

SOC388H1S: SOCIOLOGY OF EVERYDAY LIFE
Professor Vanina Leschziner
Department of Sociology
University of Toronto
Winter 2026

Location and Time: See ACORN, Tuesday 11:10am-1pm

Office Hours: Tuesday 3-5pm, 700 University Avenue

Email: vanina.leschziner@utoronto.ca

Teaching Assistants: Amanda Deeley and Zihao Zhou

Email: amanda.deeley@mail.utoronto.ca and joezihao.zhou@mail.utoronto.ca

Brief Overview of the Course

The idea that our income, power, level of education, or health are at least partly a product of societal forces is by now not new to us. We are generally familiar with and aware of the large-scale social forces that shape our lives. However, we are less aware of the social forces that shape ordinary, routine, and subtle aspects of our everyday lives, such as how we think, how we present ourselves, how we interact with others, how we see ourselves, and how we experience daily events and even our emotions.

In this course, we will examine sociological perspectives to reflect on two questions: 1) how are the seemingly individual and/or psychological aspects of our lives shaped by social forces? and 2) how do individuals contribute to maintaining or changing the social order within social groups, communities, and society?

The examination of the processes through which individuals and society define each other leads our attention to a particular set of sociological perspectives that shed light on cognitive and interactional processes. These perspectives seek to explain the everyday processes whereby individuals come to understand themselves and their social worlds, and shape their thoughts, emotions and behavior. The theories and concepts we will study will show us how, through daily interactions, individuals incorporate particular ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. These perspectives will also help us understand the everyday ways through which actors contribute to maintaining (or challenging) the social order through their patterned behavior.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The prerequisite to take SOC388H1S is successful completion of 1.0 SOC FCE at the 200 or higher level. Students without this prerequisite will be removed at any time they are discovered.

Class Format, Requirements, and Grading

- 1- in-class test, January 2710%
- 2- in-class test, February 10 15%
- 3- in-class test, March 31 25%
- 4- In-class essay test, March 17 40%
- 5- in-class quizzes10%

Attendance

Attendance is expected. Students are responsible for all material presented in class. Students who are unable to attend class are responsible for obtaining information about any announcements that may have been made in class as well as notes on the material covered from their classmates. Make sure you have classmates who can share this information with you if you are unable to attend.

Deadlines: Late work will not be accepted unless submitted with proper documentation. See below for details.

Documentation from your Physician or College Registrar

If you miss a test or a paper deadline, do not contact the instructor unless you have followed the steps described here.

Missed deadlines and tests: Students who miss a test will receive a mark of zero for that test unless the reason is a circumstance beyond their control. **Within three days** of missing a test, students must send the instructor a request for consideration. Students must document their request with **one of the following:**

- Absence declaration via ACORN (**can only be used once during the semester**)
- U of T Verification of Illness or Injury Form
- College Registrar’s letter (e.g., in case of personal/family crisis or emergency)
- Letter of Academic Accommodation from Accessibility Services

Students who miss the test for other reasons, such as family or other personal reasons, should request their College Registrar to email the instructor.

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances. This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). For more information on the VOI,

please see <https://www.registrar.utoronto.ca/policies-and-guidelines/verification-of-illness-or-injury/>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

Readings

BOOK SELECTIONS AND JOURNAL ARTICLES Book selections and all journal articles will be available on the Quercus course website, under “Course Materials.”

Students are solely responsible for obtaining and reading all required materials before class. Give yourself enough time to deal with any problems or delays accessing the readings that may arise so you can be sure to come to class prepared to discuss the materials. Problems accessing readings will not excuse failure to demonstrate having done the required readings.

Assignments

In-class Quizzes

There will be a short quiz at the end of each class meeting, except the first class and when there are in-class tests, so this amounts to 7 quizzes in total. Each quiz will consist of one question based on the day’s readings. Each quiz is worth 1%, and you get to choose three quizzes -- *at the time of writing it in class* -- that will each amount to 2%. *There is no make-up for quizzes*. If you did not come to class, you get 0% on the day’s quiz, unless you have official documentation (as noted above).

In-class Tests

There will be three in-class closed-book tests **on January 27, February 10, and March 31**. The first test is very short (two or three short-answer questions), the second test is a little longer (five short-answer questions), and the last test is the longest, and you will have the entire class session to write it (five short-answer questions and two medium-answer questions).

In-class Essay Test

The in-class essay test will be held on **March 17**. This will be a closed-book and closed-computer assessment. On the day of the test, you will be provided with three essay questions and asked to select two to answer. You will have the entire class session to complete your responses. The test is designed to evaluate your ability to engage critically and analytically with the course material, as well as to demonstrate depth of understanding and originality of thought.

Make-up Test

Students who miss the test for a valid reason and wish to take a make-up test must give the instructor a written request for special consideration -- no later than 5 days after the date of the test -- which explains why the test was missed, accompanied by proper documentation

(see above). A student who misses a test and the subsequent make-up test for a valid reason will not have a third chance to take the test, and the mark assigned for the test will be a zero.

Turnitin

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service is described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Assignments not submitted through *Turnitin* will receive a grade of zero (0%), unless a student instead provides, along with their position paper, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own. The alternative (not submitting via *Turnitin*) is in place because, strictly speaking, using *Turnitin* is voluntary for students at the University of Toronto.

Plagiarism: Be careful to avoid plagiarism. It is a serious academic offense with serious penalties (see the "Code of Behavior on Academic Matters"). If you are using somebody else's ideas, do not present them as your own. Give proper references if you are using somebody else's ideas, and use quotation marks if you are quoting. When in doubt, it is always safer to over-reference -- you are not going to be punished for that. Please also be aware that turning in an old paper, or large parts thereof, for credit in a second (or third etc.) course, is considered an academic offense that results in students being referred to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Use of Generative AI Tools

In this course, you may use generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT and GitHub Copilot, as learning aids and to help complete assignments. You will not be permitted to use generative AI on any of the in-class tests and essay test. While some generative AI tools are currently available for free in Canada, please be warned that these tools have not been vetted by the University of Toronto and might not meet University guidelines or requirements for privacy, intellectual property, security, accessibility, and records retention. Generative AI may produce content which is incorrect or misleading, or inconsistent with the expectations of this course. These tools may even provide citations to sources that don't exist—and submitting work with false citations is an academic offense. These tools may be subject to service interruptions, software modifications, and pricing changes during the semester.

Generative AI is not required to complete any aspect of this course, and you are cautioned to not rely entirely on these tools to complete your coursework. Instead, it is recommended that you treat generative AI as a supplementary tool only for exploration or drafting

content. Ultimately, you (and not any AI tool) are responsible for your own learning in this course, and for all the work you submit for credit. It is your responsibility to critically evaluate the content generated, and to regularly assess your own learning independent of generative AI tools. Overreliance on generative AI may give you a false sense of how much you've actually learned, which can lead to poor performance on the assignments, in later courses, or in future work or studies after graduation.

Accessibility Needs

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca or <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/>

Class Schedule

January 6

INTRODUCTION: SOCIOLOGY OF EVERYDAY LIFE

January 13

THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

Georg Simmel, [1908] 1950. Selection from "The Isolated Individual and the Dyad" in Kurt H. Wolff (ed.), *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. New York: Free Press (pp. 172-178, 185-186).

Emile Durkheim, [1912] 1995. Selection from "Definition of Religious Phenomena and of Religion," in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: Free Press (pp. 33-39).

January 20

SHAPING THE SELF THROUGH SOCIAL INTERACTION

George H. Mead, [1934] 1967. Selections from "The Self," in *Mind, Self, and Society*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (pp. 135-144, 152-178, 192-200).

January 27

SYMBOLIC INTERACTION

Herbert Blumer, 1969. Selection from "The Methodological Position of Symbolic Interactionism," in *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Berkeley: University of California Press (pp. 1-21).

Gary Alan Fine and Iddo Tavory, 2019. "Interactionism in the Twenty-First Century: A Letter on Being-in-a-Meaningful World." *Symbolic Interactionism* 42(3): 457-467.

Short In-class Test

February 3

THE PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Erving Goffman, 1959. "Introduction," in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. New York: Anchor Books (pp. 1-16).

Erving Goffman, 1967. "Embarrassment and Social Organization," in *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior*. New York: Pantheon Books (pp. 97-112).

February 10

THE SELF AND SOCIAL ORDER IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Jack Katz, 1999. Selection from "Shameful Moments," in *How Emotions Work*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (pp. 142-152, 161-167).

In-class Test

February 17

Reading Week

February 24

CREATING MEANING IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Howard Becker, 1953. "Becoming a Marijuana User," *American Journal of Sociology* 59: 235-242.

Harold Garfinkel, 1963. Selection from "A Conception of and Experiments with 'Trust' as a Condition of Concerted Stable Actions," in *Motivation and Social Interaction. Cognitive Determinants*, edited by O. J. Harvey. New York: The Ronald Press Company (pp. 220-238).

March 3

THE SOCIAL MIND

Eviatar Zerubavel, 1993. "Introduction: In the Beginning," "Islands of Meaning" and "The Great Divide" in *The Fine Line: Making Distinctions in Everyday Life*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (pp. 1-32).

March 10

COGNITION IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Karen A. Cerulo and Janet M. Ruane, 2022. Selection from “If You Knew You Couldn’t Fail,” and “Cultural Lessons as Guidelines for Dreaming” in *Dreams of a Lifetime: How Who We Are Shapes How We Imagine Our Future*. Princeton: Princeton University Press (pp. 1-10, 61-88).

March 17

In-class Essay Test

March 24

EMOTIONS IN SOCIAL INTERACTION

Arlie R. Hochschild, 1979. “Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure,” *American Journal of Sociology* 85(3): 551-575.

March 31

In-class Test