

## Teaching Reflections Spring 2016

Again, great semester 😊

Some of the things that went particularly well this term included:

- The changes to my lectures on sexuality went very well. The new content was certainly timelier and seemed to engage students more than the previous material.
- I also updated/revised lectures on race/racialization (incorporated a lot more material on First Nations) and religion (had a guest panel attend lectures, and, it went really well).
- The revisions to the two tutorial assignments seemed to make a lot more sense to students. Also, some of the assignments that students produced were, quite simply, spectacular. Really, really impressive.
- I have started to more consciously integrate student research onto my site [www.makingsociologymatter.com](http://www.makingsociologymatter.com) It is a wonderful way to celebrate students' achievements.

Some of the things that I continue to struggle with, and will continue to work on, include:

- Independent of my comment above, across the course evaluations, some students voice concern over the assessment mechanism in this class. While some commented that the tutorial assignment helped them learn the material better, some were confused and thought it was too much work. Over the summer I will expand the assignment guidelines as well as consider making both tutorial assignments worth more (but I have to be conscious of TA grading time). One thing that should help is that I now have examples of great assignment #1 and #2 that students have given me permission to use – I think this should really help. I remain committed to written exams and tutorial assignments.
- I have to become a better mentor to the TAs. Over the last few years I think I relied too heavily on senior TAs to keep me informed of what was going on and by doing so, unfortunately, became too officious and to be honest, too grumpy. In the last few weeks of the term I was able to work with a few of the TAs to redistribute how their work would be distributed over the term as well as modify some of my expectations. This was a really important challenge for me to work through. Next Fall I am absolutely committed to working more closely with TAs and to build their trust in me and hope that they come to see me as a mentor and someone to come to for help rather than just see me as the one who distributes the work. Will be a lot more work but, so worth it.
- I hope that by giving the TAs a better orientation in the Fall and more support through the term, that they will be able to convey their expectations to students in a manner that minimizes student perception that TAs grading varies too much (a point that is statistically untrue – I track grading distributions by TA and the differences are not statistically significant). I will also use the “grading buddy” strategy I have used before to again help minimize grading variation.

I am looking forward to a productive summer updating course materials and lectures.

/Bruce