



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo

Department of Sociology and Legal Studies

SOC 417-001 Winter 2022

Sociology of Higher Education

Location: SJ2 Room 2007

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Carol Ann MacGregor
Office: Sweeney Hall 1208
Phone: (519) 884-8111 x 28205
Office Hours: Mondays from 5-6pm and by appointment
Email: carolann.macgregor@uwaterloo.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Calendar Description: This course examines the relationship between higher education and society. Topics include: major trends, student culture, how and why students are stratified across fields of study and various kinds of postsecondary institutions, and the relationship between education and the labour market.

Detailed Description: Postsecondary “Higher” Education is a sociologically important organizational field—one that is key to questions of economic mobility, civic engagement, and healthy democracies. In this course we will engage with a variety of readings primarily about Canadian and American post-secondary education. We will focus on both micro-individual lived experience and macro-organizational structure. Our core questions will include: Does higher education lead to mobility or reproduce inequality? How does the experience of university vary by race/ethnicity, social class, gender, and other characteristics? As current post-secondary students, you bring your own auto-ethnographic accounts to this course. Those accounts are valued and add to our emphasis on learning how to understand and apply sociological theories and research methods to the study of higher education.

MANAGING OUR PANDEMIC REALITIES

This course was imagined as a lively seminar in person on Monday evenings. Although our first two meetings are forecasted to be online, I do hope that we will meet in person for the remainder of the term. 3 hours online in the evening is not an ideal set up for learning but if it is the only way to meet our public health obligations, we will move online mixing synchronous meetings for 1.5 hours on Mondays from 6:30-8 and 1.5 hours of asynchronous activity designed to ensure that the key course objectives outlined below are met.

Please familiarize yourself with the [Campus Check In](#) process and do not come to campus if you are experiencing any symptoms or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. Making this

decision, which keeps our entire community safe, will not jeopardize your grade in this course in any way. You should [self-declare your illness](#) to ensure you are given proper accommodation in this and other courses. If you do miss a class, please email me to discuss the best method for catching up on what you have missed. While we will not be recording our live Zoom discussions, I will post any PowerPoint slides and notes I use to LEARN.

In the event that I become ill or need to isolate, I will contact you by email and LEARN announcement to let you know if I am well enough to pivot online or if we will cancel class/have a guest lecturer.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

- Summarize key debates in the field of sociology of higher education/post-secondary education
- Outline the distinguishing characteristics of the post-secondary organizational field in Canada and the United States
- Articulate and interrogate the ways in which the experience of higher education differs by race, social class, gender, and other characteristics
- Successfully read and critique sociological research including identifying and critiquing research methodologies
- Properly document sources using [American Sociological Association style](#).

REQUIRED TEXTS

All required weekly readings, noted below in the Course Schedule, are available on LEARN/through electronic reserves.

You are responsible for purchasing or borrowing the book you select for the book review assignment.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL BIOGRAPHY AND PODCAST RESPONSE PAPER- Due January 24 (10%)

After our first meeting you should listen to the podcast linked in the syllabus and posted on learn and respond to the questions outlined in the assignment guidelines. This short 2-3 page reflection on your own experiences in higher education and your reactions to the major themes covered in the podcast will allow me to learn more about you and the questions you are especially interested in exploring for the remainder of the term.

GROUP FACILITATION OF CLASS SEGMENT (30%)- Varies, Schedule to be Determined Week 1

One of the best ways to learn material is by being compelled to explain it clearly and succinctly to other people in ways that are accessible and engaging. In this assignment, you will be

grouped with people who share similar interests and tasked with designing learning activities for your peers. This will also allow us to explore topics within the sociology of higher education that are of special interest. In the second half of term, we will devote one half of each class to these student-led discussions. We will also devote one class session to organizing this work—given that this time slot is one that every group member is available. Potential topics for these presentations include but are not limited to: Athletics, Online Learning, International Students, Student Activism, Accessibility and Disabilities, Graduate Education. Any other area of interest can be discussed in advance with the instructor. Class leaders will be evaluated on the basis of thoughtfulness, depth of discussion, and analytical insight demonstrated in their leadership sessions. More detailed assignment guidelines will be posted in LEARN.

ACTIVE ACADEMIC CITIZENSHIP DURING OTHER GROUP PRESENTATIONS (10%)

You may be familiar with the scene in Ferris Bueller's Day Off where the instructor in a deadpan voice says "anybody, anybody..." It is hard to lead a class when no one is participating. Our time together will be richer if you fully engage by offering comments, posing questions, participating in activities, or writing thoughtful notes/emails that show you were actively engaging. At the end of the semester, I will ask you to complete a brief self-assessment that suggests a grade. I will be evaluating your self-assessment in assigning the final grade for this component of the course. The rubric for self-assessment will be posted on LEARN.

BOOK REVIEW (25%)- Due April 4

Twenty years out of my own undergraduate education, I do not remember the tests or the nuances of every journal article I read. But, I do remember the good books some of which I still have on my shelf. Writing a book review is a key academic skill for those of you who may pursue graduate level work in the social sciences. In this assignment you will choose a book from Appendix A (at the end of this syllabus) or in consultation with me and write a 6-8pp review that summarizes the books key arguments and offers discussion and constructive critique. Further guidelines will be posted on LEARN.

TAKE HOME EXAM- Due April 25 (25%)

The final exam for this course will ask you to consider what we've read and discussed might mean for the future of higher education. How can sociology inform university leaders and government policy makers interested in providing the best possible experience for students, for communities, and for the nation? In this short 4-5pp final reflection you will outline what you see as the most pressing social problem in higher education and offer a solution that is supported by sociological theories/empirical data. This should not require new research but rather offers you an opportunity to review and reflect on the many things that have been covered in class sessions, student-led presentations and the book you reviewed.

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 10- REMOTE SESSION. A ZOOM LINK WILL BE POSTED TO LEARN/EMAILED.

Introductions and Course Overview

This week, after class, you should listen to the posted [CBC Ideas Podcast](#) “The University Crisis” (also posted on LEARN) and complete the PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL BIOGRAPHY AND PODCAST RESPONSE PAPER Assignment.

For all sessions below, please read the assigned reading before the start of class i.e. January 24th readings to be read before January 24th class

January 17- REMOTE SESSION. A ZOOM LINK WILL BE POSTED TO LEARN/EMAILED.

REMINDER: PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL BIOGRAPHY AND PODCAST RESPONSE PAPER Assignment is due by the start of class this evening.

Historical Overview and Theoretical Foundations

Cote, James E. and Allahar, Anton L. (2011) “A History of Mission Adrift: The Idea of the University Subverted” pp.1-26 in Cote, James E. and Anton L. Allahar (2011) *Lowering Higher Education: The Rise of Corporate Universities and the Fall of Liberal Education* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Davies, S. and J. Aurini (2021) “The Evolving Prism: The Role of Nationalism in Canadian Higher Education” *European Journal of Higher Education* VOL. 11, NO. 3, 239–254

Stevens, Mitchell, Elizabeth A. Armstrong, and Richard Arum (2008) “Sieve, Incubator, Temple, Hub: Empirical and Theoretical Advances in the Sociology of Higher Education” *Annual Review of Sociology* 34:127-51.

January 24- Competition, Rankings, and Prestige

Davies, Scott and Floyd M. Hammack (2005) “The Channeling of Student Competition in Higher Education: Comparing Canada and the U.S.” *Journal of Higher Education* 76(1): 89-106

Podcast: [Malcom Gladwell “The Lord of the Rankings”](#)

January 31- The Cost of Higher Education and Implications for Social Mobility

Brown, David K. (2001) “The Social Sources of Educational Credentialism: Status Cultures, Labor Markets, and Organizations” *Sociology of Education* pp. 19-34

Weingarten, Harvey P. (2021) "Is Going to College Worth It?" pp.15-29 in Weingarten, Harvey *Nothing Less than Great: Reforming Canada's Universities* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Documentary: [Hungry to Learn](#)

February 7- Curriculum and Learning

Chambliss, Daniel F. and Christopher G. Takacs (2014) "Learning" pp. 104-133 in Chambliss, Daniel F. and Christopher G. Takacs (2014) *How College Works* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Review Results of [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) at University of Waterloo

February 14- PLANNING SESSION FOR GROUP ASSIGNMENT

February 21- READING WEEK/FAMILY DAY/NO CLASS

February 28- Faculty

Henry, Frances and Audrey Kobayashi (2017) "The Everyday World of Racialized and Indigenous Faculty Members in Canadian Universities" in *The Equity Myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities* Vancouver: UBC Press.

Chapter 1 "Opening the Black Box of Peer Review" in Lamont, Michelle (2009) *How Professors Think* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

March 7- Social Class, Cultural Capital, and Hidden Curriculums

Jack, Anthony Abraham (2016) "(No) Harm in Asking: Class, Acquired Cultural Capital, and Academic Engagement at an Elite University" *Sociology of Education* 89(1):1-19.

Jack, Anthony Abraham (2019) "I Was A Low-Income Student. Classes Weren't the Hard Part" *The New York Times Magazine*, September 15

March 14- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Decolonization, Indigenization and the Academy

Harper, Shaun. (2012) "Race without Racism: How Higher Education Researchers Minimize Racist Institutional Norms" *The Review of Higher Education* 36(1) 9-29.

Pidgeon, M. (2014) "Moving Beyond Good Intentions: Indigenizing Higher Education in British Columbia Universities through Institutional Responsibility and Accountability" *Journal of American Indian Education*, 53(2) 7-28.

[Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education: Principles, Actions, Accountabilities.](#)

March 21- The Social Experience of College and Student Wellbeing

Chapter 4 “The Floor” in Armstrong, Elizabeth A. and Lauren T. Hamilton *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Ezarick, Melissa (2021) “Students Struggle But Don’t Seek Colleges’ Help” April 4, 2021
<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/04/14/students-struggling-not-seeking-campus-mental-health-support>

March 28- What is the Future of Higher Education? A Concluding Discussion

Ontario E-Campus Report: [Is the Future Micro?](#)

April 4- Time to work on Take-Home Exam, extended office hours

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Last day to add a class	Tuesday, January 18
Last day to drop a class, no penalty	Tuesday, January 25

POLICY ON LATE WORK, MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, AND MAKE-UP TESTS

My general perspective on extensions and late work is that (1) the delay sometimes makes a meaningful difference in a difficult time in someone’s life. If I can do that for you, I want to do that for you. (2) the delay can also just prolong the agony in ways that don’t make the assignment stronger or your life easier. That said, I am in a privileged position in my life, and it does not cause me undue hardship to grade things late or out of sequence. Thus, I do not apply late penalties through the last day of classes so long as you have asked for an extension in advance of the deadline. Due to deadlines for posting final grades, I am unable to accept anything late after the last day of class.

There is a group assignment in this course. A request for any extension must be requested by the entire group and cannot be given to any individual member of a group.

RULES FOR GROUP WORK IN ASSIGNMENTS

When working on a group assignment, a [Group Assignment Checklist](#) must be completed and submitted with the assignment.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

During the COVID-19 crisis there are no penalties for absences. Consistent with the COVID policies outlined above, if you are not feeling well, you should stay home. I will be assessing your active participation in this course in other ways as described in the assignments section.

ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

I trust you to use phones and laptops in ways that are respectful to me as an instructor and your peers as fellow learners. This [journal article](#) highlights that there can be negative impacts to peer learning in ways we may not even think of.

CORRESPONDENCE

Please feel free to email me at any time, to come to office hours on Monday before class, or to set up an appointment. I generally try to reply within 24 hours.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Petitions and Grievances](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties, check the [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on

Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on [Student Appeals](#).

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Mental Health Services: All of us need a support system. The SJU faculty and staff encourage students to seek out mental health support if they are needed.

On Campus:

- SJU Wellness Coordinator: Lindsay Thompson (lindsay.thompson@uwaterloo.ca)
- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 x32655
- **MATES**: one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

Off campus, 24/7:

- **Good2Talk**: Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-4300 x6880
- **Here 24/7**: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- **OK2BME**: set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 x213

Full details can be found online on the Faculty of Arts [website](#).

Download [UW and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information

Chosen/Preferred Name: Do you want professors and interviewers to call you by a different first name? Take a minute now to verify or tell us your chosen/preferred first name by logging into [WatIAM](#).

Why? Starting in winter 2020, your chosen/preferred first name listed in WatIAM will be used broadly across campus (e.g., LEARN, Quest, WaterlooWorks, WatCard, etc). Note: Your legal first name will always be used on certain official documents. For more details, visit [Updating Personal Information](#).

Important notes:

- If you included a preferred name on your OUAC application, it will be used as your chosen/preferred name unless you make a change now.
- If you don't provide a chosen/preferred name, your legal first name will continue to be used.

Intellectual Property: Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of their instructor, TA, and/or St. Jerome's University. Intellectual property includes items such as:

- Lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof);
- Lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course (e.g., PowerPoint slides);
- Questions or solution sets from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams); and
- Work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor or TA or used by the instructor or TA with permission of the copyright owner).

Course materials and the intellectual property contained therein, are used to enhance a student's educational experience. However, sharing this intellectual property without the intellectual property owner's permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. For this reason, it is necessary to ask the instructor, TA, and/or St. Jerome's University for permission before uploading and sharing the intellectual property of others online (e.g., to an online repository).

Permission from an instructor, TA, or the University is also necessary before sharing the intellectual property of others from completed courses with students taking the same/similar courses in subsequent terms/years. In many cases, instructors might be happy to allow distribution of certain materials. However, doing so without expressed permission is considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Please alert the instructor if you become aware of intellectual property belonging to others (past or present) circulating, either through the student body or online. The intellectual property rights owner deserves to know (and may have already given their consent).

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. St. Jerome's University is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River.

- Armstrong, Elizabeth A. and Laura T. Hamilton (2013) *Paying for the Party: How College Maintains Inequality* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Arum, Richard and Josipa Roksa (2011) *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Attewell, Paul, and David Lavin (2007) *Passing the Torch: Does Higher Education for the Disadvantaged Pay Off Across the Generations?* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Berman, Elizabeth Popp (2012) *Creating the Market University: How Academic Science Became an Economic Engine* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Binder, Amy J., and Kate Wood (2013) *Becoming Right: How Campuses Shape Young Conservatives* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Brint, Steven and Jerome Karabel (1989) *The Diverted Dream: Community Colleges and the Promise of Educational Opportunity in America, 1900-1985* New York: Oxford University Press
- Daniels, Ronald J. (2021) *What Universities Owe Democracy* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press
- Goldrick-Rab, Sara (2016) *Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream* Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Hamilton, Laura T. and Kelly Nielsen (2021) *Broke: The Racial Consequences of Underfunding Public Universities* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
- Harris, Adam (2021) *The State Must Provide: Why America's Colleges Have Always Been Unequal and How to Set them Right* New York: Ecco Books
- Jack, Anthony Abraham (2019) *The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges are Failing Disadvantaged Students* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Karabel, Jerome (2005) *The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton* Boston: Houghton Mifflin
- Malkiel, Nancy Weiss (2016) *Keep the Damned Women Out: The Struggle for Coeducation* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press
- McCabe, Janice M. (2016) *Connecting in College: How Friendship Networks Matter for Academic and Social Success* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McMillan Cottom, Tressie (2017) *Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-Profits* New York: The New Press
- Mullen, Ann (2012) *Degrees of Inequality: Culture, Class, and Gender in American Higher Education* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Stevens, Mitchell (2007) *Creating a Class: College Admission and the Education of Elites* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Radford, Alexandria Walton (2013) *How Social Class Shapes Where Valedictorians Go to College* Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Wade, Lisa (2018) *American Hookup: The New Culture of Sex on Campus* New York: W.W. Norton & Company

Zaloom, Caitlin (2019) *Indebted: How Families Make College Work at Any Cost* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.