This course analyzes the markers of societal success and the social conditions that sustain it. We will discuss various indicators ranging from the standard economic measures to the human development index, inequality, resilience to shocks, educational, child development and health measures. We will consider the role of cultural and institutional buffers (how cultural repertoires and myths feed strong collective identities, cultural and institutional resources provide support for coping with stigma, models of citizenship and immigration, and multi-level governance and their impact on welfare and poverty). We will addresses factors that present major challenges, like concentrated urban poverty and the well-being of racialized groups, and some of the solutions attempted. Particular attention will be put on the United States, Canada, France and other advanced industrial societies and to the role of space, institutions, and culture in shaping the conditions for successful societies. Public policy implications will also be discussed.

**Requirements:** 1) One 15 page final essay exam: compare and discuss various dimensions of societal success, drawing on course material, readings, and other sources (due **May 8**). 2) A shorter paper: construct an indicator of societal success (see last page of this syllabus for details) (due **February 21**); 3) Two 3 pages memos on the readings for each of two weeks; 4) Some students will be pre-designated to launch a discussion of the weekly readings for each session. Occasions for interaction will be built into the second half of each session.

Grading: Final paper; 50% of the grade; Shorter paper: 15%; Memos: 20%; Participation: 15%

Required books (ordered for purchase at the Coop and on reserve)


Other readings are available as pdfs on the course isite.

Schedule:

Week 1 (January 29): Introduction: Describing the questions (ML and PH)

Required Reading:


Optional:


http://www.clubmadrid.org/sspblog/

Week 2 (February 5): What Makes for a Successful Society? Problems of Definition (ML)

Required Readings:


Optional:

**Week 3 (February 12): The Problem of Indicators and their Production (ML)**

*Required Readings:*


**Week 4 (February 19): The Problem of Prosperity: Do Institutions Matter? (And If So How?) (PH)**

*Required Readings:*


**Week 5 (February 26): The Problem of Inequalities in Health: What Are Their Sources and How Can They Be Addressed? (PH)**

*Required Readings:*


*Optional:*


**Week 6 (March 5): The Problem of Poverty: Does Culture Matter? (ML)**

*Required Readings:*


Something else by Bouchard? Other?


*Optional:*


**Week 7 (March 12): The Problem of Poverty: What Can States Do and Why Do They Do It? (PH)**

*Required Readings:*


Optional:


(March 19) No Class - Spring Break

Week 8 (March 26): The Problem of Racism: How Do People Cope? (ML)

Required Readings:


Optional:


Week 9 (April 2): The Problem of Immigration: What Counts as Integration? (ML)

Required Readings:


**Optional Reading:**


**Week 10 (April 9): The Problem of Citizenship** (guest lecturer: Ben Herzog)


**Required Reading:**


**Optional:**


Week 12 (April 23): The Challenges of Change: Responding to a Neo-Liberal Era (PH)

Required Reading:


Optional:


Week 13 (April 30): Recap and discussion of papers (ML and PH)
First assignment – Soc 164 (draft)

Conceptual Models and Indicators of Successful Societies

Data that allows us to make comparisons across societies consist of indicators (e.g., GDP per capita, % of people in poverty, etc.) and usually groups of indicators that are conceptually related to one another (e.g., the Human Development Index). These indicators are usually based on some kind of conceptual framework (at least implicitly).

In this assignment you will select a conceptual framework that provides a means to understand an important issue that societies face (e.g., economic growth, human development, poverty, etc.). Once you have selected that framework, you will indentify indicators that could be used to measure the constructs in the conceptual model.

There are 7 stages to this assignment:

1) Submit a description of the conceptual framework you used (250-500 words).
2) List 10 indicators that you propose to measure, based on the conceptual framework. Each indicator should measure some aspect of a concept shown in the conceptual framework. Also, for each indicator, list a source of data (one source only, even if multiple sources exist). Present the indicators in a table with a self-explanatory title and four columns with the following information:
   • Concept (e.g., knowledge)
   • Specific indicator
   • Operational description of the indicator, if not clear from the name
   • Source of data
3) If the conceptual framework has 11 or more concepts, select only 10 for the purposes of this assignment. If the conceptual framework has less than 10 concepts, list multiple indicators for a single concept (e.g., different types of knowledge).
4) In some cases, the title of the indicator fully explains what will be measured (e.g., age of respondent, gender). For others, it is important to include an operational definition to explain how you will measure the concept. For example, “gender equity” is a good concept, but it requires some explanation of how you would measure it (for example, male/female ratio for primary school enrollment). Note: a given indicator does not have to measure all aspects of the concept, but rather some aspect of it.
5) Where appropriate, specify the age/sex to which the indicator applies (for example, “among males 15-24”).
6) The indicator should not specify the intended direction of change (“an increase in X; a decrease in Y”). Rather, it should measure the concept or factor you expect to change; for example: the percent of males 15-24 that do X).
7) Present the completed table and description of the conceptual framework you used in a report no longer than 1000 words (including the description of the conceptual framework). So in addition to describing the conceptual framework, you should also describe the table you have completed.

We will consider debating in class various types of indicators (depending on class size