

Introduction to Sociology

SOC& 101 B, Fall 2008

(previously SOC 110)

8:30-9:20 Daily, C-164

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T Th 9:30-10:20

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Course Introduction:

Welcome to Introduction to Sociology! This course is a broad introduction to the field of Sociology. Throughout this class, we will become acquainted with basic sociological concepts/perspectives and examine the importance of racial/ethnic, class, gendered, and sexual identities. Through lecture, discussion, film, readings, and other media, we will explore the many complexities of our social world. The aim of this course is for us to begin analyzing everyday occurrences and things we often taken for granted. We will question the way things work, challenge why things work the way they do, and critically think about who we are within (and how do we connect with others within) the world around us. As we all come to the course with strong ideas and beliefs about the world in which we live, the subject matter in this course is personally as well as intellectually engaging. 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 in your future endeavors.

Required Texts:

1. Jeffrey C. Alexander and Kenneth Thompson, A Contemporary Introduction to Sociology: Culture and Society in Transition (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2008).
2. Additional articles or handouts will be posted on the course website or distributed in class.

Check out BCC Sociology's MySpace page and add us as a Friend!

<http://www.myspace.com/bccsoc>

Learning Atmosphere:

I believe that students learn best when they are actively involved in the teaching and learning process. Thus, this is an active and 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 will sometimes talk about provocative material in class. Please be advised that when we explore controversial topics, they will be framed in an academic context. Topics run the gamut in sociology and at times there may be material that makes people uncomfortable. Keep in mind that when we find ourselves in a space outside of our comfort zone, it's an opportunity for learning. You may be confronted with subject matter that is difficult to watch, see, discuss, or listen to. You are free to leave the room at any time, but please know you will be responsible for any course material you may have missed while you were gone. Also, profanity exists in our social world and thus will be used throughout this course - so please be advised. If you have any questions or concerns about course content or climate, don't hesitate to let me know.

Learning and Course Outcomes:

After participating, discussing, and completing this course, a successful student will demonstrate:

1. A general understanding of basic concepts most widely used in sociology today.
2. A critical idea of society and community, including where in your social landscape you live, and how you observe those around you.
3. A general knowledge and comprehension of how social, political, and cultural forms of power are played out, and how some folks perceive those experiences.
4. A general understanding of the representation and identity construction of various groups in historical and contemporary analyses of culture in the US.
5. Identify the ways in which culture and social institutions (such as education, economy, media, family) shape our everyday experiences
6. Explain social constructionism and how life experiences and opportunities differ according to race, class, gender, and sexuality
7. Become culturally relative and think outside of personal ethnocentrism or other biases.

General Education Outcomes

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.

General Course Rules and Expectations:

- **Attendance:** Attend all class meetings and come to class on time. Your presence in class contributes significantly toward your final grade in the course as I cover a lot of material in class that cannot be found in the readings. More than three unexcused absences or late attendances will lower your grade, and continue to do so as you miss more classes. To have an absence or tardy considered excused, you must discuss it with me prior to the absence or tardy, unless it is an emergency. Excused absences include

doctor's visits, family emergencies, and sometimes work-related issues. If you miss class, please connect with your colleagues to find out what you missed. 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.

- **Preparation:** You should come to class having done all the assigned reading and homework and you should always bring the proper supplies with you, including your textbook. Note that the BCC guideline for homework is two hours outside of class for each hour spent in class.
- **Assignments/Late work:** Late work, such as papers or projects, is accepted, but 10% of the grade is taken off for each day (24 hour period) that your work is late under all circumstances. Make-up quizzes, in-class activities, or homework cannot be made up, unless you absence is excused. Emailed assignments are not accepted.
- **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. Therefore, you are expected to be an active participant in our learning environment. An active participant can include contributing to discussions, but can also mean getting to class on time, taking notes, listening to your peers, and coming to class prepared. You should do your best to contribute to class discussions and activities.
- **Respect and Classroom Etiquette:** All electronic devices are prohibited in the classroom at all times. This includes cell phones, blackberries, laptops, i-pods/mp3 players, etc. If you need a laptop to take notes, I will need verification. Furthermore, I expect that your behavior in class be respectful. Learning about diverse experiences is central to this course, so it is of the utmost importance that you respect your classmates' experiences, differences, and opinions. In order for us to learn from each other, we have to allow each other to make mistakes and to offer unpopular positions for debate. This is a college classroom and as such, I expect students to behave as adults. I do not tolerate excessive talking or whispering, consistent late arrivals, or early departures. Students who are disrespectful to their classmates or the instructor will be asked to leave class and will be marked absent until arrangements are made with the instructor to return to class and will result in your participation credit lowering.
- **Honesty:** Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will result in a failing grade for the course and a report to Student Affairs. 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 borrowed any ideas, terms, or phrases, even if you have borrowed from a classmate. See the BCC handbook on academic dishonesty for further details and if you are at any time unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please see me.

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 Disability Support Services (425)564-2498. You will need to obtain the appropriate documentation from DSS 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.

Grading:

Grades are based on four factors. (1) Participation and Discussion, (2) In-Class work/assignments or quizzes (3) Field work assignments, and (4) exams. Each of these elements is awarded a specific number of points:

Participation/Discussion	50 points
In-Class Work/Assignments or Quizzes (10 at 10 points/each)	100 points
Field-Work Assignments (2 at 75 points/each)	150 points
Exams (3 at 100 points/each)	300 points
TOTAL	600 points

Grade	Points	Percentage
A	555-600	100-93%
A-	543-554	92-90%
B+	525-542	89-87%
B	501-524	86-83%
B-	477-500	82-80%
C+	465-476	79-77%

C	435-464	76-73%
C-	417-434	72-70%
D+	405-416	69-67%
D	357-404	66-60%
F	356 & Below	59% & Below

The following is a brief description of each of the 4 components:

1. Participation/Discussion:

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, getting to class on time, class discussions, and group work. Accountability for the readings is also taken into consideration. Do not take this portion of your grade lightly!

2. In-Class Work/Assignments or Quizzes:

Over the course of the quarter, you will be asked a total of 10 times to submit work that you have completed during the class session. These in-class activities can occur either individually or in a group. They will be randomly delivered and cannot be made up. Usually, they will consist of a short piece of writing/reflection or response to something we have read or an application of terms/material covered in readings. If I notice that folks are not reading, quizzes can take the place of the in-class assignments.

3. Field Work Assignments:

There will be two field work assignments where you will actually be doing your own sociological research. This is not traditional library research; rather, your team will go out into the world and collect data about topics provided. There will be various topics to choose from for these field expeditions. For example, in one assignment I am asking students to break a social norm and report back their feelings, reflections, and responses. In another, students will do an economic analysis by completing a monthly budget from jobs, rental ads, etc. gathered from the local paper. Topics and more details about this project will be distributed early in the quarter.

4. Exams:

Over the course of the quarter, you will take two exams that integrate the course's in-class activities (lectures, films, etc.) and readings. Exams are designed to make sure you understand important course concepts and themes. Exams might include multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions. Please note that you cannot make up missed exams. Exam dates are on the attached Course Calendar, so please plan ahead.

General Written Work Guidelines:

All papers or written work should be in Times New Roman, 12 point font, double-spaced with 1" margins on all sides. Your work must be cited in MLA style and you must always give proper credit to the texts from which you draw and formulate your ideas. Title pages and bibliographies are not counted toward the minimum page requirements. Student information (name, assignment title, class) is single-spaced, at the top left-hand side of the page. Do not put extra spaces between paragraphs and paragraphs contain no less than four sentences. Magazines, newspapers, journals, and books are *italicized*. Movie titles, article titles, song titles, etc. are "in quotation marks." Quotes inside of a quotation use 'single quotation marks.' Papers should be written from an academic perspective – so no colloquial language please!

General Grading Guidelines for Written Work:

A Paper - An A paper shows me you're engaged with the readings, the media, and the lectures in class. It's a paper free from grammar and spelling errors, and a paper that demonstrated your command not only of the English language, but of the form and flow of a solid piece of

written work. Your arguments are solid and backed up with intellectual ammunition. You've demonstrated a strong understanding of our readings and the in-class materials and how they intersect with one another.

B Paper – The B tells me you're doing very good work. You may have a few grammar issues, but your paper is still tidy and the writing is still strong. You have a relatively firm grasp on the themes in the course but you may not be as well versed in the readings or materials as you could be. Your understandings of some of the course materials are stronger than others, but I would like to see you challenge yourself a bit more with the course issues and themes.

C Paper – The C paper means that you're not as invested in the class as I'd like to see. Your writing is relatively weaker than it could be and you're not thinking as critically as I'd like you to. Some of what you point out I may not follow logically, and your use of the course materials may not be as solid as it could be. You omit some of the important points raised in class.

D Paper – A D paper is not proofread and it does not deal critically with the themes in the course. It responds, perhaps, to one part of one of the readings but there is no integration of material or questions raised in class. The course materials are not presented clearly, or at all. I will work closely with each of you as much as time allows. Please note: a D paper or below may be resubmitted once during the quarter for a better grade.

Syllabus

You are expected to have read the readings assigned for the current day by the time you arrive in class!

**Though I will try to remain as faithful as possible to this syllabus, I reserve the right to make changes. These will be announced in advance in class. **

Week 1

Monday, Sept. 22nd: Introduction to the Course

Go over syllabus; class introductions; beginning definitions

Tuesday, Sept. 23rd: What is Sociology? Starting with the Basics

Readings: pp. 4-12

Wednesday, Sept. 24th: Understanding Social Construction

Readings: pp. 12-21

Thursday, Sept. 25th: A Changing Society: Understanding Today's Social World

Readings: pp. 21-26

Friday, Sept. 26th: How do we Study Society?

Readings: pp. 30-38



Week 2

Monday, Sept. 29th: Some Basic Methodological Practices

Readings: pp. 38-51



Tuesday, Sept. 30th: Ethnography and Field Research



Readings: 51-60

Wednesday, Oct. 1st: Cultural Considerations

Readings: pp. 64-73

Thursday, Oct. 2nd: Culture in the Everyday

Readings: pp. 73-89

Friday, Oct. 3rd: Inequality and Stratification

Readings: pp. 240-54



Week 3

Monday, Oct. 6th: Structures of Inequality

Readings: pp. 255-66

Tuesday, Oct. 7th: Field Work Assignment #1 Due

Wednesday, Oct. 8th: Gender as a Social Construct

Readings: pp. 270-78

Thursday, Oct. 9th: Systems of Gender Meaning

Readings: "Night to His Day," on course website

Friday, Oct. 10th: In-Class Activity



Week 4

Monday, Oct. 13th: Gender at Work

Readings: pp. 278-86

Tuesday, Oct. 14th: Gendered Exploitation and Violence

Readings: 286-295



Wednesday, Oct. 15th: Exam Overview and Wrapping up Loose Ends

Thursday, Oct. 16th: Exam #1

Friday, Oct. 17th: The Social Construction of Race

Readings: pp. 383-92

Week 5

Monday, Oct. 20th: Racial Formation in the US



Readings: Omi and Winant, on course website

Tuesday, Oct. 21st: Optional Ethnicities?

Readings: For Whites Only, on course website

Wednesday, Oct. 22nd: Affirmative Action

Readings: Meanings of Affirmative Action, on course website

Thursday, Oct 23rd: A Stratified Economy

Readings: pp. 366-77



Friday, Oct 24th : A Technological Future?

Readings: pp. 383-92

Week 6

Monday, Oct. 27th: Laboring on a Dime

Readings: Nickel and Dimed, on course website



Tuesday, Oct. 28th: In-class activity

Wednesday, Oct. 29th: No Class: College Issues Day

Thursday, Oct. 30th: Field Work Assignment 2 Due

Friday, Oct. 31st: Social Construction of Sexuality

Readings: pp. 168-180



Week 7

Monday, Nov. 3rd: Talkin' About a Sexual Revolution

Readings: 180-189



Tuesday, Nov. 4th: Sexual Embodiment

Readings: 189-202

Wednesday, Nov. 5th: Compulsory Heterosexuality

Readings: Heterosexual Questionnaire, on course website
Bisexualities, on course website

Thursday, Nov. 6th: Wrap up and Review for Exam

Friday, Nov. 7th: Exam #2

Week 8



Monday, Nov. 10th: Social Stratification of Education

Readings: pp. 396-405

Tuesday, Nov. 11th: No Class – Professional Development Day

Wednesday, Nov. 12th: Cultural Capital

Readings: pp. 405-414

Thursday, Nov. 13th: Segregation in Education

Readings: Still Separate, Still Unequal, on course website

Friday, Nov. 14th: Strategies of Resistance in the Classroom

Readings: Bad Boys in Public Schools, on course website



Week 9

Monday, Nov. 17th: Stratification of Health and Medicine

Readings: pp. 428-442



Tuesday, Nov. 18th: Health Care Inequalities

Readings: pp. 442-453

Wednesday, Nov. 19th: Global AIDS – Lecture/Overview

Thursday, Nov. 20th: The Role of Religion

Readings: pp. 458-470

Friday, Nov. 21st: American Christianity – Church versus State?

Readings: pp. 470-482



Week 10

Monday, Nov. 24th: Urbanism and Population Growth

Readings: pp. 486-497



**Tuesday, Nov. 25th: Urban Sprawl, Gated Communities...
Diasporic Living?**

Readings: pp. 497-508

Wednesday, Nov. 26th: No Class

Thursday, Nov. 27th: No Class

Friday, Nov. 28th: No Class

Week 11

Monday, Dec. 1st: Stratifying Media

Readings: pp. 92-101

Tuesday, Dec. 2nd: Possibilities for Social Change?

Readings: pp. 556-564



Wednesday, Dec. 3rd: Global Collective Action

Readings: pp. 572-582

Thursday, Dec. 4th: Wrap up and Review for Exam

Friday, Dec. 5th: Exam #3

