SOCX325

Understanding Contemporary Societies

SP4 OUA 2016

Dept of Sociology

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Lecturer
Norbert Ebert
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Tutor
Evelyn Honeywill
evelyn.honeywill@mq.edu.au

Prerequisites
Corequisites
Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit offers students the opportunity to integrate and expand their sociological knowledge at the end of their undergraduate degree. Students will gain an advanced understanding of sociological theories and concepts from across the discipline. Engaging with those theoretical and empirical approaches will equip students with refined sociological skills that will enable them to critically analyse and understand contemporary societies. All enrolment queries should be directed to Open Universities Australia (OUA): see www.open.edu.au

Important Academic Dates
Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.open.edu.au/student-admin-and-support/key-dates/

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

- A familiarity with key sociological concepts as they are applied to the study of contemporary societies.
- An understanding of a range of theoretical perspectives on social life from the 19th century to the present.
- Reading, summarising and applying basic concepts of Sociology in order to understand contemporary societies.
Assessment Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Task 1</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Week 7 (09/01/2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Task 2</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>Week 12 (13/02/2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Engagement</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Every Week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflective Task 1

Due: **Week 7 (09/01/2017)**  
Weighting: **30%**

**Word Limit: 1500 words**

For reflective exercises 1 and 2 the task is the same. The word count for tasks 2, however, is higher.

Choose one week of the course as your focus. You cannot jump ahead to a week that we have not yet dealt with, neither can you choose the same week twice (a different week must be chosen for each task).

“Reflective exercise” means that you need to think about the chosen week's topic(s), themes and corresponding readings and write up your insights. You can do so by explaining how your chosen week and the topic(s) it covers helps us to understand contemporary societies. For that to work, you need to:

1. identify the key sociological point(s) / concept(s) / question(s) presented in your chosen week;
2. define the concept(s) concisely in your own words and with the use of quotes from the corresponding/relevant reading(s). Do not quote the lectures;
3. explain the origin or development of the concept(s) / how the concept(s) came about and into use; and,
4. demonstrate why the concept(s) or theorists addressed are still useful or not for understanding contemporary societies.
5. Be sure to use the corresponding reading(s) from your chosen week to support your explanations and reference them correctly in your assignment.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

A reflective exercise is not a summary of the lecture or the reading of the chosen week. You need to show that you have thought the topic/concepts through and that you have understood the sociological relevance of it.

A reflective exercise is not an account of what you personally think about a topic or a list of examples (avoid editorial style writing and lists). Use the lecture and reading material in order.
to demonstrate your sociological knowledge and understanding.

For sociology referencing guide please see [here](https://unitguides.mq.edu.au/unit_offerings/63048/unit_guide/print).

On successful completion you will be able to:

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**Reflective Task 2**

*Due: Week 12 (13/02/2017)*

*Weighting: 45%*

*Word Limit 2000 words*

Please see reflective task 1 description. Note: Students cannot choose the same week twice.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

**Participation and Engagement**

*Due: Every Week*

*Weighting: 25%*

The participation and engagement component of the course requires students to demonstrate in-depth and continued contributions to the weekly discussions. Each week the tutor will post a short blurb covering aspects of the lecture and/or required reading(s), along with questions designed to directly stimulate peer discussion.

Within the discussion posts for the corresponding week you are required to address the question(s) posed by the tutor using the course material and highlight your understanding of the topics/concepts dealt with by reflecting upon external examples. External examples might include current or past local and global news, and/or entertainment (TV, movies and Internet content) or literature that you have come across.
To achieve a high mark for this task you need to:

- address the question(s) posed
- engage with the weekly reading
- demonstrate your comprehension of the weekly topics/concepts by reflecting on external examples
- and engage with your peers by way of comments and/ further questions.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Participation in discussion boards must be made within two weeks of the initial posting.

There is no required "word limit" for participation and engagement. Students, however, are expected to demonstrate sustained weekly contributions that satisfy the above specifications.

Student have 2 weeks from the initial post date of the tutor discussion post for the week to contribute. After 2 weeks has elapsed contributions will be penalised and/or not counted in the final grade.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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Delivery and Resources

All course material will be made available on iLearn.

Unit Schedule

Weekly schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture: Introduction to Understanding Contemporary Societies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Lecture: Modernity and Sociology as a Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture: The Social Construction of Reality</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture: Individual and Society</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture: Self and Society</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture: Society as Social Systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Week 7

Lecture: The Public Sphere

Readings:

Week 8

Lecture: Private Sphere, Private Life, Privacy

Readings:

Week 9

Lecture: The Making and Remaking of the Intimate Sphere

Readings:

Week 10

Lecture: Love, Friendship and the Problem of Institution

Reading:
### Policies and Procedures

**Late Submission - applies unless otherwise stated elsewhere in the unit guide**

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

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### Week 11

**Lecture: Family and Social Change**

**Readings:**


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### Week 12

**Lecture: Work and Society**

**Reading:**


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### Week 13

**Lecture: Differentiation and Integration**

**Reading:**

Extension Request

Special Consideration Policy and Procedure

The University recognises that students may experience events or conditions that adversely affect their academic performance. If you experience serious and unavoidable difficulties at exam time or when assessment tasks are due, you can consider applying for Special Consideration.

You need to show that the circumstances:

1. were serious, unexpected and unavoidable
2. were beyond your control
3. caused substantial disruption to your academic work
4. substantially interfered with your otherwise satisfactory fulfilment of the unit requirements
5. lasted at least three consecutive days or a total of 5 days within the teaching period and prevented completion of an assessment task scheduled for a specific date.

If you feel that your studies have been impacted submit an application as follows:

1. Visit Ask MQ and use your OneID to log in
2. Fill in your relevant details
3. Attach supporting documents by clicking 'Add a reply', click 'Browse' and navigating to the files you want to attach, then click 'Submit Form' to send your notification and supporting documents
4. Please keep copies of your original documents, as they may be requested in the future as part of the assessment process

Outcome

Once your submission is assessed, an appropriate outcome will be organised.

OUA Specific Policies and Procedures

Withdrawal from a unit after the census date

You can withdraw from your subjects prior to the census date (last day to withdraw). If you successfully withdraw before the census date, you won’t need to apply for Special Circumstances. If you find yourself unable to withdraw from your subjects before the
census date - you might be able to apply for Special Circumstances. If you’re eligible, we can refund your fees and overturn your fail grade.

If you’re studying Single Subjects using FEE-HELP or paying up front, you can apply online.

If you’re studying a degree using HECS-HELP, you’ll need to apply directly to Macquarie University.

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:


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/](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/](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 Enquiry Service

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

Equity 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.

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

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

- A familiarity with key sociological concepts as they are applied to the study of contemporary societies.
- An understanding of a range of theoretical perspectives on social life from the 19th century to the present.
- Reading, summarising and applying basic concepts of Sociology in order to understand contemporary societies.
Assessment tasks

• Reflective Task 1  
• Reflective Task 2  
• Participation and Engagement

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 outcome

• An understanding of a range of theoretical perspectives on social life from the 19th century to the present.

Assessment tasks

• Reflective Task 1  
• Reflective Task 2  
• Participation and Engagement

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

• A familiarity with key sociological concepts as they are applied to the study of contemporary societies.  
• An understanding of a range of theoretical perspectives on social life from the 19th century to the present.  
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- Reflective Task 1
- Reflective Task 2
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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

- An understanding of a range of theoretical perspectives on social life from the 19th century to the present.
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Assessment tasks

- Reflective Task 1
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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

- A familiarity with key sociological concepts as they are applied to the study of contemporary societies.
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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 outcomes

- An understanding of a range of theoretical perspectives on social life from the 19th century to the present.
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- Reflective Task 1
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- Participation and Engagement

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

- A familiarity with key sociological concepts as they are applied to the study of contemporary societies.
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• Reflective Task 1
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17/11/2016</td>
<td>Revised assessment structure and submission dates to improve student learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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