

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

SOC& 101 (Section C)

Spring 2012

Bellevue College

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Class Meets: Daily, 9:30-10:20am
Class Location: L124

COURSE INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our class, "Introduction to Sociology." I look forward to working with you this quarter and sharing with you my fascination with sociology! Hopefully, you enter this class with some degree of curiosity about why human beings behave the way we do. If so, you should find sociology intellectually rewarding as well as illuminating and useful in your own life.

This course is designed as a broad introduction to the field of Sociology. Over the course of the quarter, we will review several topics frequently studied by sociologists, with a particular focus on inequality and the distribution of power in society. We will discover how social institutions (such as education and the economy) depend upon and perpetuate inequalities between people. You will also learn how to use the "sociological imagination" to see how large institutions affect all of our lives for better or worse. As José Ortega y Gasset said, "Tell me the landscape in which you live, and I will tell you who you are." Indeed, our social environments profoundly influence not only who we think we are, but also how we behave, what we think, and how we see others. The overarching goal of this course is to examine and understand this process.



Sociology is a field that relies on scientific research and evidence, not personal opinion or casual observation. In many cases, the ideas sociology has to offer are difficult to grasp and accept because they challenge many of the taken-for-granted attitudes and opinions that we all tend to operate by in our everyday lives. (Science and research often contradict opinion. As an example, just think about how science challenged the previously held belief that the earth was flat and at the center of the universe!) As we all come to the course with strong ideas and beliefs about the world in which we live, the subject matter is personally as well as intellectually challenging. Some of what you will learn in this course may initially seem like "common sense." Sometimes what you will learn might be shocking, surprising, or even make you angry. Hopefully, you will learn from each experience and take these lessons with you on your future endeavors.

"The chief object of education is not to learn things but to unlearn things."
—Gilbert Chesterton

LEARNING ATMOSPHERE

I believe that students learn best when they are actively involved in the teaching and learning process. Thus, this is an *active, interactive* course where you will often *learn by doing*. You are expected to observe the world, read, write, discuss, and participate. I think of our class as a "collaborative learning community" where we all teach and learn from each other. Every time you make a comment or ask a question, you teach something to the rest of us. I challenge you to abandon the traditional passive student role and to get involved with teaching and learning – I think you'll enjoy it and learn a lot in the process!

A note about course content: Since sociologists examine just about every aspect of the social world, we sometimes talk about provocative material in class. Please be advised that, when we explore controversial topics, they will always be framed within an academic context. You are free to leave the room at any time, but please know that you will be responsible for any course material you may have missed while you were gone. If you have any questions or concerns about course content or climate, don't hesitate to let me know.

REGARDING SAFE SPACE: This class is a Safe Space for **all** students. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, queer-identified, and transgendered students are welcome in this classroom and encouraged to speak out and be an integral part of this class. Any questions about what this means should be brought to me immediately. All are welcome!



COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing the course, the successful student will be able to:

- Question the obvious;
- Describe the “sociological perspective”;
- Identify the ways in which culture and social institutions (such as education, the economy, the media, and the family) shape our everyday experiences;
- Explain “social constructionism”;
- Distinguish between factual statements and value judgments;
- Put aside personal ethnocentric attitudes, becoming culturally relative;
- Better understand perspectives different from your own;
- Formulate logical conclusions;
- Apply sociological knowledge to real-life situations;
- Look at your own life sociologically; and
- Describe how life experiences and opportunities differ according to race, class, and gender.

NOTE: This course’s General Education ratings are: 3 in Critical Thinking, 2 in Reading, 2 in Ethics, 2 in Historical and Intellectual Perspectives, and 3 in Cultural Diversity.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MISCELLANEOUS PURCHASES

Texts: “Sociology: Exploring the Architecture of Everyday Life” (8th Edition)
Additional readings are posted on the course website

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

The following outlines what you may expect of me as your instructor:

- *A sincere effort to help you learn the course material.* Since my ultimate goal is to help you learn and succeed, I intend to spend enough time and effort on class preparation to make the material as understandable and as interesting as I possibly can. I will not simply “regurgitate” the material from the textbook, but rather, I will help you synthesize it. This means that class time will not be solely lecture – we will have interesting discussions, watch films, and engage in a wide variety of activities. I am a big believer that a variety of teaching styles/approaches helps you learn more.
- *Accessibility.* I agree to be available to you outside of class should you desire help. I encourage you to come to my office hours whenever you have a question or concern. I am more than happy to help. If my office hours are not convenient for you, we can schedule an appointment that fits your schedule. However, please be aware that I am not available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. In general, I am in my office for a couple of hours in the morning (before my classes) and again in the afternoon, and I always check my email a few times a day. I do my coursework during the week, during daytime business hours. *Thus, please do not send to me late-night or weekend emails expecting an immediate response.* Thank you in advance for your understanding and consideration.
- *Attention.* When you are speaking, you will have my undivided attention.
- *Fairness.* Your grade will be based upon what I detect that you have learned and how I assess your performance. It is your job to clearly communicate to me that you understand the material. I will not negotiate final grades.

The following outlines what I expect from you as a student in this class:

- *A sincere effort to learn the course material.* When participating in discussions and when writing assignments/papers, your comments should indicate to me that you have read and understand the course material. Some students wrongly assume that they can simply "wing it" in this class and still receive a high grade.
- *Preparation.* You should come to class having done the assigned readings and homework, and you should always bring the proper supplies with you. On seminar days, you should bring the readings. Note that the BC guideline for homework is two hours outside of class for each hour spent in class.
- *Attendance.* Please attend all class sessions – your presence in class contributes significantly toward your final grade in the course as I cover a lot of material in class that can not be found in the readings. If you do need to miss class, please note that you will not be able to make up any in-class work that you may have missed (such as group work), and you are also responsible for any and all work that is due at the class meeting immediately upon your return. That means that being absent does not grant you an extension on anything. I highly recommend that you get the names and contact information of one or two of your classmates so you can contact them for any assignments or notes you may have missed while absent.
- *Promptness.* You should be in class on time except when delayed by an emergency, and you should stay until class is over unless you become ill or have made arrangements with me to leave early. Furthermore, you should comply with all due dates. I believe that one of the major lessons students take away from college is the importance of meeting deadlines. As a result, **no late work will be accepted.** Late work will receive a **zero** grade. Please do not ask me if I will accept your work late...I won't. If you know you are going to be absent on the day an assignment is due, then turn it in early. **Being absent on the day something is due does NOT grant you an automatic extension (even if you were absent on the day it was assigned).** Major due dates are indicated on the attached Course Calendar, so plan ahead.

NOTE: I do not accept assignments via email. It is your responsibility to get the work to me in class when it is due.

- *Contribution.* Learning about each other's experiences and perspectives is an integral part of the learning process in this course. I believe that you will learn a lot about yourself and your fellow classmates. To work effectively in this course, therefore, you are expected to be an active participant in our learning environment. You should do your best to contribute to class discussions and activities. Please be advised that your grade will suffer if you do not participate and contribute to the intellectual life of our class.
- *Respect and tolerance.* Since learning about diverse experiences is central to this course, it is of the utmost importance that you respect your classmates' experiences, differences, and opinions. Disrespectful attitudes will not be tolerated.
- *Honesty.* This means no cheating, and no plagiarism. If you cheat/plagiarize, you fail. No excuses will be taken into account. Your work must be your own, except when asked to work with other students. Furthermore, you are required to acknowledge in your papers if you have borrowed any ideas, terms, or phrases, even if you have borrowed from a classmate. Please do not copy and paste material from wikipedia or any other website into your assignments, as this is a severe form of cheating (that is very easy to catch, by the way). ***In this class, your assignments should be grounded in the textbook (rather than web resources, which are often wrong!). This means that you should NOT do internet research in this class – all you need can be found in the course textbook and supplementary readings.*** If you have any hesitation, or if you are in doubt about one of these issues, feel free to ask me.

GRADING

Final course grades are based on the following:

Exams (2 @ 250pts each)	500 points
Quizzes (9 @10pts each)	90 points
Seminar (9 @ 15pts each)	135 points
Active Explorations (9 @15 pts each)	135 points
'Community' Activities (7@10pts each)	70 points
<u>Participation</u>	<u>70 points</u>
TOTAL	1000 points

The following are the letter-grade equivalents to the course points:

Course Grade	Point Total	Course Grade	Point Total
A	= 930-1,000 points	C+	= 770-799 points
A-	= 900-929 points	C	= 730-769 points
B+	= 870-899 points	C-	= 700-729 points
B	= 830-869 points	D+	= 670-699 points
B-	= 800-829 points	D	= 600-669 points
		F	= 0-599 points

- (1) Exams: Two exams are given over the course of the quarter. Exams will likely consist of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and/or essay questions. You are encouraged to study with your classmates for each exam. **Please note that I do not give make-up exams.** If you are absent on the day of an exam, or if you arrive to class after other students have already finished taking the exam, you will receive a zero grade. Please review the attached Course Calendar and make note of the exam dates. Plan ahead!
- (2) Quizzes: Most weeks, I will give a short quiz on the reading materials. Quizzes will be held at the beginning of class, so if you come in late, you will miss the quiz and receive a **zero** grade. You are permitted to miss one quiz without consequence to your grade (I drop the lowest score). I do not give makeup quizzes, so if you are absent on the day of a quiz, then that will be your dropped quiz. Quizzes will typically be short answer, although I may throw in a multiple choice question once in a while. The purpose of these quizzes is to ensure that you have done the readings and understand them on a basic level. My rationale for this is that I think our time in class will be much more productive, and you'll learn more, if you've done the readings ahead of time.
- (3) Seminar: We will have ten seminars over the course of the quarter; you are permitted to miss one seminar without consequence to your grade (I drop the lowest score). Seminar involves discussing a specific reading and completing a brief assignment independently AND another one in small groups in order to reach deeper levels of learning. Early in the quarter, I will assign students randomly to groups. This will be your quarter-long Seminar Group (although I reserve the right to re-assign groups at any time, particularly if a group has become dysfunctional). Each week, you will work in this group, having discussions with your group members and completing a brief group assignment with them.

If you look at the Course Calendar, you will see that there is a Seminar due just about every week. On Seminar day, it is crucial that you come to class prepared. You will need to complete the reading ahead of time and bring a brief assignment to each seminar. (NOTE: I will not accept assignments that are not typed.) Each INDEPENDENT seminar assignment (that you bring with you to class on Seminar day) should include the following:

- a statement of what you think the article's main claim/conclusion is (in your own words); in other words, what is the thesis of the article, and what is the author CONCLUDING about the topic? (Oftentimes, the title of the article is a big hint about the conclusion/thesis!) Please note that a thesis is NOT the same as the topic of the article, but rather, a thesis is an ARGUABLE CLAIM that the author is making.
(continued on next page)

- 3-4 central questions that you have about the article that you would like to talk about with your classmates (the questions should be thought-provoking, not “What did you think about the article?” and “What is the author saying?”).
- Seminar assignments should NOT include your opinion about the article (you will have plenty of time to talk about that during seminar!).

In class on seminar days, you will break into your assigned groups and come to an agreement about what the thesis of the article is. Your group will write your agreed-upon thesis on a piece of paper, and then begin talking about your discussion questions. After your discussion ends, your group will staple your individual seminar assignments to the sheet of paper that contains your agreed-upon thesis, and you'll CIRCLE the best three discussion-questions (that is, the three questions that were the most thought- and discussion-provoking for you all). I grade seminar in the following manner:

I review your group's agreed-upon thesis and assign it a grade (for example, 15 out of 15). I then look at my notes from class and check to see who contributed to discussion in a meaningful way. Those students will receive the highest grade in the group (in this example, they'd receive 15s). Students who participate a little might receive 10s, and those who don't participate at all would receive zeros. Students who do not submit individual assignments (stapled in the packet) also receive a **zero** grade. This means that not all seminar group members automatically receive the same grade – students who participate less receive lowered grades.

- (4) Active Explorations: You are required to complete nine “Active Exploration” assignments over the course of the quarter. Active Explorations require you to *do something* that relates to the course material, such as watch a short music video, interview people, or observe human behavior, and then reflect upon what you saw. These assignments are described in detail in the Course Calendar. Please be advised that I do not grade all of these assignments, however; in fact, I will randomly grade at least three of these assignments over the course of the quarter (you'll receive full credit for the others that you submit).
- (5) Community Activities: Since Sociology, by its very nature, is social, we need to establish a classroom culture in which we are familiar and comfortable with one another. With this end in mind, we will have several “Community” activities that involve some kind of personal reflection and interaction (and sometimes a small amount of homework). Your participation in these activities is highly valued, so you can receive up to 10 points for your quality involvement.
- (6) Participation: Participation is essential to the format of this class and will therefore contribute significantly toward your grade. In short, your success in this class depends on your *active* participation. “Participation” includes attendance, class discussions, group work, and independent in-class assignments. As a result, if you skip class or disrupt class by coming in late regularly or whispering, then your participation grade will suffer. Conversely, if you contribute to class discussions in a meaningful way by adding important insights, your grade will benefit. *Do not take this portion of your grade lightly – excellent attendance and participation can significantly improve your final grade!*

Students with Disabilities. All students are responsible for all requirements of the class, but the way they meet these requirements may vary. If you need specific academic accommodations due to a disability, please speak with me and with the Disability Resource Center (564-2498). You will need to obtain the appropriate documentation from DRC in room B233. The disability accommodation documentation must be given to me before it is needed rather than afterward, so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

COURSE CALENDAR

The following Course Calendar will be revised as needed. Please note that you will be held responsible for all revisions to the calendar. So, if you miss a class, be sure to immediately check with me regarding any changes. You should make every effort to complete the readings in the order listed. "Newman," when listed, refers to the course textbook.



WEEK ONE - Introduction to the Sociological Imagination

PARADOX of the week:

Thinking sociologically often means making the familiar seem strange.

Readings and Assignments:

- Read syllabus and make sure you understand it
- Read McIntyre, L. "Who's Afraid of Sociology" (on WEBSITE)
- Read Newman, Chapter 1
- **QUIZ FRIDAY on Newman Chapter 1 and McIntyre article**

Quote for thought - How does the following quote utilize a sociological perspective?

*"I am somehow less interested
in the weight and convolutions of Einstein's brain
than in the near certainty that people of equal talent
have lived and died in cotton fields and sweatshops."
-Stephen Jay Gould*

WEEK TWO – Social Structure

PARADOX of the week:

What makes you an "individual" is your affiliation with multiple group identities.

Readings and Assignments:

- Read Newman Chapter 2
- **QUIZ MONDAY (on Newman Chapter 2)**
- Read Kelman and Hamilton "The My Lai Massacre: A Military Crime of Obedience" (on WEBSITE)
- **DUE FRIDAY: SEMINAR on Kelman/ Hamilton article**
- **DUE FRIDAY: Active Exploration:** Consider the concepts of statuses, roles, groups, organizations, and institutions as discussed in the Newman chapter. On a sheet of paper, write down as many examples of each of these concepts in your own life that you can think of. For example, what are all of your statuses? Roles? Which groups are you a part of? Organizations? Which institutions do you participate in?



"The Boondocks"

WEEK THREE – Social Construction of Reality

PARADOX of the week:

If we successfully answer one question, it only spawns others.

There is no moment when sociology's work is done.

Readings and Assignments:

- Read Newman Chapter 3
- **QUIZ TUESDAY (on Newman Chapter 3)**
- Read Glassner's "Culture of Fear" (on WEBSITE)
- **DUE FRIDAY: Seminar on Glassner article**
- **DUE FRIDAY: Active Exploration:** Choose an event that is currently making national headlines. It could be a political story, a major tragedy, or a criminal trial, for example. Find two news articles about this story from two different sources, print them out (or cut them out), and answer the following in writing:

- How much time or space is devoted to this story by each source? Why do you think this is?
 - What tone is each source using about the story? For example, supportive or critical? Objective or biased?
 - Can you find any language in the stories that is *biased* or reflective of certain political opinions? If so, underline them in the stories themselves.
 - Whose political or economic interests are being served or undermined by the manner in which the story is being presented to the public? Why?
 - How can these news articles shape “reality?” Be as specific as you can.
- Turn in your written response to these questions, as well as the news articles themselves.

WEEK FOUR – The Sociological Perspective: Culture, Symbols, and Images



PARADOX of the week:

Do mass media create culture or merely reflect it?

Culture is like two mirrors facing each other: it simultaneously reflects and creates the world we live in.

Readings and Assignments:

- Read Newman, Chapter 4
- **QUIZ MONDAY (on Newman Chapter 4)**
- **DUE MONDAY: Community Activity:** Bring to class a *material culture* artifact that you believe reflects who you are as a person in some way. It can be anything, but you should be prepared to tell the class about the item and its connection to your identity.
- Read Fadiman’s “The Melting Pot” (on WEBSITE)
- **DUE FRIDAY: Seminar on Fadiman**
- **DUE FRIDAY: Active Exploration:** Pick a public location of any kind. For example, you might choose a coffeshop, a bus, a restaurant, or a busy downtown street. Write down at least 25 norms that you see in operation at that location. Then beside each norm, write down one of the values that that norm reflects. (E.g. Saying “hello” reflects the value of “politeness” or “kindness.”)

Quote for thought: How does the following quote describe the ethnocentrism of some Americans?

*“Natives who beat drums
to drive off evil spirits
are objects of scorn to smart Americans
who blow horns to break up traffic jams.” –Mary Ellen Kelly*

WEEK FIVE – The Sociological Perspective: Socialization



PARADOX of the week:

The most important aspects of social life are those ideas and concepts we learn without anyone "teaching" us.

"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman."
-Simone de Beauvoir

Readings and Assignments:

- Read Newman, Chapter 5 AND pp343-348 (a visual essay called "Civilizing the Indians")
- **QUIZ MONDAY (on Newman material)**
- Read Crow Dog's "Civilize Them with a Stick" (on WEBSITE)
- **DUE FRIDAY: Seminar on Crow Dog**
- **DUE FRIDAY: Active Exploration:** Visit a clothing store that sells clothing for toddlers (an online clothing store will do just fine). What kinds of clothing items are sold for toddler boys? For toddler girls? What kinds of images are on the clothing for boys? For girls? What about colors and textures? Take notes about what you see, and describe the patterns in about a page, typed. What kinds of messages are toddler boys receiving about what it means to be a boy? What kind of messages are toddler girls receiving about what it means to be a girl? How does this relate to the Newman chapter?

WEEK SIX – The Sociological Perspective: Impression Management

PARADOX of the week:

The people you "put on an act" the most for are often the people you know the least.



Readings and Assignments:

- Read Newman, Chapter 6
- **QUIZ MONDAY on Newman Chapter 6**
- **DUE MONDAY: Community Activity:** In writing, answer the following questions (and bring them to class!): Describe one of your more embarrassing moments. What were the circumstances surrounding the incident? What image were you trying to present to others? How did the attempt to

claim this image fail? How did the people around you immediately react, physically and behaviorally, to the embarrassment? Did they try to overcome the embarrassment and “return order?” How so? How did you react? What did you do to try to “save face?” Were the consequences of the failed impression management temporary or more permanent?

- Read Grazian’s “The Girl Hunt” (on WEBSITE)
- **DUE FRIDAY: Seminar on Grazian article**
- **DUE FRIDAY: Active Exploration:** Based on what you’ve read this week, analyze the following scene from “A View From the Top” using important concepts from the Newman chapter:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyqtpnqR8kY&feature=related>

WEEK SEVEN – The Sociological Perspective: Deviance

PARADOX of the week:

It is the "deviants" among us who hold society together.

- **EXAM #1: MONDAY**
- Read Newman, Chapter 8
- **QUIZ TUESDAY on Newman Chapter 8**
- **DUE TUESDAY: Community Activity:** This week’s activity will be announced in class.
- Read Chambliss’ “The Saints and the Roughnecks” (on WEBSITE)
- **DUE FRIDAY: Seminar on Chambliss article**
- **DUE FRIDAY: Active Exploration:** Ask five people the following questions, writing down their answers to each:
 - When you think of “deviance,” what comes quickly to mind?
 - When you think of a “deviant,” what mental picture comes quickly to mind?
 - When you think of “crime,” what comes quickly to mind?
 - When you think of a “criminal,” what mental picture comes quickly to mind?

Turn in their responses, then answer the following questions: (1) what were the patterns, if any, to their answers?, and (2) how do their answers relate to the material in Newman?

WEEK EIGHT – Stratification: Social Class



PARADOX of the week:

Inequality is the result of abundance.

“The most dangerous illusion of them all is the illusion that all is well.”

-William Nicholson

Readings and Assignments:

- Read Newman, Chapter 10
- **QUIZ MONDAY on Newman Chapter 10**
- **DUE MONDAY: Community Activity:** Briefly answer the following questions in writing. Bring your responses to class:

- What is your particular social class position, and what criteria are you using to determine it (for example, are you basing your answer on your wealth, occupation, lifestyle, parents' wealth, etc.)? Be as specific as you can.
- Generally, how conscious are you of your social class position on a daily basis? (i.e. How often do you think about it?)
- What things do you do that reflect your social class in your everyday life?
- Think about the following groups and speculate about whether or not you think they are of the same social class as you:
 - Your neighbors
 - Your friends
 - Your classmates
 - Your co-workers
- Read Mantsios' "Making Class Invisible" (on WEBSITE)
- **DUE FRIDAY: Seminar on Mantsios article**
- **DUE FRIDAY: Active Exploration:** Watch the following two video clips (about 18 minutes in total length): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyw4i7G1nBU&feature=related>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnRpO5wqk20&feature=related>
 - Answer the following in writing:
 - What are the five qualities/stereotypes on television about working class people that are usually blamed for their personal failures? Briefly describe each.
 - Can you think of additional examples from television or the movies (besides the shows shown in the video clip) that illustrate these same stereotypes?

*"Nobody makes a greater mistake than
when he [or she]
does nothing because he [or she] could only do a little."
-Edmund Burke*

WEEK NINE - Stratification: Race

PARADOX of the week:

Race as we know it has no deterministic, biological basis. All the same, race is so powerful that it affects nearly every aspect of our lives, even sometimes having life-or-death consequences.

"First they came for the Jews,
but I did not speak out because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for the Communists,
and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist.
Then they came for the trade unionists,
and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for me,
and no one was left to speak for me."
-Pastor Martin Niemöller, victim of the Nazis

Readings and Assignments: NOTE: No classes on Monday, May 28th

- Read Newman, Chapter 11
- **QUIZ TUESDAY on Newman Chapter 11**
- **DUE TUESDAY: Community Activity:** Bring to class any two magazines of your choice (as long as they are not X-rated) and a pair of scissors. We will be cutting them up, so make sure you bring magazines that you don't mind getting ruined.
- Read Tatum's "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" (on WEBSITE)
- **DUE FRIDAY, Seminar on Tatum article**
- **DUE FRIDAY: Active Exploration:** As we begin to explore race in the United States this week, try your hand at categorizing people. Visit the website below, and complete the "Sorting People"

- When you think of “men,” what five things come quickly to mind?
- When you think of “women,” what five things come quickly to mind?
- Males are more likely than females to be violent. Why do you think this is so?
- Females are more likely than males to express emotions such as sadness and fear. Why do you think this is so?
- What do you think explains the behavioral differences between women and men?

Type up their responses, and bring them to class with a one paragraph summary of the overall themes/patterns.



Final exam

This course's final exam will be held on **Friday, June 15th from 9:30am-11:20am.** Plan ahead accordingly. I do not give early or late final exams, so you will need to be here.