from the 19th century to the present.

Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Quiz
- Small sociological analysis

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- 1. A familiarity with key sociological concepts as they are applied to the study of contemporary societies.
- 4. Practicing how to think sociologically.
- 3. Reading, summarising and applying basic concepts of Sociology in order to understand contemporary societies.
- 2. An understanding of a range of sociological perspectives on social life from the 19th

century to the present.

Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Quiz
- Small sociological analysis

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- 1. A familiarity with key sociological concepts as they are applied to the study of contemporary societies.
- 4. Practicing how to think sociologically.

Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Small sociological analysis

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- 1. A familiarity with key sociological concepts as they are applied to the study of contemporary societies.
- 4. Practicing how to think sociologically.
- 3. Reading, summarising and applying basic concepts of Sociology in order to understand contemporary societies.
- 2. An understanding of a range of sociological perspectives on social life from the 19th century to the present.

Assessment tasks

- Participation
- Small sociological analysis

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- 4. Practicing how to think sociologically.
- 2. An understanding of a range of sociological perspectives on social life from the 19th century to the present.

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- 4. Practicing how to think sociologically.
- 2. An understanding of a range of sociological perspectives on social life from the 19th century to the present.