



SOCX325

Understanding Contemporary Societies

S2 OUA 2019

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

Prerequisites

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. 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:

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 on foundational sociological knowledge and its contemporary relevance. 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 theorist or sometimes two and we discuss the contemporary relevance.
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 tclass and tutorials (voluntary)).

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 proposal and the social analysis have 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 the convenor 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 class/discussion boards. 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 you from attending or participating in class 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>Attendance & Participation</u>	30%	No	ongoing
<u>research proposal</u>	30%	No	02/10/2019
<u>Social analysis</u>	40%	No	08/11/2019

Attendance & Participation

Due: **ongoing**

Weighting: **30%**

IMPORTANT INFO ABOUT ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

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. You can gain a maximum 26% over 13 weeks (=2% per week). Physical presence only is not enough. It is the quality of your contributions that counts the most. Talking to the lecturer after class also does not count as participation.

INTERNAL STUDENTS:

A) Attendance and Participation refers to the lecture time (Tuesday 9-11am), NOT the tutorial. Discussion and Q&A are part of the lectures and the basic course contents will be covered and discussed here.

B) Attendance and participation in tutorials is recommended, but voluntary. In the tutorials we will specifically discuss the readings (and sometimes the additional readings) and examples. This is the space for you if you are interested in a deeper understanding of concepts and social issues and how to analyse them. The tutorials are also the place to prepare you more specifically for the final assignment. You are welcome to bring notes, drafts and ideas.

EXTERNAL / OUA STUDENTS: As an online student, attendance and participation means three things:

A) You need to listen to the recorded lecture;

B) you need to post and discuss with others in the weekly online forum

C) **We expect you to post within a week** after the lecture (Tuesday). There are no extensions possible. The reason for this is that late contributions weeks after topics have been covered are lost. 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).

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.

research proposal

Due: **02/10/2019**

Weighting: **30%**

The proposal has three main components:

A) pick a sociological concept or approach from week 2-8 and define it in no more than 500 words.

B) pick an example that you would like to analyse sociologically. Describe your example in no more than 500 words clearly so that a person who has never heard of it can understand it.

C) Outline in no more than 300 words how A) and B) are linked in your opinion.

Taken together this is a basic outline and structure for your final assignment (social analysis).

A template for the proposal will be developed in class over the first five seven week of the course.

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

Social analysis

Due: **08/11/2019**

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, analysis) 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.

An analysis is a breakdown of a more complex issue (your example), into simple elements (opposite of synthesis).

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	30/ 07/ 2019	Introduction to SOC325: Thinking Sociologically! (no tutorials)
2	06/ 08/ 2019	Sociology as a Science Required reading Elias N. (1970) What is Sociology? Columbia University Press pp. 33-49.
3	13/ 08/ 2019	Modernity and Capitalism Required reading Harriford D & Thompson B (2008) <i>Karl Marx and Alienation</i> , Chapter 5 in 'When the Centre is on Fire', pp. 111-127. Additional reading Harriford D & Thompson B (2008) <i>Looking for Species Being</i> , Chapter 6 in 'When the Centre is on Fire', pp. 131-150.
4	20/ 08/ 2019	The Characteristics of Modern Life Required reading Harriford D & Thompson B (2008) <i>The 9/11 Attacks and Max Weber</i> , Chapter 3 in 'When the Centre is on Fire', pp. 75-85. Additional reading Harriford D & Thompson B (2008) <i>Moment of Grace/Grace Undermined</i> , Chapter 4 in 'When the Centre is on Fire', pp. 89-108.
5	27/ 08/ 2019	Differentiation and Integration Required reading Harriford D & Thompson B (2008) <i>Emile Durkheim and Embodiment in the Age of Internet</i> , Chapter 7 in 'When the Centre is on Fire', pp. 155-177. Additional reading Riaz Hassan, One hundred years of Emile Durkheim's Suicide: A Study in Sociology (Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychology, 32, 1998 pp. 168-171
6	03/ 09/ 2019	Individual and Society Required reading Elias N. (1991) The Society of Individuals Continuum, New York / London, pp. vii-20. Additional reading Mead G. H. (1934) Mind, Self and Society in Mizruchi E H The Substance of Sociology, Meredith Publishing Company: New York, pp. 182-189.

7	10/ 09/ 2019	<p>Radical democracy</p> <p>Required reading</p> <p>Rosenberg R (2017) Jane Crow. The Life of Pauli Murray, Oxford University Press: New York, pp. 1-6.</p> <p>Harriford D & Thompson B (2008) <i>Condoleezza Rize, W.E.B. Du Bois And Double Consciousness</i>, Chapter 1 in 'When the Centre is on Fire', pp. 25-50.</p> <p>Additional reading</p> <p>Harriford D & Thompson B (2008) <i>Hurricane Katrina and Historical Memory</i>, Chapter 2 in 'When the Centre is on Fire', pp. 53-70.</p>
	17/ 09/ 2019	mid-session break
	24/ 09/ 2019	mid-session break
8	01/ 10/ 2019	<p>Social reality</p> <p>Required reading</p> <p>Berger P. and Luckmann T. (1975) <i>The Social Construction of Reality</i>, Penguin University Books, Whitstable, pp 64-109.</p>
	02/ 10/ 2019	ASSIGNMENT 1 (PROPOSAL) IS DUE
9	08/ 10/ 2019	<p>Identity</p> <p>Required reading</p> <p>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.</p>
10	15/ 10/ 2019	<p>Normative Biases</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <p>Bohnet I. (2016) <i>What Works. Gender Equality by Design</i>, pp. 1-17, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge.</p> <p>Additional Reading:</p> <p>Bohnet I. (2016) <i>What Works. Gender Equality by Design</i>, pp. 21-43, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge.</p>
11	22/ 10/ 2019	<p>From Structure to Process: Michel Foucault</p> <p>Required reading</p> <p>To be announced</p>
12	29/ 10/ 2019	<p>Critical Social Theory & Social Analysis</p> <p>Required reading</p> <p>To be announced</p>

13	05/ 11/ 2019	Social Analysis Workshop: Reading and Watching Society
	08/ 11/ 2019	FINAL ASSIGNMENT (SOCIAL ANALYSIS) IS DUE!

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.

Extension Request

Special Consideration Policy and Procedure (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>)

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 \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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 or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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

- Social 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

- Attendance & Participation
- research proposal
- Social 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

- Attendance & Participation
- research proposal
- Social 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

- Attendance & Participation
- research proposal
- Social 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

- Attendance & Participation
- Social 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

- Attendance & Participation
- research proposal
- Social 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.