

Syllabus:

Sociology 240 Social Psychology WINTER 2011

"The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two in society. That is its task and its promise."—C. Wright Mills, sociologist



Course Summary

Instructor and Course Designer: Liz N. Roberts, M.A.

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Computer Tech Support for Online Classes: If you have network or computer compatibility problems, please call the Help Desk Tech Support at (425) 564-4357.

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce you to the field of social psychology--*the study of individuals and their interactions in groups and in the larger society*. While both sociologists and psychologists have been interested in social psychological questions, we will be focusing on sociological social psychology. In doing so, we will focus on how the social context shapes individuals and groups thoughts, feelings and actions. The major goal in this course is to help you see reality from many (new) perspectives. In particular, I would like you to take the perspective of a stranger in a strange land. We will learn how to translate theories of social psychology, especially the theory of symbolic interactionism, into everyday life and, conversely, to interpret situations of everyday life according to theories of social psychology. How do these theories help us to understand the behavior of other people as well as our own behavior? How do they explain why we (re)act in the way we do? We will examine the underlying structure that lies behind our actions. Interaction (even deviant behavior) does not happen just randomly but follows specific social rules and norms. Together we will try to discover these social rules and norms in our everyday activities. Throughout the entire course, we we will keep a sociological focus by addressing how the social context influences individuals and groups and interactions with others.

Course Goals: A central aim of this course is to help students become more aware of how their lives are shaped by social forces and to gain an appreciation of their ability to engage and interact with the world in a constructive manner.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

- Develop a sociological approach to social psychology through readings and class discussions.
- Learn how to sociologically analyze your personal experiences, your society, and the world at large.
- Develop college level critical thinking, problem solving, and written communication skills.

Office Hours: I have **ONLINE** office hours every Friday Morning from 10:00AM to 11:00AM. You can also reach be via email, as I check it numerous times daily. I do guarantee a response

within 24-48 hours. If we cannot figure something out via email I am happy to set up a phone appointment with you. Also, if you have a question that you want answered right away, try posting it in Cafe Conversations, that way maybe your classmates will be able to help you if I am not available at that moment.

Required Book:

O'Brien, Jodi. 2006. **The Production of Reality. Essays and Readings on Social Interaction.** 5th Edition, Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

You should purchase the book for the class as soon as possible.

