Instructor Information

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Teaching Assistants

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Course Description:

"We live," Jeffrey Alexander argues, "in an age of scandal." Scandals – corporate, political, or bureaucratic – pervade media reporting and public debate. This course takes up scandals as sociological events: what are the causes of scandals? How are scandals 'made'? How are scandals represented? And what are the consequences of scandals: do they discredit some actors, and lead to cultural, institutional, and organizational change? Do they lead to reform, used for new professional mobilization, new forms of regulation and oversight, targeted for legal intervention, or do they generate new political shifts, or new memories or narratives? Or are they ignored? The course will also pay attention to how scandals are made public: leaks, investigations, whistleblowers, and media reporting, and the framing of events as scandals worthy of public condemnation. Finally, with scandals often thought of as singular, this course allows students to consider what is in common between these events.

To do so, this course will focus on scandals in the private corporate sector and in government (including political and bureaucratic scandals). Canvassing sociological research on scandal, on the media, on organizations, and on the public sphere, this course will include a wide array of scandals over time, domestically, and worldwide. These scandals cover an array of fields, including professions, finance, health, the environment, science, and politics.

Goals and Learning Objectives

Studying scandals sociologically provides students with a range of skills. It allows them analytical skills to engage in nuanced fashion with current events in the media, and with new leaks. It also allows them, in future careers, to pay attention to wrongdoing and potential scandals. And finally, by understanding scandals as sociological events, students

will learn to trace how scandals may lead to new organizational, professional, social, cultural, and political responses.

At the end of the course, students will be able:
- to critically read, analyze and write about sociological (both theoretical and empirical) literature on scandals
- to apply course material to real world and daily life examples
- to synthesize course materials from various weeks and demonstrate an understanding of the issue across various contexts

Prerequisite:
The prerequisite to take this course is completion of 1.0 SOC credits at the 200 or higher level. Students without this requirement will be removed from the course without notice.

Textbooks and Other Materials
The course relies on a collection of readings compiled by the instructor and available on Quercus.

Evaluation Components:

Type	Date(s) Due	Weight
Engagement	Ongoing	5%
In-class test	Feb 14	35%
In class quiz (based on essay)	March 14	10%
Essay	March 21	25%
In class test	April 4	25%

Engagement (5%)

Our class readings and discussions do not live purely in the realm of the theoretical. Every week's lecture and readings can be connected to current events that we read about in the media and on social media. In order to encourage you to make these connections, you will have 5 opportunities to post a link to a **current event** (within the past two weeks) that connects to the week's readings. You need to:

1) post the link to the news story (it can be from social media, it can also be a photo that you took, or something you saw on "TV"; in those cases please try to provide some kind of image or link)
2) write a short comment about how they are related (about 70 words).

These short writing exercises will be graded on a pass/fail basis, 1% per submission. There are no make-up opportunities for these assignments.

Posts are due by the start of each class, starting with Class #2 (there will be no post available for class #4 or 12). The post is meant to help you prepare for each upcoming lecture, so you will be posting based on the material we are covering that day before the class lecture for that topic.

Applied Test (35%)

The in-class test will ask you to apply material from the course to a current scandal(s). Details will be posted on Q.

In class quiz based on Essay (10%)

This **in class** quiz will ask questions about your essay; think of it as an in-class essay proposal, in preparation for your essay. Note the date is BEFORE your essay assignment is due.

Essay (25%)

Details of the essay will be provided later in the term. The essay will require some library research as well as connections to course material and course discussion.

All assignments must be submitted electronically via Quercus. Do not use the Quercus mobile app to submit your assignments. You are responsible for ensuring your essay was successfully submitted to Quercus; if it is not there, we cannot grade it. This link explains how to double check that you submitted your assignment successfully: https://qstudents.utoronto.ca/submitting-assignments-to-your-course/

Class test (25%)

Some test information includes:

- Rely on the slides to study and to guide your readings.
- Focus on the main concepts and findings/lessons - and especially examples of them!

- Try to trace some themes across the readings in any given lecture: there is often one concept or point that brings them together
- Types of questions: Tests in this course are often application based. Example questions include:
    - In the article "Article Title", the author Sample Author discusses "example topic." Please define this process and provide two examples of it.
    - In the article "Article Title", the author Sample Author discusses "example topic." What did they find? Give an example from another reading that found something similar.
    - The Author "X" in their article about "X" argues that "something happens". Give two examples of this.
    - We learned from Author X about "something important". What does this mean and what is an example of it from a different reading?

Procedures and Rules

1. Missed tests and late assignments

Students who miss a test will receive a mark of zero; UNLESS within 48 hours (two days) of the missed test, students who wish to write the make-up test give the instructor an emailed request for special consideration which explains why the test was missed. 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. Instead, the grade assigned for the missed test will be the same as the grade the student earns for the other test in this course.

Students who miss a paper deadline or a test will receive a mark of zero for that paper or test unless the reason is a circumstance beyond their control. **Within three days** of missing a paper deadline or test, students must send the instructor a request for consideration. Students must document their request with one of the following:
- Absence declaration via ACORN
- 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

In the case of late assignments, the instructor will determine whether to grant the requested extension, and length of extension.

2. Late Assignments - Time Bank

Time bank: In this course, we will be using time banks. Our time bank is made up of 72 hours total across all assignments in the course. This means that you have a 72-hour grace period to be used as you need (e.g. for one assignment or distributed across different assignments). The time bank will be calculated using 12-hour time blocks, meaning you have 6 time blocks total (6*12 hours=72 hours). For example, if you use 12 hours for your proposal, that means you have 60 hours left to use for your essay.

To use your time bank credit, you must inform us by using the assignment comment box on Quercus when you submit the assignment. Do not notify us by email.

You cannot use the time bank for tests.

Late penalties: Late assignments outside of the time bank limits and circumstances described above will be penalized 5% of the assignment marks per day. The penalty will run from the day the assignment was due until the day it is submitted via Quercus.

You are expected to keep a back-up, digital copy of your assignment.

Grade appeals

Instructors and teaching assistants take the marking of assignments very seriously, and will work diligently to be fair, consistent, and accurate. Nonetheless, mistakes and oversights occasionally happen. If you believe that to be the case, you must adhere to the following rules:

- If it is a mathematical error simply alert the TA of the error.
- In the case of more substantive appeals, you must:

  1. Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your mark.

  2. Carefully re-read your assignment, all assignment guidelines and marking schemes and the grader's comments.

  3. You have up to one month from the date of return of the item to inquire about the mark beyond the course instructor. In order to meet this deadline, you must inquire about the mark with your instructor no longer than 15 days after receiving your mark. If you are not satisfied with the instructor's re-evaluation, you may appeal to the Associate Chair, if the term work is worth at least 20% of the course mark. If your work is remarked, you must accept the resulting mark.

  If you wish to appeal:

  A. You must submit to the instructor a written explanation of why you think your mark should be altered. Please note statements such as "I need a higher grade to apply to X" are not compelling. Also, please note that upon re-grade your mark may go down, stay the same, or go up.

  B. Attach to your written explanation your original assignment, including all of the original comments. Scan all documents and submit via email to your TA.

Communication

Email communication is rapid, convenient, and efficient—and you are encouraged to use it to enhance your learning and experience in the course. With that said, it is essential that you follow a few rules:

- All course communication should be conducted through Quercus or your utoronto account.
- All emails must include the course code (e.g., SOC 389) in the subject line.
- All emails should be signed with the student's full name and student number.
- Emails from students will generally be answered within 72 hours of receipt.
- Treat emails as you would any other professional communication.
- Emails that ask questions that are answered in the course syllabus or website (e.g., "how much is assignment X worth") will not receive a response.

Emails that do not follow these guidelines will not receive a response.

Academic integrity

Cheating and misrepresentation will not be tolerated. Students who commit an academic offence face serious penalties. Avoid plagiarism by citing properly: practices acceptable in high school may prove unacceptable in university. Know where you stand by reading the "Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters" in the Calendar of the Faculty of Arts and Science.

'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.

Generative Artificial Intelligence

In this course, you may use generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT and GitHub Copilot, as learning aids and to contribute to your understanding of course materials. However, any submitted work (term paper, CRPs, in-class activities, online contributions) needs to be your own. Students who choose to use generative artificial intelligence tools as they work through the essays in this course must document this work in an appendix. The documentation should include what tool(s) were used, how they were used, and how the results from the AI were incorporated into the submitted work. Any content produced by an artificial intelligence tool must be cited appropriately. Many organizations that publish standard citation formats are now providing information on citing generative AI (e.g., MLA: **https://style.mla.org/citing-generative-ai/**).

Failure to disclose the use of generative AI in the submission of course work will be treated as an academic offense. 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.

Attendance
Students are responsible for all material covered in class and in the assignment readings.

Student resources
Accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility as soon as possible.

If required, the link for the Accommodated Testing Services (ATS): https://lsm.utoronto.ca/ats/

Weekly Schedule

Every attempt will be made to follow this schedule, but it is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. All readings are linked electronically through Quercus. There is nothing to purchase.

1. **Jan 10: What is a Scandal?**
   a. Adut, Ari. (2005) "A Theory of Scandal: Victorians, Homosexuality, and the Fall of Oscar Wilde." *American Journal of Sociology*, 111:213–248.
      i. http://www.jstor.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/10.1086/428816
   b. Bayle, Emmanuel, and Hervé Rayner. (2016) "Sociology of a scandal: the emergence of 'FIFAgate'." *Soccer & Society* 1-19.
      https://journals-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/details/14660970/v19i0004/593_soasteo.xml
   c. **RECOMMENDED**: de Blic, Damien, et Cyril Lemieux. (2005) « The Scandal as Test: Elements of Pragmatic Sociology», *Politix*, 71: 9-38.
      https://www.cairn-int.info/article-E_POX_071_0009--the-scandal-as-test.htm
   d. Examples:
      i. Bill Cosby: https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/21/upshot/bill-cosbys-sudden-fall-explained-sociologically.html?_r=0
      ii. Donald Trump: https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/05/donald-trump-presidential-scandals/522468/

2. **Jan 17: Scandals, Moral Boundaries, and Social Solidarity**
   a. Alexander, J. (1988) `Culture and Political Crisis: "Watergate" and Durkheimian Sociology', in J. Alexander (ed.) Durkheimian Sociology: Cultural Studies, pp. 187-224. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
      i. http://books.scholarsportal.info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/viewdoc.html?id=/ebooks/ebooks1/cambridgeonline/2012-11-08/1/9780511598258 (scroll down until you see the listed chapter)
   b. Jacobsson, K., & Löfmarck, E. (2008). A Sociology of Scandal and Moral Transgression: The Swedish 'Nannygate' Scandal. *Acta Sociologica*, 51(3), 203-216.
      i. http://journals.sagepub.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/doi/pdf/10.1177/0001699308094166

3. **Jan 24: Media: Role in Creating Scandals**
   a. Chen, G. M. (2019). Social media and scandal. The Routledge companion to media and scandal, 165-173. https://www-taylorfrancis-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781351173001-17/social-media-scandal-gina-masullo-chen
   b. Gamson, J. (2001). Normal sins: Sex scandal narratives as institutional morality tales. *Social problems* 48(2), 185-205.
      i. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/552c55ebe4b0c230032dbd3e/t/55351749e4b0c759b38f4c8f/1429542729531/normal+sins.pdf
   c. Moritz, Brian. (2016) "Evolution of a Modern Sports Scandal." *Scandal in a Digital Age*. Palgrave Macmillan US, 185-199.

i. https://link-springer-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/chapter/10.1057%2F978-1-137-59545-4_15

d. *Highly Recommended:* Clemente, M., & Gabbioneta, C. (2017). How Does the Media Frame Corporate Scandals? The Case of German Newspapers and the Volkswagen Diesel Scandal. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 26(3), 287–302. https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1177/1056492616689304

e. Media
   i. https://hbr.org/2016/09/what-100000-tweets-about-the-volkswagen-scandal-tell-us-about-angry-customers

4. **Jan 31: Crises, Reputations and Denunciations**
   a. Koerber, D. (2014). Crisis Communication Response and Political Communities: The Unusual Case of Toronto Mayor Rob Ford. Canadian Journal of Communication, 39(3).
      i. https://cjc.utpjournals.press/doi/full/10.22230/cjc.2014v39n3a2766
   b. Alan Fine, Gary. (2019) "Moral cultures, reputation work, and the politics of scandal." *Annual Review of Sociology* 45.1: 247-264.
      i. https://www-annualreviews-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/content/journals/10.1146/annurev-soc-073018-022649#abstract_content
   c. *Highly Recommended* Atkinson, W. (2022). On Disgrace: Scandal, Discredit and Denunciation within and across Fields. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 39(1), 23-40. https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764211024351
   d. Examples:
      i. https://www.vox.com/2017/5/16/15646286/russians-leakers-fox-news-masterclass-spin-trump-scandal
      ii. http://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/dalhousie-s-dentistry-scandal-a-costly-lesson-in-communications-1.3212800

5. **Feb 7: What are the causes of scandalous behaviour? Organizations or Bad Apples?**
   a. Vaughan, Diane. (1989), Regulating Risk: Implications of the Challenger Accident. *Law & Policy*, 11: 330–349.
      i. http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9930.1989.tb00032.x/full
   b. Greve, Henrich R., Donald Palmer, and Jo-Ellen Pozner. (2010) "Organizations gone wild: The causes, processes, and consequences of organizational misconduct." *Academy of Management annals* 4, no. 1: 53-107. https://journals-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/details/19416520/v04i0001/53_ogwtcpacoom.xml
   c. Bad Apples? SBF and Elizabeth Holmes
      i. https://www.vox.com/the-goods/23458837/sam-bankman-fried-ftx-sbf-downfall-explained
      ii. https://www.vox.com/2015/10/20/9576501/theranos-elizabeth-holmes
   d. Example:

- i. An Engineering Theory of the Volkswagen Scandal:
  http://www.newyorker.com/business/currency/an-engineering-theory-of-the-volkswagen-scandal
  http://ideas.time.com/2012/07/17/penn-state-cover-up-group-think-in-action/

6. **Feb 14: In class applied essay**

   Feb 21: READING WEEK, NO CLASS

7. **Feb 28: Law as Scandal/Law in Scandal**
   a. Brooke Harrington (2016). "Panama Papers: The Real Scandal Is What's Legal." *The Atlantic*.
      - i. https://global-factiva-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/redir/default.aspx?P=sa&an=ATLCOM0020170309ec46005yv&drn=drn%3aarchive.newsarticle.ATLCOM0020170309ec46005yv&cat=a&ep=ASE
   b. Saguy, A. (2012). "French and U.S. Legal Approaches to Sexual Harassment: The Pre and Post Dsk Scandal." *Travail, genre et sociétés*, no 28,(2), 89-106.
      - i. https://www.cairn-int.info/article-E_TGS_028_0089--french-and-u-s-legal-approaches-to.htm
      - ii. Recommended: "Denouncing Denigration" by Abigail Saguy
        1. https://booksandideas.net/Denouncing-Denigration.html
   c. Why Enron's sleazy lawyers walked while their accountants fried. By Julie Hilden:
      http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/jurisprudence/2002/06/scummery_judgment.html

8. **Mar 7: Measuring Scandals**
   a. Fourcade, M. (2011). Cents and Sensibility: Economic Valuation and the Nature of "Nature". American Journal of Sociology, 116(6), 1721-77.
      - i. http://www.jstor.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/10.1086/659640?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
   b. Media:
      - i. Confusion reigns over number of missing, murdered indigenous women:
        http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/mmiw-4000-hajdu-1.3450237
      - ii. The Truth About Chicago's Crime Rates:
        http://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/May-2014/Chicago-crime-rates/

9. **Mar 14: Whistleblowers**
   a. "The age of the whistleblower" (2015) *The Economist*
      - i. https://go-gale-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/ps/i.do?p=CPI&u=utoronto_main&id=GALE|A450209461&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon
   b. Olesen, T. (2022). The Birth of an Action Repertoire: On the Origins of the Concept of Whistleblowing. *J Bus Ethics* 179, 13–24

- i. https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1007/s10551-021-04868-3
- c. Miethe, T. D. and Rothschild, J. (1994), Whistleblowing and the Control of Organizational Misconduct. Sociological Inquiry, 64: 322–347. doi:10.1111/j.1475-682X.1994.tb00395.x
  - i. http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/doi/10.1111/j.1475-682X.1994.tb00395.x/abstract
- d. Recommended:
  - i. Patrick Bergemann, Brandy Aven (2022) Whistleblowing and Group Affiliation: The Role of Group Cohesion and the Locus of the Wrongdoer in Reporting Decisions. Organization Science 34(3):1243-1265. https://pubsonline-informs-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/doi/10.1287/orsc.2022.1617
  - ii. Roulet, T. J., & Pichler, R. (2020). Blame Game Theory: Scapegoating, Whistleblowing and Discursive Struggles following Accusations of Organizational Misconduct. *Organization Theory*, 1(4). https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1177/2631787720975192
- e. Examples:
  - i. http://www.cbc.ca/news2/interactives/WHO-whistleblowers/
  - ii. https://www.cfe.ryerson.ca/key-resources/lists/prominent-canadian-whistleblowers
  - iii. https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/brainstorm/201306/secrets-the-whistleblower

10. **Mar 21: Apologies**
    - a. Cerulo, K. A., & Ruane, J. M. (2014). Apologies of the Rich and Famous: Cultural, Cognitive, and Social Explanations of Why We Care and Why We Forgive. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 77(2), 123-149.
      - i. http://journals.sagepub.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/doi/abs/10.1177/0190272514530412
    - b. Frey, E., Bernstein, E., & Rekenthaler, N. (2022). Scarlet Letters: Rehabilitation Through Transgression Transparency and Personal Narrative Control. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 67(4), 968–1011. https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1177/00018392221115154
    - c. **Recommended**: Max Clarke and Gary Alan Fine. (2010) "'A' is for Apology: Slavery and the Discourse of Remonstrance in American Universities." *History & Memory* 22: 81-112. https://muse-jhu-edu.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/article/376352
    - d. Examples:
      - i. How to Optimize Your Apology (Ep. 353)
        1. http://freakonomics.com/podcast/apologies/
      - ii. Weinstein:
        1. http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2017/11/what_do_we_want_from_public_apologies_by_accused_sexual_harassers_like_louis.html
      - iii. SBF's Apology: https://fortune.com/crypto/2022/11/10/sam-bankman-fried-apology-ftx-wrong-meltdown-crypto-binance/
      - iv. Some Canadian Government apologies:

1. https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2006/06/prime-minister-harper-offers-full-apology-chinese-head-tax.html
2. https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649
3. http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/news/2016/5/statement-apology-women-the-rcmp-and-announcement-settlement
4. http://pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2016/05/18/komagata-maru-apology-house-commons

11. Mar 28: Scandal outcomes: Forgiveness & Consequences

   a. Canada tainted blood scandal
      i. https://reviewcanada.ca/magazine/2023/09/notes-on-a-scandal/
   b. Ruderman, Nick, and Neil Nevitte. (2015). "Assessing the Impact of Political Scandals on Attitudes toward Democracy: Evidence from Canada's Sponsorship Scandal." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 48.4: 885-904.
      i. https://www-cambridge-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/core/journals/canadian-journal-of-political-science-revue-canadienne-de-science-politique/article/assessing-the-impact-of-political-scandals-on-attitudes-toward-democracy-evidence-from-canadas-sponsorship-scandal/E97D223A5E297C1D2929D4824DEE150C/core-reader
   c. Piazza, A., & Jourdan, J. (2018). When the Dust Settles: The Consequences of Scandals for Organizational Competition. *The Academy of Management Journal.*, 61(1), 165–190.
      i. http://myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bah&AN=128057425&site=ehost-live
   d. Effects of scandals: https://www.ggd.world/p/are-sexual-predators-ostracised

12. Apr 4: Class test